

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30142

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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.

How girls and women are educated and socialised. Gender stereotyping in social and other media. In relation to domestic violence the fact that it is socially acceptable for perpetrators to abuse the partners in the home and the fact that property rights are given more weight than the safety of women and children when it comes to obtaining barring orders. Patriarchal attitudes in the delivery of health and social services as evidenced by the numerous scandals relating to women's health. Lack of female and non gender conforming staff in senior management roles in public service.

- 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 state has a role to play in encouraging female representation in public service at all levels and ensuring gender neutrality in delivery of education services. There should also be stronger legislation and support for women in the workplace. The state should ensure mandatory sex education and healthy relationships education in schools. The child care system needs urgent reform and should be delivered by the state and not as a private market service.

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.

More transparency around wages. Encouraging better support for women in the workplace who take time out for families or caring responsibilities. Public sector organisations should have targets around female representation in senior levels. Maternity pay should be compulsory and should also be included in organisations who are funded by public funds such Section 39 HSE and section 56 Tusla organisations. Female dominated Public service jobs such as nurses and social workers should be reevaluated in terms of the skills and risks that are involved and pay and conditions should be improved. Workplaces should have to have a gender analysis as part of strategic plans and have gender targets.

- 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.)

Legislation and culture change is required. Gender should become a specific portfolio for government. Some solutions suggested above.

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.

Childcare and societal attitudes to caring roles.

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

State should ensure better caring services whether it is childcare or the home care and respite packages. Much more investment is required in these areas and better pay for workers. These services should be delivered by NGOs or social enterprises and not the private sector only. There should be more flexible working and leave arrangements.

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.

Political parties don't do enough to support women to participate. Men from political families have a right to participate at the higher levels and women are asked are they qualified for the same roles. The hours of the Dáil are not family friendly. The confrontational style of the Dáil is old fashioned and very masculine way of working. Media focuses more on errors by women than by men in politics. There is more focus on women's appearance than on males also.

- 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.)

Political parties should do more to support women and should have a gender analysis and strategy. The Dáil hours and ways of working should be reviewed. More women should feature on boards of public bodies.

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

- Home & family life 1
- Education 6
- Politics and public life 3
- Media 55
- Caring for others 2
- Other – please elaborate 7

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

It's the lack of equality in the home that impacts on all other areas. We are primarily humans who live in families or are have strong social connections to family. The Labour Market access is also a big issue but shouldn't be the sole focus. It is the neo Liberal patriarchy that emphasises the importance of gender equality in the workplace which is also important but gender equality is a right in and of itself regardless of whether you are engaged in paid work or not.

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

We need to move away from the idea that the market is the solution for everything and that the function of the state is to prepare people for the labour market and that that is the reason to promote gender equality. We need to think about what kind of society we need and want to live in where children, older people and the vulnerable have a good quality of life and care available for them regardless of it is provided in the home or outside it. The people doing the caring should be valued and well paid for those roles. People should be free to engage in the Labour Market in a flexible way that suits their work life balance.