

North Belfast Ethical Investment Impact Review

GRACE

Previously operating as Ardoyne Women's Group, Grace Women's Development Ltd was established in 1984 as a place to provide local women with greater access to information, training, advice as well as opportunities to build capacity and increase their skills through further education opportunities.

Over time, GRACE has also been involved with many other initiatives that impact on the local community and has worked closely with other bodies such as the local Health Action Zone and Community Empowerment Partnership (CEP).

It has also worked hard to provide women with a stronger voice in community organisations and greater representation on their boards.



What support has NBEI provided?

GRACE were referred to NBEI by the **North Belfast Social Enterprise Hub** who provided them with initial **mentoring** and **assistance** in helping them to develop their initial plans and ideas for a multi-use women's centre

NBEI provided GRACE with financial assistance to commission **two ground investigation reports**, access to **architectural services** and an **economic appraisal**. NBEI also jointly funded a **business plan** which was completed with Belfast City Council

In lieu of this initial NBEI support, Grace was awarded **£1.6 million** capital funding from Belfast City Council's **Belfast Investment Fund**. Long term this new multi-use centre will house a new childcare facility as well as multipurpose rooms for local community use

How has NBEI support helped and who has benefited so far?

Once completed and operational the Women's centre will create up to **20 new local jobs**. To ensure long term sustainability NBEI provided the project additional financial assistance for GRACE to recruit the services of a business mentor. The mentor has consulted and worked alongside the GRACE project team throughout the development process which has involved regular consultation with Belfast City Council. Drawing on their own experience the mentor has also provided guidance on various building management issues so that GRACE develops the capacity to manage the asset effectively in the long term.

"Without NBEI we wouldn't be where we are now having secured our capital funding. Their help allowed us to undertake work necessary to meet some of our funding and planning obligations. We are delighted with the help we received"