Measuring Men’s Sheds - Barry Golding

Is there a standard way of ‘running a ruler’ over a Men’s Shed?

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(Comments are welcome by email)

Governments and other funding bodies would really like to be able to have a standard ‘Quality Assurance’ or ‘Outcome Framework’, in effect to ‘run a ruler’ over a Men’s Shed and check whether it is ‘up to scratch’. This brief article provides a possible, reasonably simple response about what such a framework might look like, and have ‘at its core’. It also urges some caution.

As all shedders know there is no one right way to run a ruler over anything. Whichever direction or dimension you measure, it will come up with a different answer. So too it is with a Men’s Shed.

So which basic dimensions of Men’s Sheds are most valuable?

I suggest two simple ways of measuring a Men’s Shed to ensure it provides quality outcomes for men and the community. Both can be asked as simple questions, and apply no matter where and what the main purpose or activity happens in the Shed.

“To what extent is the Men’s Shed inclusive and welcoming of all men?”

The main reason this question is important is that social isolation is the most important factor affecting health and wellbeing, at any age and in any situation. If a Men’s Shed and its shedders are not able to reach out to men from diverse background and needs, it is not fulfilling its full potential.

“To what extent does the Men’s Shed work with the local community?”

This question is important because no Men’s Shed is sustainable without understanding and supporting the community, and vice versa. Grassroots community organisations reap what they sow.

It is also important to consider the following when thinking about evaluations of sheds;
1. There is no simple ‘number’ that tells you how a particular Men’s Shed measures up against either of these questions (or against other Men’s Sheds). Since all Men’s Sheds are different, ‘a one-size-fits-all’ survey or evaluation method is neither desirable not possible.

2. The two questions above might be not only asked of shedders, but also of people (men and women) in the community. The questions would be best framed as an ongoing conversation.

3. Surveys and evaluations, using these two questions as a starting point, will be most valuable if shedders are consulted from start to finish of the process.

4. It is possible to ask (and answer) other useful and informative questions about the Men’s Shed, that the Shed, the community, governments and funding organisations want answered. This is possible and desirable because Men’s Sheds, like a table or chair, have multiple dimensions. The more dimensions and outcomes you value and therefore factor in, the more you will come to understand its form and function.

IMSO Consultation Survey

Background
There are currently approximately 1,700 Men’s Shed in operation, across 10 countries serving and estimated 85,000 men.

IMSO Vision
Our vision is to support the wellbeing of 1 million men by 2022 by supporting the development of the Men’s Sheds Movement across the globe.

In order for us to best meet the needs of the Men’s Sheds community globally we are currently collecting the ideas and opinions of key stakeholders which will help inform how our organisation develops over the coming months and years.

Please note that we don’t expect you to answer all questions; just the ones you feel you have something to say, and that you think we need to hear.

Please visit the following link and complete the questionnaire. It should take about ten minutes of your time. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JZZYNJ6

It is our hope that we will receive at least three completed questionnaires from each country

The deadline for the completion of this questionnaire is the 31st of August 2016

Thank you for participating in this consultation.

Irish Men’s Sheds Association Celebration 2016

As mentioned in our previous newsletter IMSA will hold its bi-annual celebration of the Men’s Sheds movement in Belfast in October 2016.

The main event is a conference on October the 22nd with complementary events planned for the entire weekend.

These events will include a round table event for the representatives of the national bodies which will be held on Friday the 21st of October.

A tour to visit a number of Men’s Sheds in the area will take place on Sunday the 23rd of October.

The full program of events is available from celebration2016@menssheds.ie
Men’s Sheds in New Zealand - Ray Hall

The men’s shed concept was quickly copied from across the Tasman by men in New Zealand with 3 sheds opening between 2007 – 2009. Since then the number of known sheds or new shed projects has grown to 100+. Sheds vary from those providing facilities for men only through to community sheds.

These sheds have all been established in the absence of any specific government funding, relying on grants, donations and income for their ongoing existence.

Early moves in 2010 to establish a national association were finally completed in 2013 with the formation of MENZSHED New Zealand Inc. An entirely voluntary organisation, it exists to assist with the development of new sheds and facilitate public access to those sheds, primarily through the website http://menzshed.org.nz/.

To meet the objective of facilitating public access to sheds, the website hosts both member and non member sheds.

MENZSHED NZ has adopted a “hands off” approach to membership, there being no standard constitution or requirement for sheds to participate in national programmes. Membership costs NZD25 p.a. and provides sheds with benefits such as a group shed insurance scheme and product discounts.

To minimise the cost of running the national association, the association is a registered charity and as such is able to participate in the Google not for profit programme. This provides free cloud based email, office software tools and data storage and has enhanced the operation of the association.

MENZSHED NZ holds a biennial conference, the most recent being held in South Island near Christchurch. The picture is of a woodturning demonstration, held as part of the conference. The conference theme of “Diversity, Collaboration and Health” recognised the variety and independence of sheds in NZ and the collaboration that does go on at a local level between sheds and with other agencies.

Planning for the next conference has started and it is currently scheduled to be in Auckland, 2nd quarter of 2018.

Courtesy, Ray Hall, Chairman MENZSHED New Zealand

About IMSO

The International Men’s Sheds Organisation is a project funded by the Australian and Irish Men’s Sheds Associations with an aim of supporting the development of Men’s Sheds globally.

Contact details:

Project Director: John Evoy

Email:    imso.johnevoy@mensshed.net
Tel:    + 353 87 7743 665

If you have any ideas for articles for his newsletter, please let us know and we will try to include it in future issues.
The following is a list of the contact details of the Men’s Sheds Organisations around the world, in alphabetical order. If there are incorrect or out of date please let us know and we will amend them for our next issue.

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<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
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<td><a href="http://www.mensshed.org">www.mensshed.org</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:amsa@mensshed.net">amsa@mensshed.net</a></td>
<td>1-300-550-009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Australian Men’s Shed Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Junction NSW 2291</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>1-204-832-0629</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canadian Men’s Shed Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>129 Woodhaven Blvd, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3J</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@menssheds.ie">info@menssheds.ie</a></td>
<td>+353 (0)1 891 6150</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish Men’s Sheds Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>1st Floor, Civic Offices, Ballymun, Dublin 9</td>
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</table>
**New Zealand**

Website: [Www.menzshed.nz/](http://Www.menzshed.nz/)

Email: secretary@menzshed.nz

Tel: (64) 03 5224560 or 027 8822448

**MENZSHED® New Zealand**

Roger Bowman, Secretary

4960 Motueka Valley Hwy

RD 2 Wakefield

NEW ZEALAND 7096

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**Scotland**

Web: [www.scottishmsa.org.uk](http://www.scottishmsa.org.uk)

Email: info@scottishmsa.org.uk

Tel: +44(0)796 403 6821

**Scottish Men’s Sheds Association**

Wester Mains, Campfield, Aberdeenshire, AB31 4DR

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**Sweden**

Web: [www.shedimalmo.wordpress.com/](http://www.shedimalmo.wordpress.com/)

Email: amsa@mensshed.net

Tel: 1300 550 009

**Please note that this is the first Shed in Sweden, rather than a national association.**

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**UK**

Web: [menssheds.org.uk](http://menssheds.org.uk)

Email: contact@menssheds.org.uk

Tel: +44(0) 7933954061

**Please contact the UKMSA by email**

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**USA**

Web: coming soon

Email: GSears@Stanfordalumni.org

Phone: +1 (808) 373-6140

343 Hobron Ln, Apt. 3503

Honolulu, HI 96815 USA

**Please note that this is the first Shed in USA, rather than a national association.**

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**Wales**

Web: [www.mensshedsцымру.co.uk/](http://www.mensshedsцымру.co.uk/)

Email: info@mensshedsцымру.co.uk

Tel: +44(0)1267 225536

**Please contact Men’s Sheds Cymru by email**