

introduction of a “charitable test”, new accounting requirements and stricter controls on street collections. Another important milestone was the launch of NIHACT’s logo. This is improving recognition of the Trust as the charity of the housing association movement in Northern Ireland. In 2008/09 the NIHACT Committee steadily pursued its strategy of supporting socially beneficial initiatives – especially those offering good prospects for sustainability. Once again,

the volume of grants awarded greatly exceeded NIHACT’s income so the Trust fund shrank. We thank the NI Housing Executive, Barclay’s Bank and a dozen housing associations for their generous donations. In the aftermath of the “credit crunch”, much less interest is being earned on the Trust fund so financial support from more housing associations and other organisations would be doubly welcome.

Northern Ireland Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust

Annual Report 2008 - 09

Extracts from NIHACT’s Audited Accounts for 08/09

Grants Awarded			
Council for the Homeless NI	£8,200	Integrated Village Development Trust	£2,500
Action MS NI	£6,940	Larne Community Care Centre	£2,480
Ballynahinch Shotokan Karate Club	£4,500	Cithrah Foundation	£2,060
Kairos Centre	£2,500	Beyond Skin	£1,500
Totals of Grants Awarded - £30,680			

Income Source			
Donations (12 Housing Associations)	£7,000	Donation (Barclays Bank Charities Aid)	£ 500
Donation (NIFHA Conference Dinner)	£1,002	Bank Interest	£9,922
Donation (NIHE)	£2,500	Total of Income	£20,924

Deficit: £13,391

Accumulated Fund as at 31 March 2009: £165,549

Charitable backing for:

- good practice;
- innovation;
- user involvement;
- quality of life for users;
- addressing unmet needs;
- a strong voluntary housing sector

The spectrum of need addressed by the Northern Ireland Housing Associations' Charitable Trust was wider in 2008/09 than previous years. £30,680 was invested to alleviate homelessness, physical disability and relationship breakdown, encourage good race relations and improve house-building techniques in India. A "seeding grant" helped the *Council for the Homeless (NI)* establish a social enterprise subsidiary offering management consultancy services. The initial client group will be voluntary organisations considering collaboration as a means of improving efficiency. The subsidiary's profits will be covenanted back to the CHNI, thus reducing its reliance on grants from public authorities.



NIHACT also gave the Council for the Homeless a small contribution towards an art project for homeless young

people and helped *Larne Community Care Centre* furnish its crisis accommodation for vulnerable families in east Antrim. In the field of disability, the Trust enabled *Action MS Northern Ireland* to simultaneously generate



revenue, engage the interest of young people and promote physical exercise! A grant from NIHACT purchased an adapted golf buggy that, for health and safety reasons, accompanies groups of schoolchildren undertaking sponsored walks in off-road locations such as forest parks. Recognising the important role of sport in promoting the social inclusion, NIHACT was pleased to assist *Ballynahinch Shotokan Karate Club*, which attracts many young people. The members now have the benefit of special interlocking

safety mats. In Newcastle an organisation called the *Kairos Centre* operates a drop-in centre used by Eastern European migrant workers and local people. Better furniture has been bought with money from the Charitable Trust. In addition, NIHACT released the last instalment of its grant to *Beyond Skin* – a project that brings teenagers of many races together to make and record music.

It is a regrettable fact that domestic violence mars many relationships in our society. Some years ago, the Trust helped the *Cithrah Foundation* establish a counselling service for victims in the Carrickfergus area and in 2008/09 made a further small contribution by funding the purchase of a photocopier. NIHACT's strategy is to help sustain communities in which Northern Ireland's housing associations are operating. Its constitution, however, allows it to undertake charitable work anywhere in the world and from time to time the Trust supports housing-related projects overseas. The NIHACT Committee was therefore delighted to fund research by *the Integrated Village*

Development Trust to recommend more cost-effective ways of building sound but affordable homes for the rural



population of Orissa, India. The construction techniques are firmly based on local experience, construction skills and building materials. The Trust received five applications for assistance in 2008/09. One was awarded a grant, another was offered an interest-free loan (which has not yet been drawn down), one was rejected and two were still being considered at the end of the financial year. A highlight of the year was the Assembly's passing of the Charities (NI) Act 2008: the most substantial change in Northern Ireland's charity law for decades. NIHACT welcomes all the main changes—the widening of the definition of "charity, the establishment of a Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and the