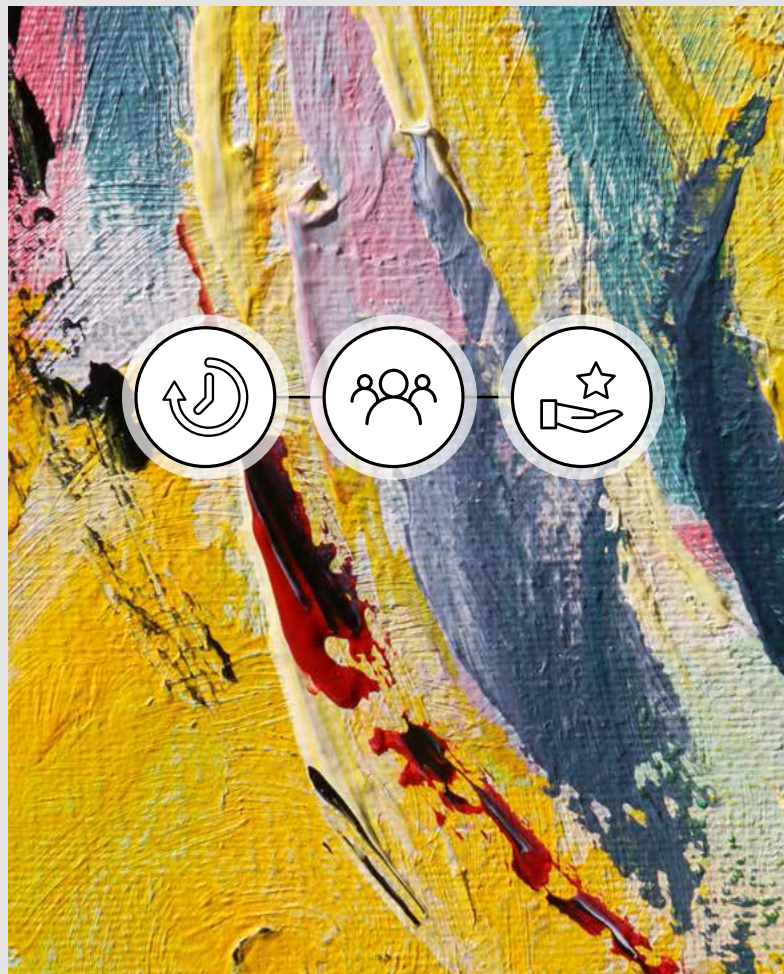




EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Strategic Plan 20-25

People Build Communities





FOREWORD



HISTORY & CONTEXT



MISSION

Theory of Change
What is Community Development?



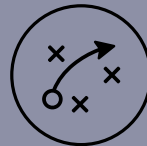
VALUES AND PRINCIPLES



STRATEGIC THEMES



MONITORING FRAMEWORK



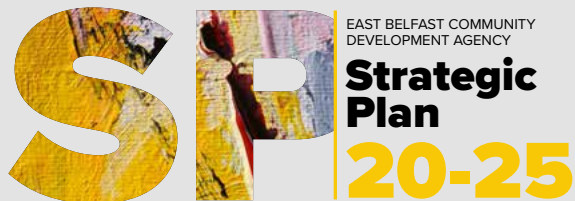
STRATEGIC LINKS



STRATEGIC PARTNERS



foreword



East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) is the “umbrella organisation” supporting community development in East Belfast.

Our membership is made up of community groups drawn from an area that contains just over 95,000 people. It is representative of a broad range of interests and needs within communities and encompasses a variety of groups, including residents' associations, faith based organisations, sports clubs, older people's projects and women's groups.



People Build Communities

The title of our Strategic Plan “**People Build Communities**” is carried forward from our 2015-2020 Strategy. It is a concept we strongly believe in and as a concept, it is something we experience every day, within our work and is based on the following key points:

- **Bricks and mortar** (buildings) are important to invest in, as they allow for delivery processes to be more comprehensive, but without people buildings will remain empty.
- **The community sector in East Belfast** needs to collaborate more in all that it does, recognizing our strengths, our weaknesses and the opportunities we have ahead of us.
- **We must exploit the opportunity to work with our funders**, our elected representatives, Government Depts and other statutory agencies in a meaningful, collaborative and transparent way that benefits everyone's agenda.



History & Context



In 2020 East Belfast Community Development Agency will have been in existence for 50 years. The organisation has experienced many changes in those 50 years.

History

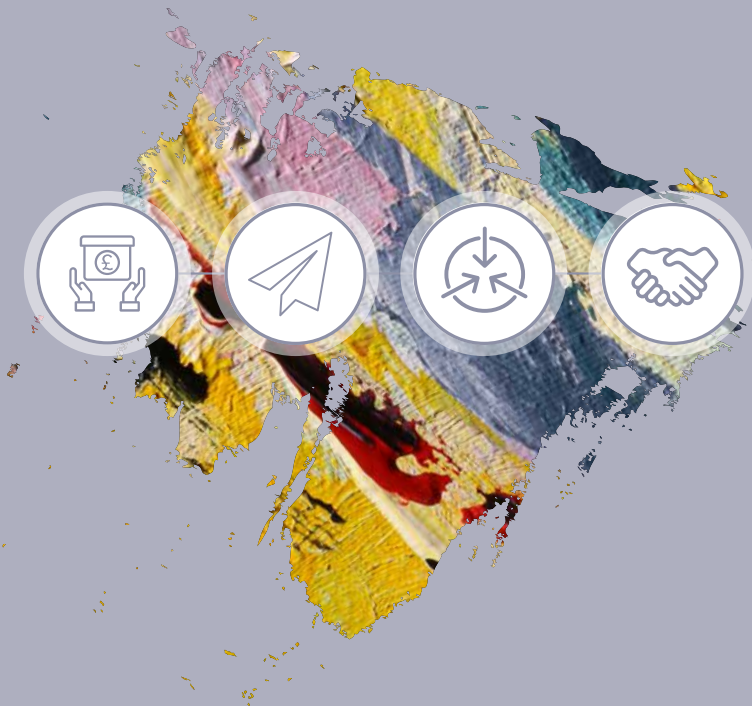
Started in 1970 by a small group of volunteers from the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) and the Boys Brigade and then entitled East Belfast Youth Council, its purpose was to create an alternative opportunity for young people in an attempt to prevent them getting caught up with the "troubles."

With funding from Belfast City Council in 1973 two staff were employed and the organisation became East Belfast Community Council to reflect other Community Councils in North, South and West Belfast. Whilst the organisation continued with a focus on young people, they also began to have more of a focus on Community Relations/Cross Community work and Community Development. A name change again in 1989 to East Belfast Community Development Centre, based on moving into newly refurbished bigger premises and persuasion, from Making Belfast Work (MBW), who funded the move. The name was changed to East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) in 1994 to better reflect the support role of the organisation to the community sector in East Belfast.

Context

EBCDA is operating in an environment than can be characterised by change, and uncertainty. While such change brings concerns and anxiety, over the past number of years this change and uncertainty has not been unusual within the sector. Though there are number of things which are different, these are

- **The financial context.**
- Potential move by some funders, from **grant funding to a tendering process.**
- **The pressure to deliver more with less.**
- The challenge of being a **delivery agent** in partnership with Government Departments and Statutory Agencies, while **remaining independent.**
- **The need to provide greater integration** between outcomes-based accountability (OBA), delivery, impact framework and streamlining the collection of evidence which can support concise reports illustrating what is being delivered and showing the added value that EBCDA brings to the sector.
- **Opportunities to work in partnership** with many Government Departments and Statutory Agencies.





Mission

Theory of Change

EBCDA's job is to add value to the activity undertaken by groups in local areas. We work with other key organisations to ensure the continued development of a community sector in East Belfast that is recognised, valued and effective. We seek to support successful community development, encourage reflective practice and promote cooperation and locally based solutions.

EBCDA exists to provide resources, support and capacity building programmes for community groups that are based upon partnerships, equal opportunities and sustainable outcomes.

What is Community Development?

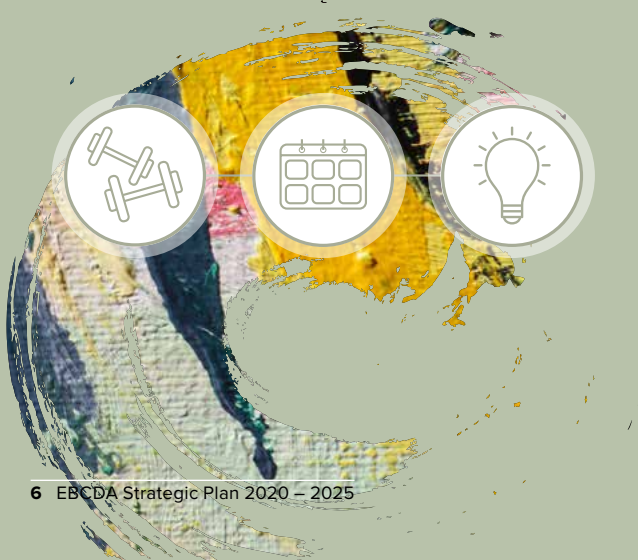
Community development is action that helps people to recognise and develop their ability and potential and organise themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong communities that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. It also enables community and public agencies to work together to improve the quality of government.

Community development is an occupation (both paid and unpaid) which aims to build active and influential communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect. Community development work is done in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities. It involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives.

Community development work involves working with communities to:

- **Identify their strengths, needs, rights and responsibilities**
- **Plan, organise and take action**
- **Assess the effect of any actions taken**

It involves working with agencies to increase their capacity to understand and work with communities. Communities can be based on where people live (geographic communities), or on a shared concern, issue or identity (communities of interest).





Values and Principles

Leadership

Encouraging the involvement of communities in decision making processes that affect their lives and their communities. Ensuring that the principles of community development are fundamental to successful regeneration in East Belfast. Encouraging equal access to a wide range of development opportunities for people living in areas of recognised disadvantage. Involving relevant Government Departments, Statutory Agencies and other key organisations in promoting community participation and consultation in developing policy and practice.

Participation

We will work proactively to ensure that people have the opportunity to fully contribute to, and share in, decision-making processes in relation to policies and programmes that will affect them.

Inclusion

We will support and promote work which builds communities that include groups and people that have been most marginalised.

Fairness

We oppose harassment, victimisation and prejudice of any kind. We are committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate against anyone within, or in contact with, the Agency on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, and responsibility for dependents, sexuality, age, economic status, religious or political belief or marital status.

Good Practice

We value learning from other places and will promote identified good practice amongst our members and other stakeholders.





Strategic Themes



Theme 1

Community Support & Capacity Building:

To assess the needs of the community sector and work with other key organisations to:

- recognise the principles and values of adopting a community development approach
- draw up support programmes that develop the community sector
- plan projects that lead to more collaborative working
- develop plans and strategies that build capacity
- advocate on behalf of and with communities
- seek to influence the policies of community, voluntary, government and statutory agencies



Theme 2

Community Resource & Finance Services:

To manage our human and physical resources and promote good financial management practice in the community sector by

- offering financial management advice and guidance
- providing financial training and support services
- providing a payroll and community accountancy service
- managing and maintaining East Belfast Network Centre
- ensuring the sector is up to date in charity compliance



Theme 3

Community Health Development:

To encourage, support and facilitate the provision of community health programmes and projects that.

- seek to influence the health policies of community, voluntary, government and statutory agencies
- promote and provide opportunities for health education and training
- support the community sector to recognise the value of adopting a community development health approach in their work
- builds the capacity of the communities in East Belfast to develop collective solutions to their health problems
- plan and deliver health projects that lead to more collaborative working





Monitoring Framework



At the start of our 2015-2020 strategic plan we committed to ensuring that the Agency had a proper recording system in place that provided us with a framework to record all our interventions and the impact of these. At each AGM we then reported on how this was helping us develop our work each year. Though it was a word-based intervention record form that was laborious and time consuming.

With financial support from Belfast City Council during 2018/2019 and expert guidance from NICVA, we have now developed a cloud-based recording system using Microsoft Dynamics 365. This has allowed us to have our 3 strategic themes linked to all our funders targets and each member of staff assigned to specific pieces of work and targets. We have also been able to link our database, calendars, emails, events registration and a new evaluation process into this system. This will allow us to be able to see how we are progressing against all or specific targets, on more regular and comprehensive basis and will provide us with more detailed information with which to report to our members as well as our funders.



Strategic Links

People Build Communities

In developing this Strategy, the Board and Staff of EBCDA have considered the contents and roll out of several documents, that will ultimately influence how we deliver and manage our work year on year, these are;

- Belfast Agenda/Community Planning
- Communities in Transition Programme
- Community Development National Occupational Standards (CDNOS)
- EastSide Urban Village Initiative
- Inner East Neighbourhood Action Plan
- Making Life Better – Strategic Framework for Public Health
- NI Programme for Government





Strategic Partners



Key Organisations

Whilst we will manage and deliver on our Strategy in East Belfast, though we recognise we cannot do this on our own. We see the following as key organisations in assisting us in the successful delivery of our Strategy.

- Belfast City Council
- Community Sector in East Belfast
- Department for Communities
- Department of Health
- Public Health Agency
- EastSide Partnership
- NICVA
- MP, MLA's and East Belfast Councillors
- The Executive Office

