

## **“Creativity through Consultation” Strategy 2008-2011**

*Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity*

**Article 31, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

# Creativity through Consultation

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## PREFACE

“Theatre feeds the heart and nourishes the soul and enlarges the spirit” so writes Philip Pullman the gifted novelist. He goes further and says, “Children need to go to the theatre as much as they need to run about in the fresh air..... The difficulty with persuading grown-up people about this is that if you deprive children of shelter and kindness and food and drink and exercise, they die visibly, whereas if you deprive them of art and music and story and theatre, they perish on the inside, and their starvation doesn’t show.”

At Replay we are keenly aware of the phenomenal benefits children and young people gain from theatre and the arts therefore we remain committed to producing quality theatre and its related activities for young audiences. This strategy has once again been designed to ensure Replay’s ability to deliver, remain sustainable and to highlight to ‘grown ups’ how, with support, we can nurture our children’s hearts, souls and spirits helping to provide well rounded human beings capable of feeding positive, useful and creative energy into our society.

Replay has developed this new strategy against a continued decrease in statutory funding and increase demands on these funds combined with the potential shifting in the landscape of statutory bodies. In acknowledgement of this changing climate the company has expanded key strategic partnerships to aid in the realisation of its vision. But Replay is not content to watch cuts in the investment in the arts in Northern Ireland without championing their cause. Economically the arts in Northern Ireland provide employment, generate income, encourage tourism and help to raise the overall profile of Northern Ireland on an international platform. Any reduction in support for the sector will have a damaging impact on the moves to build a fairer, more equal society, which engages the talents of its most vulnerable members. Investing in arts for our children is investing in our future.

In 2007/08 Replay entertained, educated and stimulated **10,475** children and young people in Northern Ireland through live theatre performances and participatory workshops. In addition Replay produced and distributed an interactive resource to every school in Northern Ireland reaching a potential audience of over **60,000**. We strive to build on this- extending the boundaries of the quality of the work we produce and the young people we access.

‘Creativity through Interaction’ has evolved through an intense process of strategic review and planning. In evaluating the company’s progress over the last number of years the Management and Board of Replay are once again heartened by the progress made and inspired by the new challenges yet to be met. This document launches the company into the next exciting period of consolidation and consultation through a journey of imagination and exploration.

This document is a testament to the dedication, creativity and hard work of Replay’s board, management and freelance workforce as well as the numerous children and

young people and those adults who work and care for them who continue to benefit from engaging with the company.

Much has been achieved and much remains to be achieved.

## **COMPANY ACTIVITY**

Award winning Replay Productions is a professional educational theatre company based in Belfast. Established in 1988, Replay is dedicated to providing high quality theatre for children and young people throughout Northern Ireland, and to supporting and inspiring the adults that work with, and care for them. All projects provide unique curriculum support, encourage increased understanding, development and learning (at school level and in life skills) and promote concepts of cultural identity and diversity.

Through an extensive touring programme of theatre productions with free supplementary resources (around 2 - 3 every year), drama workshops, residency and training projects (1 – 2 each year), Replay underpins its commitment to accessibility. By touring to schools, youth/community centres, theatres and arts centres the company provides unique opportunities for children in all communities (of different religious, political and economic backgrounds, and in both urban and rural areas) and of all abilities (including those with physical or learning disabilities) to experience professional theatre as audience members and participants.

Replay encourages skills development by promoting new writing for young audiences and nurturing Northern Ireland's indigenous talent - its writers, designers, performers and composers. More recently the company has begun working on long-term residency and workshop projects, exploring teacher skills development and the uses of drama in positive behaviour management in Belfast schools.

The Company is also pro-active in supporting the work of other arts organisations, the arts sector and particularly those working for and with children and young people. Through a plethora of networks and partnerships Replay has been able to promote not just its own work but the work of indigenous organisations locally, nationally and internationally.

## **COMPANY STRUCTURE**

Replay Productions is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The company is managed by a team of 2 full-time and 2 part-time members of staff. Day-to day responsibility for the management and programming of the company, lies with the Artistic Director (Richard Croxford) who is supported by Development Manager (Eimear Henry), Operations Manager (Fiona Bell) and Administrative Officer (Irene Swift). The staff answers to a voluntary Board of Directors –

Jim Strange (Chair), Joe Kelly, Rachael Kennedy, Cathy Law, Jim McCarthy, Sheelagh O’Kane, and Jemma White.

All other staff are employed on a project to project basis and Replay, due to its level of activity, has a reputation as a significant employer of local talent. As a resident theatre company in The Old Museum Arts Centre Replay enjoys a supportive relationship with staff and management of the venue. It is with much anticipation that Replay looks forward to developing this relationship further and to making the move to The Mac in the coming years

**Arts Council of Northern Ireland** revenue funding remains crucial to Replay. This funding enables the company to maintain affordable charges to young audiences – both in schools and arts centres. However, due to the cuts in the recurrent budget for the arts handed down from DCAL the company is aware that this funding stream is not guaranteed to continue at this level. In recent years **National Lottery Funding** (dispensed through ACNI) of arts projects has played a significant part in the company’s work. **Belfast City Council** continues to support the company under its Annual Funding Programme, providing the necessary support to make Replay’s work publicly available in the city. To this end, the company has worked with the Culture & Arts unit to maximise the benefit of the relationship to both organisations.

Replay is tireless in its efforts to increase the levels of private and in-kind sponsorship to ensure sustainability. Recent corporate partners have included **Telereal, Consarc Design, Firmus Energy and Diageo**. The company continues to foster strategic partnerships with statutory bodies such as the **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**, which afford access to previously untapped funding streams and essential advice and guidance. In particular Replay would like to recognise the phenomenal support provided by the **Lloyds TSB Foundation’s** 6 year Creating Change Programme.

## Strategic Review

### In Summary...

The following key points were agreed:

- Replay would strive to produce three theatre productions each year.
- Replay would refocus the artistic direction of the company with added emphasis on Replay's role as a touring company. This would mean a scaling back on additional services such as workshops and training.
- Replay would increase the number of projects specifically designed for special schools.
- Replay would continue to produce projects designed to raise the profile of the company but this would be in addition to the programming of primary and secondary school tours.
- The board of Replay endorsed plans to take up residency in the Mac..
- Replay would research, create and implement audience development plans to nurture and increase core audiences- schools and family based audiences.

### Creative Programme

Replay will strive to deliver the following -

One **primary** school tour each year

One **secondary** school tour each year

One **special schools** specific tour once every three years

One innovative **profile** production once every three years

One **Artistic Director's choice** once every three years

A programme of workshops each year- **Theatre Squad**

**Mission**

*Replay provides high quality professional theatre that entertains, educates and stimulates children and young people.*

**Vision**

*To produce a programme of work acclaimed for its innovation and excellence, thus enhancing the stature of Replay and of professional theatre for young audiences in Northern Ireland.*

**Values**

*Replay Productions believes that the company's management and activities are underpinned by three core values.*

**Quality**

*Replay will strive to ensure that creativity is underpinned by quality through the delivery of a challenging programme of work and to adhere to standards of 'best practice' in the governance and management of the company.*

**Efficiency**

Replay will strive to maintain the highest standards of efficiency in all areas of company business. Working effectively within the company's resources the company strives to deliver the highest standards in projects, services and management practices.

**Integrity**

Replay will seek to ensure that all work both creative and operational is underpinned by integrity. Replay is committed to openness of process and opportunity ensuring that children and young people remain at the heart of the company's working ethos.

Following a strategic review Replay has identified both strengths and opportunities to be built upon and consolidated as well as a need to develop effective contingencies and plans to address organisational weaknesses and external threats.

Furthermore the company has concluded that due to an unfortunate lack of additional support for producing companies from external agencies Replay must develop its own methods of analysis to ensure that all decisions-strategic, operational and creative- are based on current, reliable and accurate data.

The company feels that following the success of Knowledge through Interaction, Replay must enter a period of consolidation and consultation. As the company celebrates twenty years of producing theatre, this is both a time for reflection and renaissance. In this new strategic period Replay will undertake comprehensive stakeholder, market and product analyses.

As Replay Productions enters this new strategy 'Creativity through Consultation' with operational and creative targets for the next two years, the company has identified three key strategic aims.

- 1) to ensure the excellence of the creative work produced by the company
- 2) to maintain and increase the accessibility of the company's work
- 3) to raise the profile of the company in the Arts, Education and Public sectors

To achieve these aims the company has identified a number a key strategic priorities and objectives

**AIM: To ensure the excellence of creative work produced by the company**

Objective 1. To increase the financial sustainability of the company by:

- 1.1 Ensuring the organisation's running costs represent no more than 35% of total expenditure
- 1.2 Redirecting funds from core costs into company reserves by the following amounts

Year 1	£ 2,500
Year 2	£ 2,500
Year 3	£2, 500
- 1.3 Decreasing reliance on public sector funding. The percentage of income from this source should decrease by 5% over two years

Objective 2. To maintain, review and implement effective office systems by:

- 2.1 Maintaining and improving Replay's financial systems
- 2.2 Improving record and storage systems thus increasing office capacity
- 2.3 Maintaining and upgrading office technology

Objective 3. To maintain, review and implement effective personnel procedures by:

- 3.1 Implementing a performance management system for core staff
- 3.2 Reviewing current procedures for freelance staff
- 3.3 Implementing a Staff Development Plan

Objective 4: To maintain, review and implement all relevant company policies by:

- 4.1 Reviewing Replay's current policies on Child Protection, Health & Safety and Equal Opportunities
- 4.2 Exploring the feasibility of an organisational Risk Assessment Policy
- 4.3 Researching and implementing a new company policy on Data Protection and the Environment

Objective 5: To ensure 'best practice' levels of governance and management by:

- 5.1 Reviewing, assessing and developing the role of the board in achieving the strategic vision of the company
- 5.2 Ensuring compliance with all changes necessitated or recommended by the introduction of a Charities Commission to Northern Ireland

Objective 6: To establish a process of Research & Development as an essential part of Replay's Artistic Policy by:

- 6.1 Ensuring that the Creative Programme is informed by an awareness of trends and developments in theatre for young audiences.
- 6.2 Developing and creating at least one new creative partnership each year
- 6.3 Ensuring that Replay operates a system of quality control in all stages of product development
- 6.4 Identifying areas where specialist skills are required to build and develop products/markets and take steps to introduce those skills through training where possible
- 6.5 Ensuring that Replay accesses an extensive skills base by actively promoting an openness of process and opportunity

Objective 7: To increase the impact and sustainability of the creative programme through the highest standards of product delivery by:

- 7.1 Ensuring the effective management of each project in accordance with agreed targets
- 7.2 Ensuring the effective management of creative teams in the delivery of projects

- 7.3 Fostering a positive approach to receiving feedback from creative teams during the progress and delivery of projects

Objective 8: To assess the impact of Replay's work and increase the quality and relevance of future work by:

- 8.1 Receiving feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders
- 8.2 Continuing and expanding regular stakeholder analysis, evaluation and consultation
- 8.3 Developing a creative approach to receiving feedback from young audiences
- 8.4 Ensuring that feedback is effectively collated and utilised when planning future creative programmes

**AIM: To maintain and increase the accessibility of the company's work**

*Objective 9: To maintain and develop audience base through a 2 year period of research by:*

- 9.1 Collating and analysing data for period 2003-2008 in the following areas
  - Geographical spread
  - Demand for product
  - Volume of work
  - Touring information
- 9.2 Maintaining the geographical spread of touring productions
- 9.3 Ensuring that Replay's continues to produce a diverse programme of work including productions and workshops for primary and secondary school level.

Objective 10: To ensure the continued relevance and appropriateness of Replay's creative programme by:

- 10.1 (6.1) Ensuring that the Creative Programme is informed by an awareness of trends and developments in theatre for young audiences.
- 10.2 (6.2) Developing and creating at least one new creative partnership each year
- 10.3 (8.1) Receiving feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders

- 10.4 Consulting with teachers, Education and Library Boards and Government to ensure the credibility of work in light of advancements in the curriculum or general trends within education
- 10.5 Consulting with professionals responsible for the provision of youth services to ensure the currency and credibility of creative products designed to address issues relevant to young people
- 10.6 (8.2) Continuing and expanding regular stakeholder analysis, evaluation and consultation
- 10.7 (8.3) Developing a creative approach to receiving feedback from young audiences
- 10.8 (8.4) Ensuring that feedback is effectively collated and utilised when planning future creative programmes

Objective 11: Explore the dramatic form through a range of new media in the realisation of projects by:

- 11.1 (6.2) Developing and creating at least one new creative partnership each year
- 11.2 (6.4) Identifying areas where specialist skills are required to build and develop products/markets and take steps to introduce those skills through training where possible

Objective 12: To increase the provision of work for young audiences with physical and learning disabilities by:

- 12.1 Developing the skills of local arts practitioners in delivering projects for young people with physical and/or learning disabilities.
- 12.2 Consulting with focus group and/or professionals to examine the specific needs of the sector
- 12.3 Delivering a creative product for young audiences with physical and/or learning disabilities at least once every two years including a tailor-made touring production once every three years

**AIM: To raise the profile of Replay in the following sectors- Arts, Education and**

**General Public**

Objective 13: Develop meaningful and sustainable relationships with new and existing audience groups by:

- 13.1 Implementing of an effective evaluation procedure with schools, venues and general audience members
- 13.2 Establishing an Audience Development Policy and framework for its implementation including a specific action plan to address the decrease in Replay's family audiences
- 13.3 Maintaining and developing relationships with host venues especially the Old Museum Arts Centre
- 13.4 Maximising on-line identity and information dissemination
- 13.5 Develop partnerships with other arts organisations including theatre companies throughout the arts sector
- 13.5 Producing an innovative venue based show to raise the company's profile once every three years

Objective 14: Review existing relationship with primary and secondary schools by:

- 14.1 (9.1) Collating and analysing data for period 2003-2008 in the following areas
  - Geographical spread
  - Demand for product
  - Volume of work
  - Touring information
- 14.2 Consulting with key stakeholders and professionals within the Education Sector
- 14.3 Developing a Youth Board to consult about the currency and credibility of Replay's projects

Objective 15: Improve company profile amongst the media and the general public by:

- 15.1 Developing company PR/marketing strategy and framework for its implementation

- 15.2 Maintaining current standards of publicity materials ensuring that information is effective in content, style and distribution and that it appeals to the audiences targeted by Replay
- 15.3 Maximising on-line presence by re-launching website and exploring a variety of new media opportunities
- 15.4 Ensuring that the company is nominated for any appropriate sectoral awards

Objective 16: To develop key strategic relationships with decision makers/ funders by:

- 16.1 Maintaining and developing a small number of strategic partnerships with key funders
- 16.2 Examining and building relationships with private supporters- trusts and sponsors

*Objective 17: To ensure Replay's position as a key player and advocate for the provision of high quality arts for young people in Northern Ireland by:*

- 17.1 Continuing to have representation at board level in key strategic organisations such as NITA, UAYD, TYA UK, Theatre Shop*
- 17.2 Fostering relationships with non-arts organisations committed to developing the quality of life for young people in Northern Ireland such as NICCY, ELBs*
- 17.3 Ensuring representation and participation in sectoral meetings, lobbying groups, steering groups etc*

*Objective 18: To gain recognition as the leading developer and producer of new writing for young audiences in Northern Ireland by:*

- 18.1 Raising awareness of Replay's past successes and canon of work*
- 18.2 Delivering at least one production every two years based on a new writing commission*
- 18.3 Showcasing new writing through a variety of forms and development processes at least once every three years*

18.4 *Forging key partnerships with other arts organisations and stakeholders to increase accessibility and gain recognition for the relationship between new writing and quality arts for young audiences.*