

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30231

Name: 30% Club Ireland

Theme 1: Gender norms and stereotypes

Gender norms and stereotypes as barriers to gender equality

Fixed ideas about what women and men should do in the home or at work are learned by girls and boys in early childhood and throughout their lives. These ideas or gender stereotypes affect their choices in school and as they enter careers and contribute to a lack of progress toward equality between women and men. This limits not only the jobs that women and men consider or are available to them, but also can exclude women and men from social roles and tasks.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

- Over 80% of the unpaid care work is done by women so from very early childhood boys and girls start to see the defined roles of men and women
- Many national policies tend to focus on 'standard working man' and ignore the fact that female employment can follow different patterns. E.g. in the UK system the failure to account for the fact that women are more likely to have several part-time jobs means they do not qualify for auto enrolment pensions. A worker must earn at least £10,000 a year. This means that 2.7 million employed women (32%) will not earn enough to benefit from auto enrolment compared to 14% of men.
- At age 20, men and women have similar pension possibilities. By age 60, men tend to be 60% better off. This is attributed to the impact on women of the triple bind in that they tend, on average, to be lower paid, they are more likely to have had periods of part time employment or career breaks, and they are less likely to make additional voluntary contributions because they prioritise other family commitments. This coupled with the fact that women live on average longer than men, exacerbates financial insecurity and additional reliance on state support
- With only 7% of female Chairpersons and 91% of CEO's being male (CSO Sept 2019) it is still very hard for women to see their role as equal to men when it comes to business and governing. There are still 9 all male Boards in Ireland and this highlights that many companies despite all the evidence, are resistant to any form of change and progress

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

- We need a gender lens on all policy development on workplace practices to ensure that we do not inadvertently disadvantage men or women, through lack of knowledge, understanding or appreciation of the impact of differing work practices
- We need to review policies such as pension, auto-enrolment, etc in other

countries to see examples of where structural differences in work practices between men and women have been accommodated • The Balance for Better Business government initiative has started to drive progress across listed organisations in Ireland, but the focus needs to continue to include all employers in Ireland above a reasonable size for both boards and senior leadership teams in terms of pipeline. Organisations that deliver on such targets need to be celebrated and identified. Separately the targets of 40% gender representation target on state boards needs to be applied to all state boards on an individual basis as a measure of success, rather than on a cumulative basis. • Examples of alternative approaches to family leave are outlined in later questions below

Theme 2: Work: Occupational segregation by gender, gender discrimination and the gender pay gap

Women and men are often concentrated into different kinds of jobs and within the same occupations, women are often in work that is less well paid and has less opportunities for career advancement. Women often work in areas where they can work part-time so as to fit in with their caring responsibilities. While many men work in low paid jobs, many professions dominated by women are also low paid, and professions that have become female-dominated have become lower paid. This worsens the gender pay gap (the average difference between the wages of women and men who are working).

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

- This barrier becomes established in the primary school system where already at a young age boys and girls develop stereotypical behaviour in relation to subject preferences, job expectations, and career potential. This behaviour is reinforced through the secondary school system and the application of subject choices, underfunded career guidance, and under use of the transition year opportunity. •

Girls who display an interest in a caring role are directed towards nursing rather than medicine, teachers have little knowledge of workplace skills in relation to emerging roles such as data science, complex financial services, biotechnology and food science and STEM For example in the 2019 iWish survey of 7,000 students 64% of girls said they didn't know enough about stem, 48% of Teachers said they did not know where to go for information on school or industry initiatives relating to STEM. In the 2018 survey 93% of teachers surveyed rated self-belief in girl's ability as the greatest impediment to the promotion of STEM in school • The 2020 BTYSE winners identified the early stereotypes developed in boys and girls as young as aged 6 in the view of the gender of engineers • These foundations move into early career choices where girls are directed away from the higher value roles e.g. in STEM, Medicine, Engineering, despite comprising more than 54% of college graduates, and are more likely to take on back office roles or lower paid roles, which starts a career journey with more limited scope for progression • The continued dependence on women to take on caring roles – both childcare and elder care, drives a need for more part time employment which tends to be confined to lower paid jobs; or

extended exit from the workplace which limits career opportunities and potential for salary growth. For example, research in Germany has identified that a woman who has given birth to one child can expect to earn up to \$300,000 less by the time she is 45, compared to a woman who has worked full time without interruption • Gender pay gap reporting in the UK has already identified that the significant contributor to differences is less about pay equity (equal pay for like roles) and more about representation, where even in industries like financial services where women make up more than 55% of the workforce, the lack of representation at senior levels (less than 23% of senior roles) is the bigger driver of gender pay gap. In particular industries this representation gap becomes even more apparent with airlines as a specific example where the gender pay gap is driven by the exceptionally high percentage of males in the more highly paid role of pilot (approximately 95%) with the higher predominance of women in the lower paid or part time clerical / cabin crew roles

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

- Greater focus within the teacher training process on the importance of balanced skill development in both boys and girls. The DCU STEM internship voluntary programme run in conjunction with business through the 30% Club and CWIT (connecting women in technology) should be the mandatory standard for all teacher training in Ireland • We need further research into the role and impact of single sex versus co-ed schools and influences in terms of stereotypes, expectations, subject choices and potential for ingrained bias from early schooling • All teachers should be required to complete Unconscious Bias Training and we should consider research on other ways to encourage more gender-neutral classrooms and reduced stereotyping in teaching practices – reference the work of Dr Javid Abdelmoneim • It should be a requirement for all Career Guidance Teachers to have access to more in depth knowledge on industry and the world of work and to complete refresher programmes to keep up to date on competencies for modern roles • We need to progress to gender pay gap reporting but ensuring that it focuses on gender representation as well as pay equity, so that data can drive action within organisations • We need a government led approach to apprenticeship programmes, developed in partnership with industry, that encourage a) girls or boys into underrepresented skills, particularly where there is an opportunity to encourage girls into higher paid technical roles and b) movement from school into career choices that offer better potential for long term higher value roles, particularly for young school leavers who have less access to third level education • The private sector has a strong role to play in working in partnership with the education system, providing examples of men and women visiting schools demonstrating breaks from standard stereotypes as part of ‘see it to be it’ e.g. female doctors, male nurses, female engineers etc • The curriculum for Transition year should be fully overhauled to provide a more comprehensive and standardised learning process for wider subject choice, more focused onward education or job/skills planning, and genuine work experience that will add material value. The private sector needs to be actively encouraged to participate in the Transition Year process in a more structured way to support this approach.

Theme 3. Care, paid and unpaid, as a social and family responsibility

Care -- the social responsibility of care and women and men's co responsibility for care, especially within the family

Women remain disproportionately responsible for unpaid care and often work in poorly paid care work. For working parents or lone parents, balancing paid work with parenting and or caring for older and dependent adults presents significant challenges. Women are most disadvantaged by these challenges, yet men also suffer from lack of opportunities to share parenting and caring roles. Despite recent legislation and policy initiatives to support early years parental care, inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care continue between women and men. The cost of childcare has been identified as a particular barrier to work for women alongside responsibilities of caring for older relatives and dependent adults.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

- Ireland has the second highest level of under 5's in the EU, and the third highest level of childcare costs and this is not sustainable for working couples where both parties might wish to work. There is significant anecdotal evidence where it becomes cheaper for one partner to remain at home • Where a woman is typically on a lower wage (as seen from gender pay gap reporting) – she is more likely to become the stay at home parent, because the financial loss is lessened • In the less likely event that the mother is on a higher salary, there is reluctance to take unpaid leave because of the financial impact on the family, but in some cases e.g. extended maternity leave there is no option for the leave to be transferred to a father, who may be on a lower salary, and therefore less financial impact on the family. • While 85% of companies in Ireland offer some form of flexible working / family leave, less than 50% of employees avail of the options because of the concern regarding impact on their careers, particularly among male employees – 30% Club Women in Management Research 2020. Further research across financial services – Making the Change Count 30% Club 2018 – identified that only 11% of men availed of parental leave compared to 34% of women and further women on average availed of 11 weeks parental leave but men only availed of 4 weeks, because of perceived career impacts. • Ireland has a history of investing equally in the education of men and women, but we have had less success in encouraging women to successfully return to the workforce post a period of family leave. In parallel, where men do not see women successfully reintegrating into the workforce from leave, it reinforces their view that family absence is career limiting • A very high proportion of Irish Employers are SME or Micro organisations, and have a genuine concern about capacity to support mandated family absences beyond statutory maternity leave, or to influence policy change in this regard

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

- We need a national solution to the spiralling and disproportionate costs of childcare relative to total income – whether in the form of state childcare, subsidies, incentives, caps, tax relief
- We need more national supports or incentives for employers to invest in returner programmes and recapture the lost workforce, which is predominantly female
- We need a simpler, holistic approach to policy and legislation in relation to family absences. In particular:-
 - The distinctions and complexities between maternity, paternity and parental leave provide little scope to encourage male/female balance in caring responsibilities, and provide a significant challenge for employers in terms of interpretation, application and compliance. European examples of a more simplified approach where paid leave, beyond the medical aspect of ‘childbirth’ leave, is defined simply as parental leave and equally shared across both parents has resulted in more significant take up equally by both genders. Additionally, such policy should be developed in consultation with employers so that any approach can be developed in a way that is easier to implement, to be encouraged, and ultimately adopted equally by men and women. This is particularly important when the Irish economy has such a high proportion of SME and micro organisations where the perceived burden of family absence policies is seen as only achievable within larger organisations
 - The changing nature of Irish demographics also suggests a radical review of Carer’s leave and the potential for introduction of more comprehensive elder care leave that can help to retain carers in the workforce albeit on a part time basis, alleviate pressures on the healthcare requirements, and affording elder citizens the dignity of appropriate home support
 - Force Majeure leave, while helpful to working parents, is too restrictive in relation to the notice period and triggers and should be more generic or principles based to allow for unplanned emergencies that impact on family life
 - The UK practice of ‘paid keep in touch days’ should be reviewed as a basic addition to maternity leave/parental leave legislation to allow for better contact during family absences and an increased chance of a return to work

Theme 4: Women’s access to, and representation in, public life and decision making

Ensure women’s participation and representation in decision-making and leadership in the workplace, political and public life

Women are systematically underrepresented in leadership in economic and political decision-making. Despite the introduction of a candidate gender quota (through the system of party funding) for national political office, and initiatives to support women’s access to corporate decision-making roles, men continue to dominate leadership positions. There are also issues to be considered around how media represents women and men.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

- The roles of national office are not designed to support working parents – male and female – in terms of attendance, hours of work, geographical location
- The candidate gender quota does not extend far enough into the process to drive change and our most senior decision-making bodies do not represent the citizenship that it serves.
- Balance for Better Business, a government led initiative, strives for gender targets in senior decision-making roles in business, but we do not apply similar standards in State bodies
- The State Board targets of 40% have been met on a cumulative basis, but not at an individual board level
- We have a number of different government departments focusing on aspects of gender and diversity – Balance for Better Business, Strategy for Women and Girls, Ireland for Finance, consultation on flexible working, future jobs Ireland, gender pay gap reporting etc – we need a more holistic approach to applying a gender and diversity lens

➤ Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

- The targets set out in Balance for Better Business, should be extended to include Public Sector Bodies
- The State Board targets should be met by every individual board and a focused target date should be set and met
- For elected bodies, we need to take more decisive action to ensure that decision makers better represent the population that they serve, even if that ultimately leads to a more affirmative quota approach t local and national levels. More immediately, consideration needs to be given to the application of work practices for elected office, to encourage a more integrated work/life approach and more gender friendly opportunities
- Establish a more cohesive approach to gender-based policy planning so that individual government initiatives can work within a single or complimentary diversity framework

5. Where does gender inequality impact most?

To conclude we would be interested in your response to the following question: In which area do you think gender inequality matters most?

Please rank the following in order of importance, 1 being the most important:

- Paid work 1
- Home & family life 3
- Education 2
- Politics and public life 4
- Media 6
- Caring for others 5

- Other – please elaborate

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

The biggest immediate and pressing inequality is in relation to paid work – in terms of hours, pay and opportunity. If we addressed that as the main priority this would feed into improvements in home and family life and caring responsibilities. Education is the second highest priority as it is the enabler for change in terms of future behaviours

- Please include any further comments or observations you may have here.

The 30% Club Ireland officially launched in January 2015, with a goal to achieve better gender balance at all levels in leading Irish businesses. The 30% Club believes that gender balance on boards and executive leadership not only encourages better leadership and governance, but further contributes to better all-round board performance, and ultimately increased corporate performance for both companies, stakeholders, employees and the wider economy. The purpose of the 30% Club is to be useful to businesses in achieving their culture and inclusion ambitions, with a specific focus on senior gender balance; and focuses on raising awareness of the business benefits of gender balance; supporting businesses in their efforts to achieve balance; and working to improve the gender talent pipeline through mentoring programmes, business scholarships, board readiness and leadership development initiatives. The initiative is complementary to individual company efforts and existing networking groups, adding to these through collaboration and the visible commitment of senior business leaders. Over 265 Irish Chairs and CEOs of leading businesses are supporters of the 30% Club Ireland. These leaders are committed to accelerating gender balance in their organisations through voluntary actions. We believe that partnership and collaboration between business and policy makers leads to better and more workable solutions for employees, industry and the economy