

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30101

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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.

Laws are very specifically gender biased in terms of childcare, maintenance, parental leave etc.

- 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 needs to address gender bias in law

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.

Pay inequality is driven by employer stereotypes and practice. For example, in any organisation, on a day to day basis, the most vital employee is the cleaner (typically

female and very low paid). The least important employee is the CEO. Decisions can easily be made by a group of informed employees. (Typically the CEO is male and ridiculously overpaid). Only state law can reverse this pay inequality.

- 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.)

Private sector needs to address this inequality. But, it cannot do so without state driven law on the value of work.

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.

The problem is that unpaid care is largely unpaid and not recognised as employment! Care of dependants is a vital role in society and is often full time 'employment' in itself.

- 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 needs to recognise care of dependants as vital, social employment and pay carers for the value of the work done on behalf of the state. This could be further enhanced and emphasised by recognising, and remunerating, this work as more valuable than long-term unemployment.

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 key barrier is social stereotyping, reinforced by media, and enshrined in a Constitution written primarily by men.

- 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 should consider the role and employment of a politician. The concept of 'winning' an election and losers are effectively unemployed is a male concept. Political life would be more inclusive if politicians were continuously employed in local 'clinics' as liaison officers between civilians and state bodies, as well as private sector bodies (eg publicly writing to an organisation which has mistreated a citizen). The profile gained from this work would help to inform the election process of the value of local representatives.

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

- Other – please elaborate

7

Only selected as the last ranking number due to a flaw in the questionnaire - it wasn't clear it was optional.

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

Unpaid care work, pay inequality, gender biased laws and state institutional bias are greatest source of gender inequalities.

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

Positive discrimination and gender quotas do not solve the underlying problem. If anything they make it worse! These measures themselves reinforce gender inequality. The solution is to eliminate the causes of inequality by rewording state laws, recognising care of dependants as valuable employment, breaking down the huge pay inequality within the private sector and redefining politicians as public servants rather than horses in an electoral horse race!