



## **Evaluation Report**

**Project Title:** Leave It Out

**Descriptor:** Responsible Drinking Programme for Students

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**Compiled by:** Eimear Henry, Executive Director, Replay Theatre Company

**For comments or questions please contact us at [executive@replaytheatreco.org](mailto:executive@replaytheatreco.org)**

## **Contents**

<b>1.1</b>	<b><i>Executive Summary</i></b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b><i>About the programme</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b><i>About Replay</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b><i>Programme Objectives</i></b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b><i>Programme Overview</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b><i>Methodology</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b><i>Findings</i></b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b><i>Key Outcomes</i></b>	<b>9</b>
	<b><i>Appendix A: Resources</i></b>	<b>11</b>
	<b><i>Appendix B: Participation</i></b>	<b>12</b>
	<b><i>Appendix C: Feedback from universities</i></b>	<b>13</b>

## ***1.1 Executive Summary***

In August 2010 Replay began devising a creative programme to fulfill the following brief:

To deliver a Responsible Drinking Education Performance or Programme to students at Northern Ireland Universities; the performance will be delivered to students at Queen's University Belfast during Welcome Week and the University of Ulster during Freshers week, both w/c 20th September; to develop a concept around responsible drinking that communicates to students in a language and manner they can relate to; to engage students' imaginations and emotions with a concept that conveys key messages of responsible drinking, personal safety and making informed choices about alcohol in an interactive and challenging manner.

Replay engaged with the key stakeholders at the Students Union of University of Ulster, Jordanstown and Queen's University Belfast to prepare for the delivery of the programme.

Both qualitative and quantitative data confirms the levels of engagement of the student population with the programme.

Over 1500 students directly came into contact with the programme. A further 1500 were exposed to information through the distribution of beer mats in the Students Union bar. There were also over 1000 visits to the website, illustrating the impact of the project. This was largely due to the style and appropriateness of the programme, in particular the use of 'invisible theatre' as a method to engage the students.

Replay believes that the use of this style of theatre for what is both an educational programme and a form of social dialogue has phenomenal benefits for the student demographic. In future scenarios could be further developed and refined to ensure even greater clarity of message and lasting impact.

The report below sets out in detail the findings following a comprehensive evaluation process with stakeholders.

### ***1.2 About the programme***

In September 2010 Replay Theatre Company designed a bespoke 'invisible theatre' programme to address attitudes to Responsible Drinking among the student population at Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster, Jordanstown. This programme was delivered through a series of reoccurring scenarios on the respective campuses during the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010. Replay worked with a team of professional actors to deliver this project. The scenarios took the form of public arguments/ discussions/ 'happenings' in the Student's Union building, in the bar and throughout appropriate locations within the university grounds. Each scenario was created to explore a specific theme via improvisation through the rehearsal process to create a naturalistic feel.

### ***1.3 About Replay***

Replay is a theatre company inspired by the integrity of educational theatre and the power of storytelling. Transforming spaces into theatres for a day, we want to give all of Northern Ireland's children and young people their first opportunity to experience live theatre.

At Replay, we believe that theatre finds truth in discussion. By empowering their authentic voice, we aim to grow the possibility and potential of our young audiences. Established in 1988, Replay is dedicated to providing high quality theatre that entertains, educates and stimulates 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.

Replay receives revenue funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council and the Lloyds TSB Foundation's Creative Change programme. Replay delivers a comprehensive programme throughout the year and each element of this programme is independently fundraised from a diverse range of sources.

Replay is committed to ensuring best practice in the safeguarding of children and young people. Replay's Safeguarding Policy may be accessed via the company's website at [www.replaytheatreco.org](http://www.replaytheatreco.org) or copies are available from the designated Safeguarding Officer who can be contacted at [operations@replaytheatreco.org](mailto:operations@replaytheatreco.org)

#### ***1.4 Objectives***

##### **Student Community Engagement Objectives**

Replay's engagement with young adults within a student community sought to

- enhance their critical and emotional engagement concerning alcohol misuse,
- personalise their understanding of their choices with regards to alcohol consumption,
- empower young people to become attitude-formation leaders amongst their peers concerning responsible drinking.

##### **Project Objectives**

This programme was designed to

- critically explore the concerns of alcohol misuse in young adulthood through performance and participation,
- explore attitudes and expectations concerning alcohol in a peer and media led environment,
- generate both critical distance and emotional engagement on the effects that alcohol can have on their lives and relationships.

### **1.5 Overview of project**

In response to the funder's brief, Replay engaged the methods of Augusto Boal's 'Invisible Theatre' to create a higher profile and awareness of the issues surrounding responsible drinking among students.

The project was completed through the following stages:

*Research:* Replay carried out comprehensive research on the culture around students and alcohol.

*Development:* Replay designed and developed all aspects of the performance programme including script, resources and web presence.

*Training:* Replay recruited a team of performance trained facilitators. These actors completed bespoke training in the delivery of the programme.

*Delivery:* Replay created and delivered a number of 'happenings' that were performed on campus throughout the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> September.

*Evaluation:* The project was monitored at all stages and an evaluation framework created. A final evaluation report was created.

### **2.1 Methodology**

Invisible Theatre is a rehearsed sequence of events that is enacted in a public, nontheatrical space, capturing the attention of people who do not know they are watching a planned performance. The goal is to bring attention to a social problem for the purpose of stimulating public dialogue. Actors may include bystanders in the performance by drawing them into the discussion.

In this instance, we also subtly filmed the performances. These films were then uploaded onto the website created for the project. Immediately following the

performance, beer mats with the web address and campaign slogan were distributed to those watching. (A beer mat is in keeping with the theme of the piece while also being less disposable than a flyer.) As well as the uploaded videos the website also has further information on responsible drinking.

## **2.2 Findings Summary**

### **Quantitative**

#### **Immediate: Performance**

Fifty scenarios were performed over a week between the Student Union at Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

#### **Reinforcement & Impact: Beer mats**

1500 beer mats were distributed directly to students during the course of the performance week. In addition a further 1000 were given to the Speakeasy Bar within Queen's Student Union for continued use, which means that the profile of the project and the website will be sustained long after the performances have been completed.

#### **Website**

The website has proved successful with over 1000 hits to date, meaning that large numbers of students have viewed the videos and seen the information on responsible drinking.

### **Qualitative**

#### **Performance**

The performances remained very much in line with the ethos of 'Invisible Theatre' as established by Augusto Boal, the creator of the form. "A rehearsed sequence of events that is enacted in a public, nontheatrical space, capturing the attention of people who do not know they are watching a planned performance. It is at once theatre and real life; though rehearsed, it happens in real time and space and the actors must take responsibility for the consequences of the 'show.' "

The audiences reacted differently to what we had anticipated. Rather than gathering a large crowd, each scenario tended to reach those already present who would react in one of four ways:

- Watch attentively from a distance
- Pretend to ignore (while obviously listening).
- Seek to intervene, (for example in the scenario where a handbag is stolen)
- Edge away uncomfortably

As this was the case, we repeated the scenarios more times than originally intended, delivering a total of 50 separate scenarios, and revealed the performative nature of the pieces quickly following the climax of the scene.

In three of the fifty scenarios played, some of the observers claimed they had known it was a performance, due to the fact that they had seen the actors elsewhere on campus performing other scenes. However, in the vast majority of cases, all observers were absolutely unaware of the performative nature of the piece.

*“The goal is to bring attention to a social problem for the purpose of stimulating public dialogue. Actors may include bystanders in the performance by drawing them into the discussion.”*

This aim was undoubtedly fulfilled in that the effects of irresponsible drinking were displayed through the scenes, and bystanders reacted by discussing the issues raised. Some performances included interaction by observers, either through volunteering information, such as in a scene where a handbag was stolen in the bar, or by being drawn into conversation by the actors, for example in the scenario where they are offering accommodation. Reactions to the issue happened both during the scene and following the scene. So for example, in the scene where the actors sit with real students at a cafeteria, one group of students said that they didn't want to live with the actor 'students' as they drank too much and they'd never get any work

done, while following another scene, students reacted by agreeing that “I’d go mad too if someone broke my guitar while they were drunk”.

### **Website**

The main purpose of the secret videos was to attract students to the website where they would come across the information and tips about responsible drinking. As we have had almost 1000 hits on the website, we consider this to have been successful.

In some instances the students shown in the secret filming did not give consent for that film to be uploaded. In other instances, situations outside our control such as people standing in front of the secret video or loud ambient noise, meant that the film was not of a good enough quality to upload. Therefore, although 50 scenarios were filmed, 19 were uploaded.

### **Beer-mats**

Beer-mats proved to be an invaluable tool, both as a way to break into ‘the reveal’ by distributing them, and also as a physical, retainable reminder to visit the website.

## **2.3 Key Outcomes**

### *Challenged students behaviour and attitudes towards responsible drinking*

The programme clearly challenged existing attitudes to responsible drinking and the idea that the consequences of student life that involved alcohol misuse was both relevant and realistic for the bystander. The programme, presented real life examples of the effects of alcohol misuse.

### *Encouraged critical emotional engagement around the issues of responsible drinking*

The programme encouraged dialogue and discussion among the student population. It also took place at a time and place where the students could critically engage without being directly involved in the ‘happenings’.

### *Combated alcohol misuse amongst students*

The purpose of the programme was to get students thinking about their own choices. The scenarios set up these opportunities for engagement and then followed

up with the additional resources (beer mat & website) to ensure that there were future options open for support or advice.

*Communicated to students in an appropriate language that encourages discussion and avoids being seen to patronise or condescend to students*

The use of 'invisible theatre' ensured that while the programme delivered a serious message that the aims were met in an appropriate way that engaged students, avoiding any sense of condescension. The use of young actors also ensured that the programme was presented as credible and peer led.

Appendix A: Resources



—THE WARNING SIGNS—  
LACK OF FOCUS  
ALCOHOL POISONING  
To watch the secret video of this event visit  
**[www.leave-it-out.com](http://www.leave-it-out.com)**  
ACCIDENT  
PUTTING ON WEIGHT  
FINANCIAL STRAIN  
SECURITY

For the facts on alcohol and its effects  
visit [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)  
or talk to Frank on 0800 776600

Website Resource: [www.leave-it-out.com](http://www.leave-it-out.com)

## Appendix B: Participation

Total Number of Scenarios	8
Total Number of Performances	50
Total Audience	1500
Visits to Website	1004
Total Wider Exposure	2500

## **Appendix C: Feedback from University Representatives**

**Adrian Kelly, President of Students' Union, University of Ulster (UUJ)**

**Jay Downs, VP Community, Student's Union, Queen's University Belfast (QUB)**

**Why did you decide to host 'Leave It Out' within your student union?**

**UUJ:** We decided to host Leave It Out within our SU as we're very aware that the student demographic is particularly prone to alcohol abuse.

The project also provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to our stakeholders that we are taking a pro-active approach to combating alcohol abuse within the student community.

**QUB:** We wanted to engage with students about problems associated with drinking. It's important that students understand the consequences of their actions, and that they must be responsible when inebriated, and responsible enough not to get to a point where they lose control.

**Do you think the project was worthwhile in terms of communicating a message about responsible drinking?**

**UUJ:** We thought the project was very worthwhile in communicating the message. Afterwards, while walking around the Student's Union I could hear students discussing the performances and the issues raised in general conversation.

We're also aware that the website had a large number of hits which suggests to me that the students have taken it on board.

**QUB:** I thought the core messages were to the point and eye opening for students. There were concerns that students would only see a little bit of the sketch but didn't understand the concept or context.

**Do you think it was a valid method of delivering that message to students?**

**UUJ:** Yes – it was the method in which the message was delivered that really captured the student's attention. They are constantly targeted with poster campaigns, and flyers are easily discarded but the performances really seemed to capture their imaginations as they were visual and immediate.

We'd be keen to take part in this sort of project again.

**QUB:** I thought the project was worthwhile in reaching out to people. It is great to make people aware of the problems when they are in a state of mind to fully comprehend, however, if it could be backed up with static images or messages which could stay it would hopefully further reinforce the message.