

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

## QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30109

Name: Sex Workers Alliance Ireland

### **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.

Sex work laws: evictions, deportations and imprisoning of vulnerable including pregnant women. Police using condoms as evidence. Comprehensive Sex education. Intersex surgeries/ FGM and lack of follow up care, appalling trans healthcare or lack thereof.

- 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.)

End brothel keeping arrests and evictions where there is no pimp involved. Full decrim, stop using condoms as evidence, end IGM, increase healthcare for trans and intersex folk, increase accessibility to mental health service, make college up to PhD affordable for all, provide comprehensive sex education

### **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.

A lack of Affordable third level education, lack of education and awareness/exposure

- 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.)

Make third level education all the way to PhD affordable for all. Full decriminalization for sex work. More programming and advertising, campaigning challenging stereotypes and undoing our harmful past

### **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.

Lack of Affordable childcare, our history of forcing the poor to have children and the culture that was born of it

- 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.)

Provide free quality childcare and continue to unravel our dark catholic misogynistic past

## **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.

lack of accessible third level education for all, cultural stigma and barriers against progression

- 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.)

Provide affordable third level education to PhD to all and encourage working class women to embrace it

## **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 4
- Education 3
- Politics and public life 2
- Media 1
- Caring for others 6

- Other – please elaborate

7

Ireland continues to persecute it's most vulnerable, sex workers and trans folk, migrants.

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

It's easier to fix these problems from the top down as the harm comes from the top down in the form of punitive government, police and education, media

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

It's great that Ireland is progressing but tragic that some of those involved such as Frances Fitzgerald are instrumental in the persecution of our most vulnerable and see us as an acceptable sacrifice

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Feminisation of poverty is a huge issue. Lack of child care, unpaid care work, low wages for women and trans people, domestic violence and uneven domestic duties all contribute to this and are exacerbated by gender.

- 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.)

Access to good quality education and child care, more domestic violence shelters, housing supports, equal pay, better supports for carers

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**Theme 4: Women's access to, and representation in, public life and decision making**

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Marginalised women are not listened to about the reality of our lives. For example sex workers, who are an extremely disenfranchised group who are almost invisible in Irish society were ignored in the formulation of the laws around sex work in Ireland in 2015. This has led to increased violence, a 92% increase and a plummet in trust in the Gardaí.

- 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, policymakers and service providers need to listen to the key populations they are trying to serve.

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- Media 5
- Caring for others 6
- Other – please elaborate 7

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

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

The feminisation of poverty had led more and more people into sex work. The law is failing them and making us less safe. Sex work is work that is often gendered because care work is gendered and because single parenthood often falls on the mother. The Nordic Model of sex purchase criminalisation has made sex workers invisible in Ireland, we are being silenced by the law. Gender norms about sex work mean that men and their specific needs are often left out of sex work.