

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30055

Name: Name with Secretariat

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.

I am the primary childcare in my home. I am the main person my children rely on for feeding, collection and playtime. They see me as the parent at home- the woman at home. Not my husband, he is at work. Many factors led to this arrangement, none chosen by me for me. I don't feel more capable to be the primary childcare, or wish to be at home, but that is the case nonetheless. Both my husband and I have PhDs. We studied and met at UCD. I went on to do a masters, my husband remained in a low paid researcher position. We couldn't survive on our income so we made the decision for husband to become a medical doctor and earn a solid fixed wage. To support this choice I became primary childcare. Years later I was eager to get back to work and it was extremely difficult- nearly impossible. I eventually was given an in back into research through luck and a female boss that realised despite years of effective unemployment that I was potentially a very good employee. And I am. I am so good at my job that they want me to go full time and move up the ladder very rapidly. Now this is where the stereotype arises. Because I have been the supportive home childcare person, both my kids and my husband now expect that job to still fall to me. I am now challenged to keep a job I love and cover childcare. Which is impossible- I'm exhausted. I want support for my choices now as my husband had support in his. He leaves for a full day without thinking who will collect the kids- he knows I always will. I want to progress in work without worrying about my kids now. And I don't need to preface this with I love my kids, that's a given, but I am entitled to my life. I need my wages to be fair and to have childcare backup otherwise I can't do what I'm very good at - which is my job. My kids should see myself and my partner as equals, educationally we are. If my kids (both boys) don't see their mother happy/fulfilled and doing well in life how can they respect me? How can they respect their future partners and employees. This lack of state support for my choices has a long term effect on everyone.

- 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.)

State: 1 year postnatal support in terms of money and physical and mental oversight for the mother. Focus is now too much on the baby. The mother is left alone and fragile both physically and mentally. State: Early years childcare at least part-time (eg. 9-1.30). You can't possibly work with the hours offered now. It prolongs the out of work scenario and cv gaps that can kill your career. State: afterschool money and cover. Children get out of school at 2/2.30 until they are 12. This means you can't work full time and be a mother. We need paid for afterschool. Most mothers newly back to work aren't paid enough to afford afterschool and this further inhibits them returning to work. State: free post-natal physio. Most women's bodies are broken after having kids and they need physio care otherwise they can suffer debilitating issues such as urinary incontinence and won't leave the house. Education: back to work supports postnatally would enable women to believe they can return to work or start a new career after baby. Cv clinics, career advice and easy to get to night courses would all help. Women are very clever at diversification; starting mommy pages and blogs to begin a type of self-start up from the confines of being at home with baby. This is a huge potential money spinner for the state/ industry. Well educated women are currently stuck at home!

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.

Gender quotas should be enforced. This would set a standard and we can work from there. We need to see women in more diverse roles and history has shown us they won't simply be chosen because they are the best candidate. Standard job progression implementation across the public service. If you do your job well you should be up for promotion. Gender quotas should also apply here. The scales have been tipped so far in favour of men I think this is a correct realignment. Job progression should be offered if you happen to be on maternity leave when it arises. Publication of job salary ahead of hiring. Everyone should know what the job is offering and it should not alter whether a woman or man is hired. Visibility! It should be incumbent on all companies to show their diversity policy and demonstrate

female promotion and acceleration. It's embarrassing that this has to happen in a forced way but you'd be amazed at how often men are pushed forward for talks/seminars/panels when there are several more worthy women that can do it. It has to be a policy. Soft activities- Christmas parties etc should rotate around the office. Sorry- these always get landed with the women.

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State: gender quotas across workforce- both Public & private. This should be law and fined if non-compliant. State: corporate female visibility. Show us what you've done to internally promote women? This should be rewarded and checked yearly. Those not doing their bit should be taxed. Women are 50% of the population we should be 50% visible. State supported postnatal help as outlined above and solid childcare supports for women that fall within a proper working day (9-5). Cheaper childcare and better wages.

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 them in law, policy and practice.

State: More childcare hours, and cheaper childcare. Childcare is currently far too expensive and the hours are prohibitive. State childcare hours are too short, it would be impossible work with this alone. Afterschools are private and also far too expensive, meaning you need a job you can leave early. Elder care. Our population is aging and as childcare has fallen to women so to has this, often for in-laws as well as your own parents. This means the care burden on women has now tripled. This will naturally result in less women returning to the workforce and high mental health challenges in women (30-50). In my opinion they are more at risk of depression and suicide because of this increased care burden. More state funding into elder care, respite care, home help and childcare would all help women. The state is currently relying on women as the great unseen workforce- I suppose historically this has always been the case. I hope the citizens assembly can highlight this.

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Fully funded/ full time state provided childcare facilities- not money to private providers. Fully funded state elder care- again no private providers. Women shoulder the burden of this now, either doing it themselves or paying for the shortfall in care funding, if the state wants to help it needs to step up its childcare/ elder care programs drastically.

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.

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Sexuality /equality/consent should all be taught at a young age in schools across the board. Our sexual teaching is archaic. If boys learned early about equality it would be inherent in them. Consent and strong sentences for rape would all send a clear message. The system for trialling rape where the victim is effectively on trial needs to change and the reporting of this also. This reporting of detail in such trials should be illegal. If more women were employed in the media this reporting angle would shift. Gender quotas across companies need to be insisted upon. Early learning on sexual awareness and respect should be in schools from the age of 6.

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State early (age 6-7) informed sex educational and consent awareness coming from an educator not a religion class! Change in the set-up of rape trials to allow more protection for the victim would lead to more reporting. Harsher sentences for rape. No reporting of rape trial detail in the news/media. Quotas on all jobs.

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 5
- Home & family life 1
- Education 6
- Politics and public life 3
- Media 44
- Caring for others 2
- Other – please elaborate 7

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

If you can't see it you can't be it. Women can't inspire other women if we are all home caring for our patents/kids. We just aren't able to be visible and so we don't make policy decision and are treated as fluff in the media. We need to be supported and out doing things. We need to inspire the next generation of women. Girls can unfortunately get more info on a female celebs clothing than what women are doing in the workplace. And boys get much sexual learning from the internet. Females in strong roles are key.

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

At the moment Ireland has a dormant workforce. A force of well educated women that are stuck at home. We suffered more than anyone from the recession and we've been forgotten. We kept the show on the road, raised kids, kept our partners going; we need to be supported now. Many are struggling to return to work after being out so long and childcare/ elder care is a strangle hold. Many won't make it back to work. This is where we set the tone for the next generation. Are they to see us just as mothers? I'm a mother but I'm also more, I'm a human with a myriad of interests. I can take part and I want to.

