

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

## QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30154

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.

This stems from early childhood development. girls are often provided with dolls to play with while boys provided with building blocks and other more cognitive toys. Clothes that are designed for boys include themes of action and adventure, while girls clothes generally have some sort of princess theme. Girls schools often have minimal STEM-type subjects on offer and instead offer Home Economics and Biology as their only science subjects, while the reverse is true for boys schools allowing them to only do construction/metal work 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.)

Gendered branding should be removed from all toy advertisements in store and in advertisements. A greater effort should be made to ensure that girls and boys clothing are not quite as separate as they are in stores so that girls and boys and their parents can chose without prejudice what they want to wear. The leaving certificate as a whole could really do with a revamp, but a good start would be to ensure better equality between schools - perhaps having secondaries working together with other local schools to share facilities and classes.

### **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.

Carers responsibilities fall to women because many men do not get the same bonding opportunities in early childhood. Couple this with the fact that women are obliged to take a career break every time they have a child while their male peers adding to their families don't have this same break. Paternity leave should be greatly improved in this country to include at least the same length of time as maternity leave. Both should have the same mandatory period. Carer responsibilities are compounded by the current crisis in the childcare sector in Ireland. Companies should be obliged to support their staff with childcare places onsite where possible. This would reduce the requirement for many private childcare providers and would further incentivise people back to work after children.

- 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 need to intervene with regard to paternity leave, the private sector need to intervene with regard to childcare and the education system needs to support the private sector to facilitate parents in their return to work by providing facilities for their children.

### **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.

In the above context childcare is a significant issue - in Dublin childcare places for under 1 year olds are limited. They are also expensive (our current place is costing us the same price as our mortgage for one child). Further to this afterschool care is practically non-existent in many places.

- 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 needs to address the current childcare crisis. If we have another child we cannot afford to send them to creche and therefore one of us will have to give up work. This is commonplace across Dublin.

#### **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.

Maternity leave means that you are forced (willingly of course) to take a career break for each child you decide to have. This is not the case for fathers. Mothers are disadvantaged in the workplace as their career is put on pause while they "go off to have a baby". As a professional, my career path was very structured, but having a child at the "wrong" time of year put my career off track by 2 years, despite taking just 10 months out of work. That was just for 1 baby. So all my male peers were now a level above me in the hierarchy. This is not an isolated practice, this is commonplace across all industries and 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.)

Paternity leave should be equal to maternity leave. Men should be required/entitled to take as much time as women are required/entitled to take with the same benefits offered.

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

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

I think gender balance needs to be reached in the areas I have outlined as the top ranking items in order to feed into the "carer" type responsibilities. E.g. in my house I (the woman) am the most educated and the highest earner therefore our roles in the home are slightly non-traditional as I work much longer hours than my husband does and therefore he takes on much of the carer responsibilities.

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