Moving Forward, Shoulder to Shoulder

Strategic Plan

2013 - 2016

The Irish Men’s Sheds Association is a registered charity in Ireland.
Charity No: CHY 19928
Company Registration No.: 493940
Registered address: 83 Dominic’s Place, Waterford, Ireland

Patron: President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.
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The Irish Men’s Sheds Association Strategic Plan is a plan for action for the years 2013 – 2016. The plan provides direction for activities from June 2013, to the end of 2016. The plan contributes to achieving a shared vision for all stakeholders, and provides a tool to ensure a shared and informed structure for work which the organisation will carry out over the next few years.

The strong network of Men’s Sheds in Ireland will be core to the next 3 years of IMSA’s work, as there is now a strong voice for the Men’s Shed movement throughout Ireland which cannot be ignored. Coupled with the passion among our members for the Association and the Men’s Shed movement in Ireland, IMSA are in a very strong position to move forward as a sustainable organisation; there is strength in numbers and conviction.

A potential external obstacle to the long-term success of IMSA in supporting the Men’s Sheds movement in Ireland may be lack of funding to carry out our planned activities. To date, this has not been the case – we have achieved all of our core plans and targets, and have been successful in a number of key funding applications. We will go from strength to strength in this area and overcome obstacles by implementing several funding strategy strands, maximising income through various sources, maintaining a reserve and building on our strengths.

The strengths of IMSA are our positive and transparent reputation in delivering on targets and maintaining a clear ethos and vision to our work which is understood as providing valuable contribution to individuals, communities and society. As an example Fianna Fail recently published a policy document on Suicide Prevention, “Actions Speak Louder than Words, A Structural Approach to a Societal Issue”, which noted the key role which IMSA has in society. The document stated that “many men simply cannot cope with the strain they are under and act on their suicidal thoughts. The concept of the “Men’s Sheds” ran by the Irish Men’s Shed’s Association is taking the right direction in terms of it being impractical and unrealistic to expect men to gain benefit from the traditional model. As such, it aims to include men into community projects, reducing isolation, building camaraderie, a closer sense of community, and inadvertently encouraging the men to talk to one another.”
The Irish Men’s Sheds Association (IMSA)

Purpose
The Irish Men’s Sheds Association was formed to support the development and sustainability of Men’s Sheds in Ireland.

Vision
“A future where all men in Ireland have the opportunity to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing by taking part in a community Men’s Shed.”

Mission Statement
The Irish Men’s Sheds Association will; support communities, organisations and individuals who wish to establish a Men’s Sheds, support the sustainability of Men’s Sheds, and share information freely between Sheds.

What is a Men’s Shed?
A Men’s Shed is a dedicated, friendly and welcoming meeting place in the community where men come together and undertake mutually agreed activities. Men’s Sheds are open to all men regardless of age, background or ability. It is a place where men can share their skills and knowledge with others, learn new skills and develop existing skills. The men who are part of a Men’s Shed have ownership of the projects and decide their own programme of events.

From a number of men restoring furniture to perhaps restoring bicycles for a local school, or maybe fixing lawn mowers; if you looked inside Men’s Sheds, you will see both young and older men learning new skills from each other and maybe also learning something about life from the men they are working with.

In a Men’s Shed, men can ask for information they need and try new things. A Men’s Shed is not a formal training programme but men gain new knowledge and skills from taking part. A Shed is not a health programme but health and wellbeing does improve for men taking part, by keeping physically, mentally and socially active; connected to their community and the world.

In February 2013, ‘Men’s Sheds in Ireland; Learning through Community Contexts’, by Dr. Lucia Carragher of Dundalk IT, was published. This research provides evidence on who is participating in Men’s Sheds in Ireland, and with what outcomes, and reports a clear improvement in health and wellbeing for the men who take part in Men’s Sheds in Ireland, relating primarily to increased social networks through taking part in a Men’s Shed. The report also indicates that “IMSA plays a significant role in supporting the development of Sheds in Ireland”.

In February 2013, ‘Men’s Sheds in Ireland; Learning through Community Contexts’, by Dr. Lucia Carragher of Dundalk IT, was published. This research provides evidence on who is participating in Men’s Sheds in Ireland, and with what outcomes, and reports a clear improvement in health and wellbeing for the men who take part in Men’s Sheds in Ireland, relating primarily to increased social networks through taking part in a Men’s Shed. The report also indicates that “IMSA plays a significant role in supporting the development of Sheds in Ireland”.
IMSA’s Achievements and Outcomes to Date

The Irish Men’s Health Policy which was published in December 2008 was the first policy in the world to identify that the Men’s Sheds model is an ideal way to promote men’s health and well-being in community settings. The first Men’s Shed in Ireland was officially opened in Tipperary town in August 2009.

In October 2010, John Evoy and a group of interested individuals formed the Irish Men’s Shed Forum, an unincorporated temporary body which existed as an informal group who wished to promote the development of Men’s Sheds in Ireland. At this point there were 7 Men’s Sheds in existence in Ireland.

In January 2011 the members of the Irish Men’s Sheds Forum formed a new structure, a company limited by guarantee; The Irish Men’s Sheds Association (IMSA). The Irish Men’s Sheds Association has achieved far beyond initial goals and expectations which those involved in the organisation had. Since January 2011 we are very proud that our organisation has;

• Supported the start up of over 100 new Men’s Sheds across Ireland
• Increased our membership to 132 Sheds
• Secured funding from the Arthur Guinness Fund, the Ireland, Funds, The HSE, etc,
• Supported over 35 Volunteers to be involved in our organisation; Men’s Shed Advocates and Board Members
• Developed a great reputation and high levels of good will and commitment within our organisation
• Introduced societal knowledge of Men’s Sheds
• Secured international recognition from Ashoka Changemakers as an innovative model for improving health outcomes
• Secured inclusion in several national policy documents in Ireland including the National Men’s Health Policy 2008, HSE published document Suicide Prevention in the Community, respective Fianna Fail Policy Documents on Suicide Prevention and Human Rights for Older People.
Strategic Priority 1 - Support the Growth of New Men’s Sheds
IMSA will work together with individuals, communities and appropriate organisations, in supporting the start-up of new Men’s Sheds in Ireland, throughout all areas of the country, specifically through the availability of services, supports and resources from our organisation.

Strategic Priority 2 - Provide Effective Services to Men’s Sheds
IMSA will continue to develop and provide effective supports and services to Men’s Sheds in Ireland which meet their needs, effectively assist Men’s Sheds in Ireland to gain the maximum benefit of these supports and services, and facilitate Men’s Sheds to actively contribute to the organisation on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Priority 3 - Continue to develop a healthy, transparent, effective and efficient Organisation
IMSA will continue to facilitate the growth of an effective and efficient organisational structure to support the growth of Men’s Sheds in Ireland including a work environment, policies and systems which will enable IMSA to effectively deliver on its key objectives and achieve the strategic priorities during 2013 – 2016.

Strategic Priority 4 - Raise Awareness and Understanding of the Men’s Shed Model
IMSA will continue to strive for significant positive impact at society level. Through engaging in consistent positive PR opportunities, IMSA will generate widespread understanding that the different approach which the Men’s Shed model takes to men’s health and wellbeing is one that works, one which is needed in Irish society, and one which can be effectively and efficiently implemented for long-term positive outcomes for Irish society.
Irish Men’s Sheds Association
Key Actions 2013 – 2016
Strategic Priority 1 - Support the Growth of New Men’s Sheds

IMSA will work together with individuals, communities and appropriate organisations, in supporting the start-up of new Men’s Sheds in Ireland, throughout all areas of the country, specifically through the availability of services, supports and resources from our organisation.

Objective 1.1
Provide a system of mentoring, information and advice to individuals, communities and relevant organisations who are interested in setting up a Men’s Sheds in their community.

Key Performance Indicators:
By the end of 2016, IMSA will have supported the start of, in total, 400 Men’s Sheds through one of more of;

- Local information workshops on Setting up a Men’s Shed, in collaboration with local service providers and communities
- Complete the development the App “How to Set up a Men’s Shed” during 2013 and ensure effective dissemination
- Continue to develop the Men’s Shed Advocates Panel (ensure the support for, and availability of, skilled Volunteers) through the provision of on-going training and development opportunities, to a minimum of 2 relevant training opportunities per year 2013 – 2016.
- Continue to develop and deliver the annual opportunity “Men’s Sheds Start-UP Grants” as a key support mechanism
- Continue to support the work of Local Development Company’s, Family Resource Centre’s, County Councils, Nursing Homes, Men’s Health Organisations, and other relevant agencies who are setting up Men’s Sheds in Ireland, and including Men’s Sheds as part of local development plans to combat social exclusion of marginalised men and unemployed men.

Objective 1.2
Ensure on-going dissemination of information on the Men’s Shed model, to the wider public in Ireland, in order to promote further awareness of what a Men’s Shed is, the benefits, and best practice in setting up a Shed.

Key Performance Indicators:
- Dissemination of quarterly IMSA Newsletter to all stakeholders, in both online and hard copy format, including highlighting the key aspects of the Men’s Shed model (e.g inclusive)
- Develop a Communications and PR Strategy in 2013 and implement each year, to include Equality measures to ensure equitable dissemination of IMSA information to all communities (working together with national bodies representing marginalised groups and special interest groups, including older people & young men age 18 - 30)
Irish Men’s Sheds Association
Key Actions 2013 - 2016
Strategic Priority 2 - Provide Effective Services to Men’s Sheds

IMSA will continue to develop and provide appropriate supports and services to Men’s Sheds in Ireland to meet their needs, effectively assist Men’s Sheds in Ireland to gain the maximum benefit of these supports and services, and facilitate Men’s Sheds to actively contribute to the organisation on an ongoing basis. ‘Men’s Sheds in Ireland; Learning through Community Contexts’, by Dr. Lucia Carragher of Dundalk IT, reports that “IMSA plays a significant role in supporting the development of Sheds in Ireland”.

Strategic priority 2 for IMSA is to develop is our direct services to Men’s Sheds in Ireland. In the recently published research report (Carragher, 2013), a question was asked, “What services should IMSA provide?”. There was agreement that IMSA should provide advice and support (100%), advice on useful resources was also considered important (90%), as was networking (86%), policy development and training (76%), campaigning (69%), lobbying (69%), consultancy (59%), the development of standards (59%), and dispute resolution (31%). In 2013, the 125 Men’s Sheds registered to IMSA are very clear on the support that they require from us. As such, we are now in a position where we need to diversify to provide new services such as Training, as well as maintaining and growing all aspects of IMSA’s current service provision to Sheds (including Support and Advice, Useful Resources, Small Grants, Networking, IMSA Website). Providing more opportunities and events for Sheds to come together is a key aspect of growing our service development, and creating an environment where Sheds learn from each other, share ideas face to face, and as such empower each other to create a space which is healthy and happy for all their members.

Objective 2.1
Develop and provide training opportunities for local Men’s Sheds which will enrich the ability of the Men’s Shed to provide a safe, comfortable and positive space for men taking part.

Key Performance Indicators:
• Provide opportunities for representatives from each Men’s Shed in Ireland to take part in regional workshops/training in the areas of;
  • Governance
  • Sustainability (fundraising, grant applications)
  • Men’s Health and Wellbeing
  • Health and Safety
  • First Aid
  • Conflict Resolution
  • Equality/Social Inclusion

• By the end of 2016, IMSA will have supported 400 Men’s Sheds in Ireland to be inclusive, safe and positive spaces for over 20,000 men taking part.
Objective 2.2
Provide a variety of low or no cost resources for Men’s Sheds, which support Sheds in their local activities, and develop new resources as required by Men’s Sheds in Ireland.

Key Performance Indicators:
- Provide localised promotional materials to each Men’s Shed, to support equality of access, and visibility. (To include leaflets/flyers, badges, caps, pins, stickers, hi-viz vests, t-shirts)
- Low-cost insurance in collaboration with BHP Insurance

Objective 2.3
Provide a system of mentoring, information and advice to Men’s Sheds in Ireland.

Key Performance Indicators:
- Facilitate free, regular Men’s Shed Representatives meetings for information sharing and networking opportunities among Men’s Sheds, to include a minimum of one meeting per region per annum.
- Host a National Conference for Men’s Sheds in Ireland
- Develop two networking opportunities per year for Shedders across Ireland to come together
- Continue to develop [www.menssheds.ie](http://www.menssheds.ie) in response to Men’s Sheds information requirements and requests, to include on-line resources for download and links to relevant sites, including in relation to unemployment, men’s health and wellbeing (unique information section), bereavement, older people, suicide prevention in the community, younger men.
- Deliver a Health and Wellbeing Programme for Men’s Sheds, to be developed by IMSA Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, following participation in the HSE ENGAGE Training Programme.
- Together with Turn to Me, facilitate online a programme of no-cost counselling (group and one to one) specifically for Shedders.
Objective 2.4
Facilitate, and evaluate, an Awareness Raising Programme for gatekeepers in suicide prevention/mental health promotion within our organisation during 2014 – 2016;

Key Performance Indicators

- Raise awareness among members of local Resource Offices for Suicide Prevention – roles and contact details
- Annual delivery of SafeTalk and Assist for IMSA Staff, Men’s Sheds and Shed Advocates within each region, as needed
- Deliver Suicide Prevention Workshops as part of Regional Men’s Shed Network Meetings (4) during 2013, with funding from ESB Electric Aid Ireland.
- Bereavement Support - IMSA’s provision of information will involve the dissemination of literature, directories and resources for those bereaved by suicide, or those wishing to support the bereaved, to Men’s Sheds in Ireland. This will include the use of leaflets, posters, booklets, factsheets and through internet www.menssheds.ie (including links to information websites).
- Information on Where and How to Get Help? - IMSA’s provision of information will involve the dissemination of literature, directories and resources outlining where and how to get help, to Men’s Sheds in Ireland. This will include the use of leaflets, posters, booklets, factsheets and through www.menssheds.ie (including links to information websites and linked specifically to Objective 2.3 and projects such as Turn to Me programme)
- Raise awareness among member of relevant community guidelines to members (eg. Suicide Prevention in the Community, A Practical Handbook)
- Develop and maintain international suicide prevention and research links through membership of bodies such as the International Association for Suicide Prevention and other relevant networks so that IMSA can learn from, and contribute to, international best practice in suicide prevention and mental health promotion for men.

Objective 2.5

“Facing the Challenge-The Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men’s Health in Ireland” (IPH, June 2011) indicated the vital role played by organisations and projects operating within the community – where a first point of access can be provided for men in a secure and trusting environment. In recognition of this report and the needs of our members, IMSA will facilitate, and evaluate, an awareness raising programme for Men’s Sheds, in the area of maintaining wellbeing during challenging economic times;

- Ensure each Men’s Sheds is resourced with appropriate information; literature, leaflets, signposting to services to be available for Shedders experiencing financial difficulties/debt/stress due to unemployment or low income
- Facilitate a training programme for gatekeepers in Men’s Sheds across the country, for those interested in being a volunteer contact equipped to listen, and signpost others to appropriate services (MABS etc.)
Irish Men’s Sheds Association  
Key Actions 2013 - 2016

Strategic Priority 3 - Maintain an Effective and Efficient Organisation

IMSA will continue to develop an organisational structure, work environment, policies and systems to enable IMSA to effectively deliver on its key objectives and achieve the strategic priorities during 2013 – 2016. To continue to deliver a high level of outcomes for all stakeholders, and support the growth of the Men’s Sheds movement in Ireland efficient and effective organisational processes and systems will continue to be, and consistently, applied within IMSA. In this regard, this priority will focus on enhancing organisational resources (human, finances, IT, communications, knowledge, skills) within IMSA, to ensure a sustainable organisation that is performing at a high standard. Underpinning this strategic priority is ensuring growth in IMSA’s organisational income. In order to achieve our impact targets within the next 3 years, an increase in funding each year is required. To achieve this we are setting about implementing our Funding Strategy which diversifies from our current funding model to include a range of strategies as well as maintaining a Funding Application approach as a core strand.

Objective 3.1
To ensure effective human resources (staff and volunteers) within the Irish Men’s Sheds Association that will enable the organisation to deliver the Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016 to a high performance standard.

Key performance indicators:
- Secure and allocate adequate funding to ensure a Full-Time CEO position for IMSA
- Secure and allocate adequate funding to resource additional 2 Full-Time positions; Administrator and Shed Supports and Services Manager.
- Facilitate on-going training opportunities for volunteer Shed Advocates
- Facilitate on-going training opportunities for the IMSA Board of Management

Objective 3.2
To ensure adequate financial resources within IMSA to carry out the Strategic Plan to a high standard of delivery.

Key performance indicators:
- Implement IMSA Funding Strategy to include
  - Strand 1 Funding Applications
  - Strand 2 Sponsorship
  - Strand 3 Fundraising
  - Strand 4 Sale of Advertising/ Sponsorship Space
  - Strand 5 Registration Fees and Sale of IMSA Merchandise (to our members)
  - Strand 6 Vendability Project – in collaboration with Hand on Hearts Enterprise
  - Strand 7 Proposal to Government
Objective 3.3
To ensure effective and efficient organisational systems and communications (internal and external).

**Key performance indicators:**
- Ensure the standards set within Governance Code
- Key internal systems reviewed and enhanced as required (e.g. finance)
- Accessible and user-friendly website with regularly updated information and publications
- Development of effective dissemination strategy for IMSA
- Newsletter distributed quarterly to all relevant stakeholders including funders
- Implement the Quality Standards on Bereavement Support, as an information provider

Objective 3.4
To develop www.mensheds.ie as a high quality website for information and dialogue for all stakeholders

**Key Performance Indicators:**
- Enhance IMSA resources available on-line at www.mensheds.ie
- Maintain on-line resources as guides in best practice in Men’s Shed start-up and other issues/policies relevant to Men’s Sheds.

Objective 3.5
To develop and implement necessary strategies, to support staff and volunteers in delivering on the Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016 and subsequent annual work programmes of IMSA, and nurture a positive work environment for all.

**Key Performance Indicators:**
- Human Resources Strategy developed, and implemented
- Human resources policies reviewed and updated as required
- Performance Management and Development System developed in line with good practice.
- Volunteer Policy developed and implemented

Objective 3.6
To ensure the effective delivery of all statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

**Key performance indicators:**
- Adherence to all financial and governance requirements, including annual audit of financial statements and dissemination of Annual Report.
- Health and safety processes, systems and practices updated and implemented where appropriate.
- Implementation of an agreed effective organisational performance framework
Strategic Priority 4 - Raise Awareness and Understanding of the Men’s Shed Model

IMSA will continue to strive for significant positive impact at society level. Through engaging in consistent positive PR opportunities, IMSA will generate widespread understanding that the different approach which the Men’s Shed model takes to men’s health and wellbeing is one that works, one which is needed in Irish society, and one which can be effectively and efficiently implemented for long-term positive outcomes for Irish society.

Objective 4.1
Raise public and political awareness of the Men’s Sheds model by generating and disseminating clear information on the impact and outcomes of Men’s Sheds as an innovative solution to the needs of men in Ireland.

Key Performance Indicators

- Publish and launch an effective IMSA Annual Report each year 2013 – 2016
- Facilitate a follow-up study to Dr. Carragher’s 2013 Research Report on Men’s Sheds in Ireland, focusing in particular on the health and wellbeing outcomes for men taking part in Men’s Sheds.
- Support local Men’s Sheds to engage in positive PR opportunities at a local level
- Engage with local, regional and national media opportunities
- Maintain IMSA website, Facebook page and Twitter account to a high standard in order to raise awareness of the on-going positive activities of IMSA and Men’s Sheds throughout Ireland
- Promote a positive image of men and men’s health, including dialogue around the benefits of taking part in Men’s Sheds for positive mental health through social connectedness, engaging in lifelong learning and taking part in community (a sense of belonging).
- Disseminate evidence-based information on Men’s Sheds and men’s health promotion, through media
- Recognise the ‘Media Guidelines For Reporting Suicide and Self-harm’ (IAS/Samaritans) and refer any media enquires in relation to male suicide and self-harm to these guidelines and national research.
The Irish Men’s Sheds Association will monitor the success of this inaugural Strategic Plan through a number of ways, to include;

- IMSA will regularly review the achievement of the objectives and key performance indicators outlined under the three Strategic Priorities outlined within the plan.

- IMSA will develop and implement annual work plans and review the same quarterly, specifically monitoring key performance indicators.

- IMSA will maintain ongoing and regular engagement with our stakeholders, including Men’s Sheds Reps, Shed Advocates, men who are taking part in Men’s Sheds (‘Shedders’), through direct and indirect contact at local, regional, national and on-line forums such as the AGM, Regional Shed Reps. Meetings and our website.

- In addition, during 2016, IMSA will commission a research piece which will provide a follow-up study to the 2013 Research Report by Dr. Carragher
Guiding Principles in IMSA’s Work

At IMSA, at all times we carry out the work and activities of the organisation through the following principles:

- Men’s Shed provide a safe space, and a welcoming and supportive place where men are encouraged to have a sense of belonging, and friendship.

  Each group of men taking part in a community Men’s Shed are encouraged and supported to realise their own potential and to take responsibility and ownership for their own Men’s Shed and its possibilities.

- Each local Men’s Shed which is a member of the Irish Men’s Sheds Association retains its own autonomy, except on matters relating to membership of the Association.

- The passing on of skills, traditional and new, is a key aspect of community Men’s Sheds. Each Shed member should see himself as teacher and as a learner in their Shed. Different men will possess varying degrees of skills professional and practical which will encourage the community learning possibilities. Each man brings his own particular individuality, skills and limitations to their Shed and should be fully respected and acknowledged.

- There should be a clear anti – bullying policy within each Shed.

- Community Men’s Sheds have an emphasis on informal learning. An atmosphere of ‘doing stuff together ‘having fun, creating a buzz should prevail.

- Men’s Sheds are both urban and rural. We will respect the place a particular group of men comes from, its uniqueness and possibilities.

- IMSA and its members are not affiliated to any political or religious grouping, and are not-for-profit.
The Irish Men's Sheds Association is a registered charity in Ireland.
Charity No: CHY 19928
Company Registration No.: 493940
Registered address: 83 Dominic's Place, Waterford, Ireland

Patron: President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.