

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

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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.

The key barrier I am familiar with is the imbalance in the national media coverage of women's sports. The blatant discrimination is tolerated and goes unchallenged on a daily basis. It undermines efforts to address stereotyping and gender norms in Irish society and guarantees the maintenance of the status quo.

I have two very clear examples to illustrate, both concern Gaelic games. One with RTE over two weekends last October and the absence of coverage of women's games on at the same time as men. The second is in relation to newspaper sports reporting on Monday March 2nd. I will detail the Irish Independent coverage on that day, the other papers with the notable exception of the Irish Times (who printed photos but no report) went along the same lines. If it were the exception it may be acceptable, but it is the norm in relation to coverage of female sports participants.

It deprives young girls of the opportunity of hearing and seeing outstanding role models in action. Last Monday's Irish Independent newspaper unfortunately is typical.

24 sports pages, 39 pictures. We had two incredible camogie (a sport UNESCO declared a part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity) games in Croke Park – All Ireland Club finals. One miniscule photo of one group lost in the results of the weekend. Talk about rubbing your nose in it – compare it to their full back page picture – a male player pulling the jersey of the back of his opponent.

It reminds me of the quote from Maya Angelou "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made me feel". How did our camogie stars feel when they opened Monday's Irish Independent and all our other newspapers? The Irish Examiner gave more space to the Munster Schools hurling final (played by boys of course) then the two camogie games combined. One of the tabloids had the "Definitive" GAA 8-page supplement of

the weekend's activities – I failed to find anything on the All Ireland Club Camogie finals.

A rough estimate 120 women have dedicated a huge part of their lives to get to these finals, a lifelong dream fulfilled. Supported passionately by their communities. When the male equivalents took place, pages were dedicated, and the participants lionised and idolised.

I have no doubt if these wonderful, beautiful young women from Waterford, Offaly, Derry and Galway had paraded around in all their finery they would have made the front page along with a dedicated supplement. All the better if they were on the arm of some sportsman even if he had never achieved what they had achieved.

A visit to Inphoto's web page will illustrate what they failed to share.

https://inpho.ie/app/WebObjects/Shop.woa/wa/s?cl=-V4LC8ILcbtaSfy9kYsavw..a&ts=7axVllleBz67pYuu9FY8xYhlF2kfc3No0Mw5f_q-0nI.a

The coverage of women's sports in that edition is approximately 1%. The following day they gave the same reporting space to a Leinster schools rugby semi-final – played by boys of course. The Monday edition of the paper had an article by Emily Hourican about low esteem in women (advertised on their front page) plus a page on International women's day. Hypocrisy?

The other significant consequence is that sponsorship is harder to attract as sponsors do not get the same return for their investment. A vicious circle needs to be shattered.

Progress is being made. 20*20 is good. But their plans are based around a 20% increase in a 4% share. This will take too long. Estimates of the money going into sponsorship for female sports are as low as 1% of the total. This is 2020, the third year of the 20*20 initiative and here is where we find ourselves.

My October 2019 issue with RTE Sunday Sport on radio was along the same lines. Little or no coverage of women's county finals but whole programmes dedicated to the male equivalent. As I said at the time if it was a race issue, we would have had uproar. In Waterford you had siblings participating in both, they sat down to breakfast together but what a difference in how the media treated them. On one of the weekends I attended three (two senior and one intermediate) camogie county finals in Waterford and Cork – no mention on the National airwaves.

I worked through the RTE complaints process (first an email to the programme – no response, then their feedback route, was told I may not get any reply so onto formal complaint – received a reply from Deputy Head of Sport defending their position and then onto the National Broadcasting Authority (you cannot complain about what was not broadcast 😊 I was told).

I ended up writing to genderequality@justice.ie (two emails in November) citing the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 featured on the front page of the Department of Justice and Equality webpage.

I referred to Objective Three - Ensure the Visibility in Society of Women and Girls, and their Equal and Active Citizenship.

Opening sentence – “Women and girls continue to be less visible than men and boys in key areas of Irish life, such as in sport or in arts.”

But alas no response. Nice concepts but no teeth. Worth noting Section 3.10 designates the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland with the responsibility to take action.

My two examples are typical. So please do not see them as a gripe about incidents close to my heart. These are two I am very familiar with, they are representative and I'm sure you will get the same story from all the other sports. It's a fundamental issue of equality and current responses to the problem are totally inadequate.

I can provide more backup to both incidents if you are interested.

- 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 responsibility to fix this in the first instances rests with the state. Resources should be set aside to monitor the imbalance and to hold those responsible to account. What gets measured gets done. Treat it as we would treat it if it was on grounds of race.

There are lots of policies in place, but too much of it is aspirational. What I do as opposed to what I say I do.

Let's get some serious measures in place. Invest and encourage some Master's/PhD students to evaluate and report on the current situation and come up with some ideas.

Set money aside for the various organisations to engage in PR etc.

Implement what was committed to in the 2017-2020 National Strategy. Great ideas in there.

<http://justice.ie/en/JELR/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 - 2020.pdf/Files/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 - 2020.pdf>

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.

The failures highlighted above in section 1 result in less opportunities for female sports personalities to participate in media work when they finish playing. So, another door is closed or left open minimally.

- 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.)

Same as answer to question 1. Implement previously agreed policies, measure and hold the stakeholders to account.

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.

- 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.)

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.

- 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.)

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 -----
- Education -----
- Politics and public life -----
- Media -----
- Caring for others -----
- Other – please elaborate -----

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

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

If there is any supplementary information or documents that you would like to submit as part of your consultation, please send this to info@citizensassembly.ie, with 'Public Consultation Supplementary Information' in the subject line, along with your name to allow us to correctly match any documents with your submission.