

Older People Interest Organisations and Collective Action in Ireland: A Comprehensive Exploration

Older people interest organisations (OPIOs) play a vital role in advocating for the rights and interests of older people in Ireland. These organisations represent a diverse range of older people, including those from different socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and geographical locations. OPIOs provide a range of services and activities, including information and advice, advocacy, support groups, and social activities. They also work to raise awareness of the issues facing older people and to promote positive ageing.

Collective action is an important tool for OPIOs in achieving their goals. By working together, OPIOs can amplify their voices and increase their impact on policy and decision-making. Collective action can take many forms, including lobbying, campaigning, and organising protests. OPIOs in Ireland have a long history of collective action, and they have played a key role in shaping policy and legislation on issues such as pension rights, healthcare, and housing.



The politics of old age: Older people's interest organisations and collective action in Ireland

by Martha Doyle

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History of OPIOs in Ireland

The first OPIO in Ireland was the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament (ISCP), which was founded in 1982. The ISCP was established to represent the interests of older people in Ireland and to provide a voice for them in policy-making. In the years since its foundation, the ISCP has grown to become one of the largest OPIOs in Ireland, with a membership of over 100,000 people. Other major OPIOs in Ireland include Age Action Ireland, the National Council on Ageing (NCOA), and the Irish Association of Senior Citizens (IASC).

OPIOs in Ireland have played a key role in shaping policy and legislation on issues affecting older people. For example, OPIOs were instrumental in the development of the National Policy on Ageing (2009), which sets out the government's vision for a society that values and supports older people. OPIOs have also been involved in the development of legislation on issues such as pension rights, healthcare, and housing.

Structure and Activities of OPIOs

OPIOs in Ireland vary in terms of their structure and activities. Some OPIOs are national organisations, while others are local or regional organisations. Some OPIOs are membership-based organisations, while others are open to all older people. OPIOs typically provide a range of services and

activities, including information and advice, advocacy, support groups, and social activities.

Information and advice services are an important part of the work of OPIOs. These services provide older people with information on a range of topics, such as pension rights, healthcare, and housing. OPIOs also provide advice on issues such as legal rights and financial planning.

Advocacy is another important activity of OPIOs. OPIOs advocate for the rights and interests of older people at local, regional, and national levels. They work to influence policy and decision-making on issues such as pension rights, healthcare, and housing. OPIOs also work to raise awareness of the issues facing older people and to promote positive ageing.

Support groups are an important part of the work of many OPIOs. These groups provide older people with a safe and supportive space to share their experiences and concerns. Support groups can also provide older people with information and advice on a range of topics.

Social activities are another important part of the work of many OPIOs. These activities provide older people with opportunities to socialise and make new friends. Social activities can also help to reduce isolation and loneliness among older people.

Collective Action by OPIOs

Collective action is an important tool for OPIOs in achieving their goals. By working together, OPIOs can amplify their voices and increase their impact

on policy and decision-making. Collective action can take many forms, including lobbying, campaigning, and organising protests.

OPIOs in Ireland have a long history of collective action. In the 1980s, OPIOs played a key role in the campaign for a state pension for all older people. In the 1990s, OPIOs were involved in the campaign for the of a free travel scheme for older people. In recent years, OPIOs have been involved in campaigns on issues such as pension rights, healthcare, and housing.

Collective action by OPIOs has been successful in achieving a number of positive outcomes for older people in Ireland. For example, OPIOs have been instrumental in the development of the National Policy on Ageing (2009), which sets out the government's vision for a society that values and supports older people. OPIOs have also been involved in the development of legislation on issues such as pension rights, healthcare, and housing.

Challenges and Opportunities for OPIOs

OPIOs in Ireland face a number of challenges, including funding issues, the need for greater diversity and inclusion, and the need to engage with older people in rural areas. However, OPIOs also have a number of opportunities, such as the growing number of older people in Ireland and the increasing awareness of the issues facing older people.

Funding is a major challenge for many OPIOs in Ireland. OPIOs rely on a variety of funding sources, including government grants, membership fees, and donations. However, funding is often insecure and can fluctuate from year to year. This can make it difficult for OPIOs to plan and deliver their services effectively.

The need for greater diversity and inclusion is another challenge facing OPIOs in Ireland. OPIOs need to ensure that they represent the interests of all older people, including those from different socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and geographical locations. However, OPIOs often struggle to engage with older people from marginalised groups.

The need to engage with older people in rural areas is another challenge facing OPIOs in Ireland. Rural areas are home to a growing number of older people, but OPIOs often struggle to reach these people. This is due to a number of factors, such as the lack of transport and the isolation that can be experienced in rural areas.

Despite these challenges, OPIOs in Ireland have a number of opportunities. The growing number of older people in Ireland is one such opportunity. As the number of older people increases, so too will the demand for services and support from OPIOs. This presents OPIOs with an opportunity to grow and expand their services.

The increasing awareness of the issues facing older people is another opportunity for OPIOs in Ireland. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the issues facing older people, such as ageism, discrimination, and poverty. This has led to a greater demand for OPIOs to provide services and support to older people.

Recommendations for Future Development

The following are some recommendations for the future development of OPIOs in Ireland:

- Increase funding for OPIOs to ensure that they can plan and deliver their services effectively.
- Increase diversity and inclusion within OPIOs to ensure that they represent the interests of all older people.
- Engage with older people in rural areas to ensure that they have access to services and support from OPIOs.
- Collaborate with other organisations to achieve common goals.
- Develop innovative new ways to reach and engage with older people.

OPIOs play a vital role in advocating for the rights and interests of older people in Ireland. Through their work, OPIOs help to ensure that older people have access to the services and support they need to live full and active lives. Collective action is an important tool for OPIOs in achieving their goals. By working together, OPIOs can amplify their voices and increase their impact on policy and decision-making.



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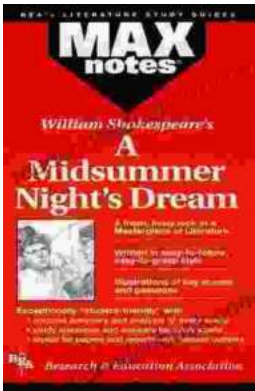
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