

GILBERT AGRICULTURAL & RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER



the
GARD
center

**Annual Report
Sept. 2017- August 2018**

**Strengthen
the
weak
hands
and
make
firm
the
feeble
knees
Isaiah
35:3**

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**GARD CENTER
ANNUAL
REPORT**

**SEPTEMBER 2017–
AUGUST 2018**

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Objectives, Vision and Mission

Objectives

To develop skills of men and women between the ages of 16 - 30 years, to be able to establish and operate viable farms or other agricultural and rural based enterprises, at a universally acceptable standard of living.

To encourage the formation and development of groups and other types of organizations amongst graduates of the GARD Center's training programs and to establish links with other existing local and regional organizations.

A sustainable institution through which young men and women are empowered to improve their living standards

To provide training programs that facilitate the development through life skills, agriculture, entrepreneurship, technical vocational skills and business development services

Message from the Vice Chairperson of GARD Center's Board of Directors



The GARD Center has been in service to the young people of Antigua and Barbuda for the past 28 years and can boast of having attained a reputation as the leading Non-Governmental training facility in the nation.

The Center has evolved out of a desire to raise the consciousness of the nation of the need for young people to consider Agriculture as a viable occupation and to expose vulnerable youth and women to a second chance at self-actualization through relevant training and the acquisition of marketable skills. From its humble beginnings as an Agricultural pilot project, the GARD Center has grown to offer training to in excess of 5000 young people in basic education

(numeracy and literacy) and life skills as well as in non-traditional occupations such as yacht maintenance, computer repairs, ground maintenance and customer service as well as various areas of Agriculture.

2017-2018 at the Center has been an extremely busy and eventful year. The Center, while it has dedicated itself to fulfilling its training mandate, has arrived at the end of the programme year on the WINDS OF CHANGE.

Mrs. Roberta Williams, the Center's first and only Executive Director to date and a founding member of the GARD Center has advised the Board of Directors of her pending retirement in 2018. In addition the Board bade farewell to Bishop Otto Wade and Rev Patmore Henry, the President and Secretary of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas. Both Gentlemen have served as Chairman and Secretary respectively of the GARD Center's Board.

It is pertinent therefore, to record the deepest appreciation on behalf of the Board of Directors: firstly to Mrs. Williams for her dedicated and selfless contribution to the GARD Center. On the Board we have all recognized that Mrs. Williams saw her role, not as a job, but rather as a MISSION, one which she carried out faithfully and which has redounded in no small way to the benefit of the many cohorts of trainees who have passed through the Center. Secondly to Bishop Wade who has served the GARD Center as Secretary then as Chairman for the past fifteen (15) years. Thirdly to the Rev. Patmore Henry as Secretary for the past five (5) years. The GARD Center has been the beneficiary of their sterling service and unwavering support.

It is now left to Mrs. June Jackson, newly appointed Acting Executive Director, to steer this ship. Mrs. Jackson has been an effective member of the GARD Center family since 2013. The Board echoes the sentiments of Mrs. Roberta Williams and extends to Mrs. June Jackson our sincerest wishes and support for her success.

This year at GARD Center could not have been the success it was without the dedicated work of the Administrative Staff and Tutors; the support of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and the MCCA; the many partners, local, regional and international who have assisted in providing financially and in many other ways towards the work of the Center.

We continue to give God thanks for the work he has wrought here at the GARD Center. We continue to solicit and anticipate the support and prayers of all.

J. M. Eusalyn Lewis
Vice Chair, Board of Directors

Executive Director's Message



“All the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely players, they have their exits and entrances and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.” As You Like It. Williams Shakespeare

With this being my time to exit and my last annual report for the GARD Center as the Executive Director, my 28 years have been an amazing journey, one that I will never forget. It has been a journey which has taken me to many countries across the world, meeting an array of dynamic individuals who share the same passion and commitment to the youth in this world, which has been my mission. There is so much work to be done to protect, elevate and empower our youth to face the many challenges of today's world i.e. increasing racial violence, the effects of climate change, massive people displacements, lack of food and water security, government corruption, widespread poverty and others. My journey has been blessed with staff, partners and volunteers who have supported the work of the GARD Center and given of their talents and skills which has had a tremendous effect on our youth and their successes.

I leave with much peace and satisfaction that my post and duties will be filled by a woman of great fortitude, Mrs. June Jackson. The GARD Center's legacy is on her shoulders now and may the God that I serve continue to bless her, the staff, trainees and friends of the GARD Center, moving them to new heights.

It was my pleasure to have served under Bishop Otto Wade, President of the MCCA Trust and Chairman of the GARD Center Board of Directors. Many thanks to the other members of the Board of Directors for your continuous support and the many kind words and gifts at my Retirement / Birthday Celebration Church Service. To God be the Glory. May we continue to Strengthen the Weak hands and make firm the feeble knees Isa. 35:3 of our youth.

I hereby humbly submit this report to the Bord of Directors.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roberta Williams".

Roberta Williams
Executive Director

2017 - 2018 Board & Advisory Committee Members

Board Members

Bishop Otto Wade.
Chairperson (completed
Term in June 2018)

Dame Euzalyn Lewis.
Vice Chairperson

Rev. Patmore Henry.
Secretary (completed
Term in June 2018)

Mr. Kirthley Maginley.
Member

Mrs. Maudlyn Richards.
Member

Mr. Neil Gomez. Member

Mrs. Denise Hodge. Member

Mr. John Mussington.
Member
[Barbuda]

Mrs. Jacqueline Yearwood.
Member

Permanent Secretary.
Ministry of Agriculture

Mrs. Roberta Williams.
Executive Director.
Member

Advisory Committee

Dr. Brian Cooper. Agricultural Consultant

Mrs. Kathleen Forde. Agricultural Consultant

Mrs. Jennifer Maynard. Agro-tourism Consultant to the
Ministry of Tourism



Highlights of Achievement for the Year

Partnership formed with the newly reorganized Antigua-Barbuda Beekeepers Cooperative

Australian Embassy-Trinidad forms a collaboration effort with GARD Center to train more youth in beekeeping and its added-value products

Mill Reef Fund, long standing partner donates \$US10,000

Bishop Otto Wade, President and Rev. Patmore Henry, Secretary of the MCCA Trust ended their terms in Antigua and Barbuda

Job Placement Officer, Mrs. June Jackson takes on the new Directorship, as Executive Director Ag.

Mrs. Roberta Williams Executive Director and one of the founding members of the GARD Center for over 28 years retires at age 70 years

Staffing & Staff Development

GARD Center welcomed a new staff member who was hired through the European Union/ GARD Center Project, Ms. Soyini Warner as Jr. Clerk /Admin. Assistant. During this period we also welcomed Mrs. Judy Dease-Richards, who has been assigned to the Center from the Ministry of Labour through its Work Program. Ms. Warner and Mrs. Dease-Richards works along with Ms. Tamesha Bryant, the Job Placement Field Officer. These ladies assist Mrs. Jackson in the Job Placement Program.

Table 1

Staff Member	Activity	Location/Dates
Roberta Williams (Executive Director)	2017 Global Youth Economic Opportunities Summit	Sept 27-29 Arlington, Virginia
June Jackson (Job Placement Officer)	Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2018,	Istanbul, Turkey, April 15-20, 2018
Joycelyn Humphreys, Project Manager	Human Rights & Civil Society Grants Award Ceremony	Barbados, Feb. 2018
Tamesha Bryant (Job Placement Field Officer)	World Festival of Youth and Students	Sochi, Russia, Oct. 14-22, 2017

Mrs. June Jackson in Istanbul, Turkey



Ms. Tamesha Bryant in Sochi, Russia



Courses

Table 2

Course	No. of Graduating	Starting Date
EU/GARDC Courses		
Agriculture (incarcerated)	4	September 2017
Information Technology (2)	39	September 2017
Professional Hospitality	25	April 2018
Customer Service	12	February 2018
Business Enterprise	9	February 2018

Internships / Job Placement Highlights

Internship opportunities were secured for 95% of the trainees in totality at the end of the training. The Job Placement Department has seen quite a number of placements for internship opportunities during the year Sept. 2017 - August 2018. Employers in over 12 organizations partnered with the Center to make the placements possible and successful.

Employers who supported the GARD Center Job Placement Program During this Period

• AUA	• Medical Benefits
• Kennedy's Club	• Unicomer - Employed
• Caribbean Airport Services	• Unicomer (Courts) Antigua Ltd
• Antigua Port Authority	• Lockhart Mendes & Co
• American University of Antigua	• Antigua-Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
• FLOW	• Lockart Mendes & Co
• Medical Benefits Scheme	• Mount St. John's Medical Centre
• Ministry of Public Works & Housing	• Pineapple Beach Club
• Royal Retreat Spa	
• Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa	

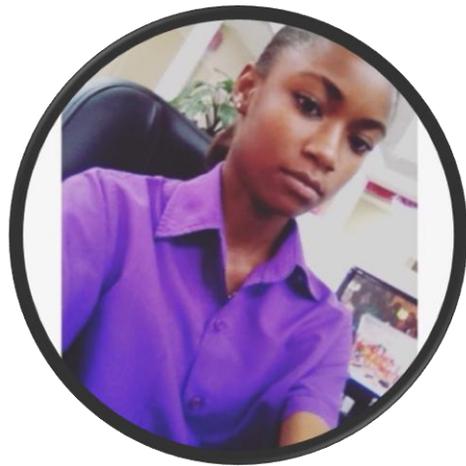


Success Story

Shadae Browne was placed on internship training at Mount St. John's Medical Centre as a Customer Service Representative in the Pharmaceutical Department. She is a very quiet and soft spoken individual and as we would say "her eyes speak with a SMILE". Her mid-training report conducted by the Field Officer echoed by Mr. Dave Bridgewater, her Supervisor, revealed that she was **MAGNIFICENT!!!** Her overall internship assessment rating was 100%. He further concluded that she shined a light in the Pharmaceutical Department especially at the window. Ms. Browne is very professional in her work and she has a strong penchant for learning.

Here is what Ms. Browne has to say:

"During my internship training at Mount St. John Medical Centre, I was a Customer Representative in the Pharmaceutical Department. At first I was really nervous because of my shy personality but I didn't let that get in the way of completing the task given by the Supervisor. It was a bit challenging dealing with some customers because some were really nice but the challenge came about when dealing with the not so nice characters but nevertheless I showed off what was taught at the GARD Center when dealing with those types of persons.



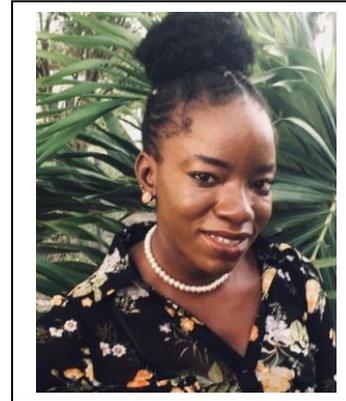
Truly I can now say I have gained a wealth of confidence and came out of my shell. This really helped me to perform better and interact more with other employees. The team taught me more about the process and duties in the pharmacy. I have also gained valuable friendships which will surely be remembered. I observed the task that a pharmacist does on a daily basis, some days were hectic but they still worked acidulously to get the task done and on time. I can definitely say I have gained a lot of experience during my internship. It

was surely an eye opener as a young lady whose goal from an early age is to become a Pharmacist. It was definitely worth the training opportunity!!

Joy-Ann Michael, Customer Service

After leaving school I found myself moving from job to job basically because they brought an income, however for me that wasn't enough.

I didn't stay at any job too long because I knew to myself that life had so much more in store for me. My last job was the final straw for me, I tried my best to stay there until better came, I did so all in the name of earning an income. Just a few months during my time there, deep down I felt stagnant, I felt oppressed, there was no doubt in my mind that being there I wouldn't advance in life, therefore I made the hard yet conscious decision to resign. After closing that door I registered with the One Stop Employment Programme. I sent applications to many places, I explored every possible option but nothing proved fruitful. Months passed and I figured that no opportunities would come my way, each time I called to check up on an application the answer was unsatisfactory, to be honest I began to lose hope.



When I first received the call about the Customer Service course offered by the GARD Center from One Stop Employment I was surprised quite frankly, I thought that they had placed my files in the archives, nevertheless I accepted. I didn't know what to expect from the course, Customer Service has never been an area of interest for me; however I went in with the willingness to learn. A bond was created between tutors and students and though professional, it aided an environment comfortable for learning. It appeared as though I was adopted into a new family. Each student was treated like he/she was the only student, special attention was given when needed whether it be because of problems with the course, another student or even at home. The tutors were always rather encouraging, their passion and their knowledge in their field was a driving force for me, I never had reason to question their credentials.

Based on the teaching offered during the course and my capability to apply them while on internship, I was seen as favorable. Therefore I was offered a permanent job. In my opinion attending and completing this course is one of the best decisions I've made in my life thus far as it has opened doors that I didn't think was possible before.

Projects

European Commission/GARD Center

Increasing Opportunities for At-risk, Probationary and Incarcerated Youth in Antigua and Barbuda



Cohort 2 in **Information Technology** was conducted with 15 trained and completed by January 2018. To date 5 have gained full time employment. Two more courses started in February 2018 with 20 trainees in **Customer Service**, 11 trainees for **Small Business Development**. In April, a new course in **Professional Hospitality Services** commenced with trainees from the Ministry of Labour Work Programme. This was initiated after discussions with this Ministry on letting GARD Center help in the training of the unemployed youth who register in their jobs' programme.

Eleven trainees completed **Small Business Development** and presented business plans in areas such as Taxi and Tours with women drivers, Fresh food mini mart, mobile cloth store, a Home for girls (NGO), and a funeral business specializing in cremation using the alkaline hydrolic system. Twenty-five completed the **Professional Hospitality Services** course, many who came from the Ministry of Labour work program. **Customer Service** course has 15 completed.

In July 2018, 15 participants started the **Basic Baking and Decorating** training course with 2 weeks of practical sessions at the Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute. Also in July, the **Information Communication Technology**, and **Professional Bar and Beverage Service** courses, started with 15 youth in each.

Prison re-entry program

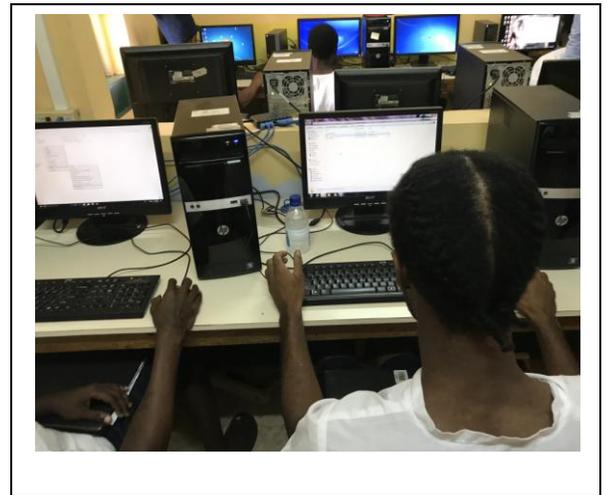
Major challenges have developed with the prison program as the Center faces head on the prison culture of punishment versus rehabilitation. Conditions deteriorated to such a level

that the enrollment of the first cohort was reduced from 11 to 3. A meeting had to be requested with the Attorney General. Lack of communication, poor transportation, lack of sensitivity for the inmates' welfare etc. were some of the issues discussed.

A second meeting was also called by the Attorney General with the Superintendent of Her Majesty's Prison and the Permanent Secretary to further highlight the problems that the Center was encountering and assurances were given that things would change for the better.

With the second cohort of inmates, seven were selected and training started in April 2018 in Plumbing and Carpentry, challenges continued which affected the final numbers who completed the program.

learning carpentry/computer literacy



United Methodist Women (UMW) - Women's Division / General Board of Global Ministries

Once again our valued partner the UMW has supported our efforts with skills training for vulnerable youth. These funds of \$US 8000 in 2017 and a commitment of \$US 10,000 for 2018 contribute to trainer fees, training materials, administrative fees, stipends for trainees in need and other necessities. These funds help to extend our programs and to meet the daily needs of operating this Center. Many thanks for this partnership which has continued over the years.

ICT Cadet Program

The Life Skills sessions for the government ICT Cadet Program continues. Many thanks to Mistresses Humphreys and Jackson who with passion and professionalism conduct these important sessions that have helped so many of the trainees deal with their personal challenges. These cohorts completed their terms in April 20, 2018.

Farm-to-Table Benefit Luncheon 2018

Where Cuisine Goes, Agriculture Follows:

The 4th Annual GARD Center's Farm to Table Benefit Luncheon once again drew a wide diverse crowd of persons from children to proud senior citizens of 90 years old. The food this year was definitely a winner amongst everyone from a sweet spiced Sorrel Mimosa welcome drink, to a nutty-gin cream soup, nopal salad, roasted leg of pork with pineapple cilantro sauce, stuffed chicken breasts with plantain mousse and rosemary sauce, marlin or lobster kebab, anti -pasta lasagna, assorted breads to name a few. To complete this mouth watering three course meal, goat cheese tarts, spicy chocolate samosa and sweet potato donuts. Does this not entice you to come next year?



All of this could not have been achieved without the many wonderful partners who share the mission of the GARD Center to touch the lives of our vulnerable youth in this Nation through holistic technical and life skills training programs and services. The GARD Center is indebted to the James and Maginley Charity and Care Foundation as the Premier Sponsor; Agricultural Producers; the Agricultural Extension Division; Fisheries Division; Goddard Catering who led a team of chefs from Jumby Bay Resort, Carlisle Bay, Curtain Bluff, Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa, and Flavas Restaurant, and of course the

Patrons of this event. His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams and the more than 280 guests who supported the luncheon, a sincere thank you.



Ministry of Trade: Small Business Development Center project

The Executive Director has been involved in a series of planning for the National Small Business Development Center (SBDC). As a selected satellite center, the GARD Center is being placed in a position to offer business advisory services through funding that is being proposed by the Government. If this funding materializes, a Business Development Officer will be hired or seconded in the program. Both Mistresses Ephraim and Jackson have been trained in the specialized data base system which will store all the info on the clients and provide valuable statistics.

Nationals in Mission Appointments

The Methodist Church in Britain continues to play an important role in providing a salary for the Center's Job Placement Officer, Mrs. June Jackson. This position is vital to ensure professional guidance to numerous trainees and placing them both in internships and permanent jobs. As of July 2018 however, Mrs. Jackson has been promoted to the position Executive Director Ag. With the retirement of Mrs. Roberta Williams, Mrs. Jackson will still advise in this position until another person is hired.



Jumby Bay Island Company Ltd Donates to GARD Center

The GARD Center's trainees are beaming at their new bus shed that will protect them from the elements as they wait for their transportation after classes. They are also very proud that they volunteered to participate in its construction thanks to the technical team from the Jumby Bay Island Company Ltd who taught the youth some basic skills in masonry and carpentry. Many thanks to Jumby Bay for donating staff and materials, it was truly appreciated by the GARD Center staff and trainees. A special thank you is also extended to Antigua Plumbing and Hardware, VEG International and Construction Company Ltd. for their contribution in building materials, as well.

The GARD Center in partnership with the European Commission continues in a two year project to provide quality and trend setting training for vulnerable youth, preparing them for the workforce and/or business development, emphasizing life skills, remedial Math and English and computer literacy.



Workshops/conferences

Exploring Alternatives Workshop

On International Women's Day, March 8, 2018 the GARD Center in collaboration with Consultant Mrs. Ingrid O'Marde hosted a workshop on "Exploring Alternatives." The objectives were to:

- Share knowledge and experiences with like -minded individuals and organizations.
- Share strategies and techniques in applying alternatives.

- Explore possibilities for greater collaboration and support among participants.
- Review the GARD Center's experience and other partners and/ propose a way forward for greater sustainability.

A diverse group of organizations and individuals attended, totaling 23 in number.

28th Anniversary celebrations/Global Entrepreneurship Week

To celebrate the Center's 28th anniversary which coincided with the Global Entrepreneurship Week for which the Center is a country host, a number of activities took place:

1. A pictorial display was mounted at ACB on St. Mary's Street for one month with some of the successful GARD Center Entrepreneurs
2. Radio interview on Market Place, Observer Radio
3. Television interview on Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Station
4. Young successful graduate addressed several classes of new trainees
5. Information was placed on GARD Center's website and Facebook page

In addition, for the Global Entrepreneurship Conference, Mrs. Jackson travelled to Istanbul, Turkey, as the GARD Center representative.

Soil Management Workshop

Mr. Andy J. Wetherill, Extension Educator, Small Farms Program, Delaware State University came to organize a workshop on Soil Management. The GARD Center hosted this workshop along with the Agricultural Extension Division. Twenty-eight (28) participants came to the workshop to learn about the techniques for better managing the soils on their farms. In addition to Mr. Wetherill, speakers from the Department of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture Chemistry Laboratory and Agricultural Extension presented excellent information that created much dialogue amongst the participants. On the second day Mr. Wetherill went with Agricultural Extension Officers to visit farms and advise the producers individually on their respective farms.



Retirement of Mrs. Roberta Williams, Executive Director of the GARD Center for 28 years.



In June 2018, Mrs. Roberta Williams retired from what she referred to as her mission, the GARD Center after 28 years. She described it all as an amazing journey.

Mrs. Roberta Williams, our unsung hero, we salute you from the GARD Center Staff (presented at the Retirement Celebration Church Service on June 21, 2018 Mrs. Williams' 70th birthday)

Framed in your office is a quote that says, "Success is largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go." We think it is safe to say, that you, dear, have a commitment that is unmatched. Where others would have long thrown in the towel, you broke through barriers, where others saw obstacles, you saw opportunities, where others were frustrated and ready to give up, you were gracious and ready to try one more time, and one more time after that.

Over the past 3 decades God has used you to strengthen feeble hands and to encourage those with weak knees to keep moving forward. Your compassion and devotion to the youth of our nation has made a positive impact not only in our society, but in the hearts and minds of each trainee that would have passed under your wing. It has also kept you young. As you stand tall and beautiful, a refreshing embodiment of poise and grace, you make us, your GARD Center family, want to be and do better. You have set a standard, and an example, that we can only hope to one day meet. You have left behind more than fond memories, but a legacy that must be continued. You'd have it no other way, or you'd probably try to do it yourself.

Even though she really is the gift that keeps on giving, we know that it gets hard sometimes, and that things get heavy. But in those trying and testing times, she does what we all should do when we don't know what to do, "Be still and know that He is God."

Did we mention she's a stickler for deadlines? More than getting things done right, she strives to get them done on time. Her work ethic is one to be admired. And after the course is complete, after the event has ended, before the dust can settle, the thank you's MUST be sent out. Our superwoman never fails to give credit where credit is due and she certainly

never forgets to say thank you. From the very important person to the behind the scene helpers, her gratitude is always heartily expressed.

Even though she really is the gift that keeps on giving, we know that it gets hard sometimes, and that things get heavy. But in those trying and testing times, she does what we all should do when we don't know what to do, "Be still and know that He is God." Finally, our love, we'd like you to know that when we count our blessings, we count you twice. We want you to know that we have no intentions of leaving you alone and that there is nowhere that you can go that our love won't reach you. We want you to know that we will always be praying for you, and to remind you to:

Lift your eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh your help. Your help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Mrs. Roberta Williams, our unsung hero, we salute you.



Friends, relatives, colleagues and partners celebrate Mrs. Roberta Williams' retirement and 70th birthday



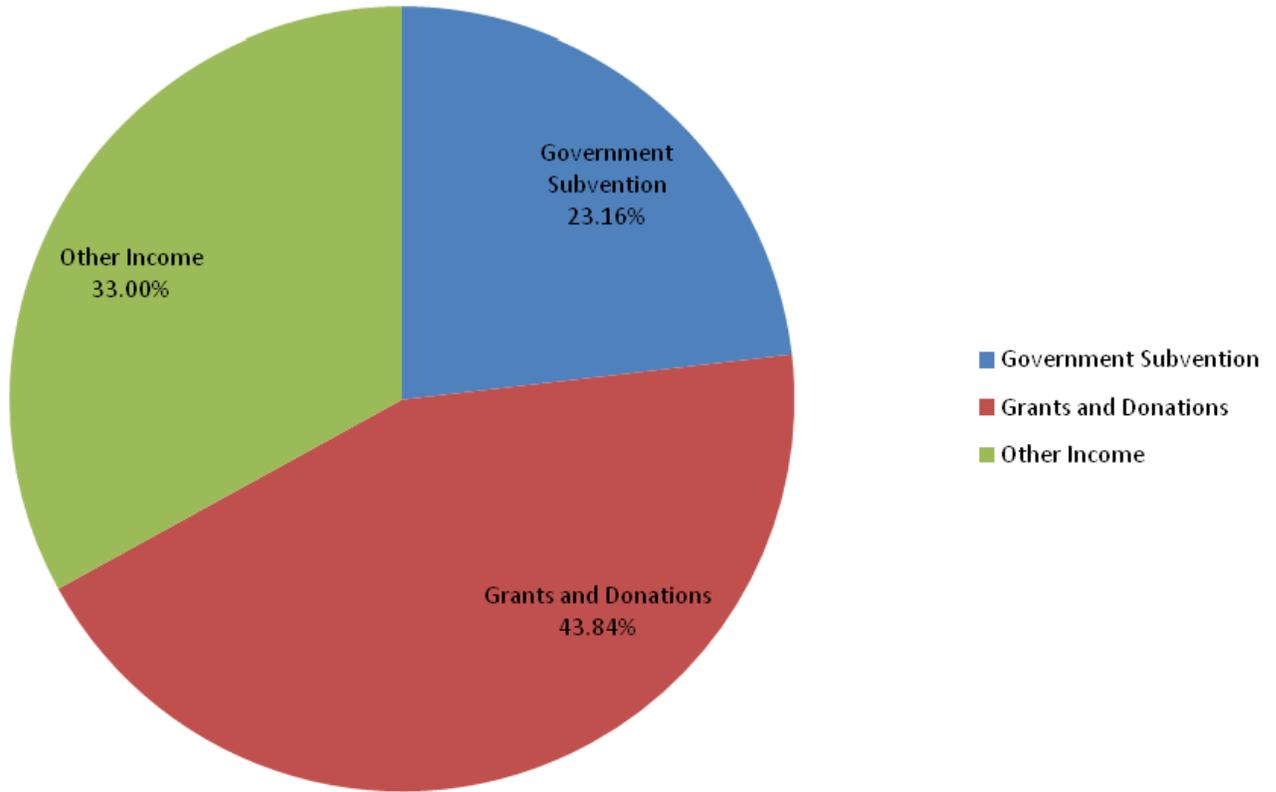
Bishop Otto Wade presents a plaque on behalf of the Board of Directors

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Financial Statements

	<u>Sep '17 - Aug 18</u>	
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Government Subvention	79,200.00	23.16%
Grants and Donations	149,907.20	43.84%
Other Income	112,840.56	33.00%
Total Income	<u>341,947.76</u>	
Gross Profit	341,947.76	
Expense		
Adm Cost	21,446.25	2.99%
Advertising and Promotion	9,789.64	1.37%
Agro Nature Center	1,752.13	0.24%
Bank Charges	1,586.07	0.22%
Computer/Copying	1,547.46	0.22%
Contract Services	64,552.50	9.01%
Facilities and Equipment	54,458.63	7.61%
Insurance	8,779.00	1.23%
Payroll Expenses	273,373.29	38.18%
Projects	2,118.40	0.30%
Security Cost	2,836.53	0.40%
Training Cost	246,650.44	34.44%
Travel and Meetings	17,337.10	2.42%
Utilities Cost	9,851.31	1.38%
Total Expense	<u>716,078.75</u>	
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-374,130.99</u>	
Net Income	<u><u>-374,130.99</u></u>	

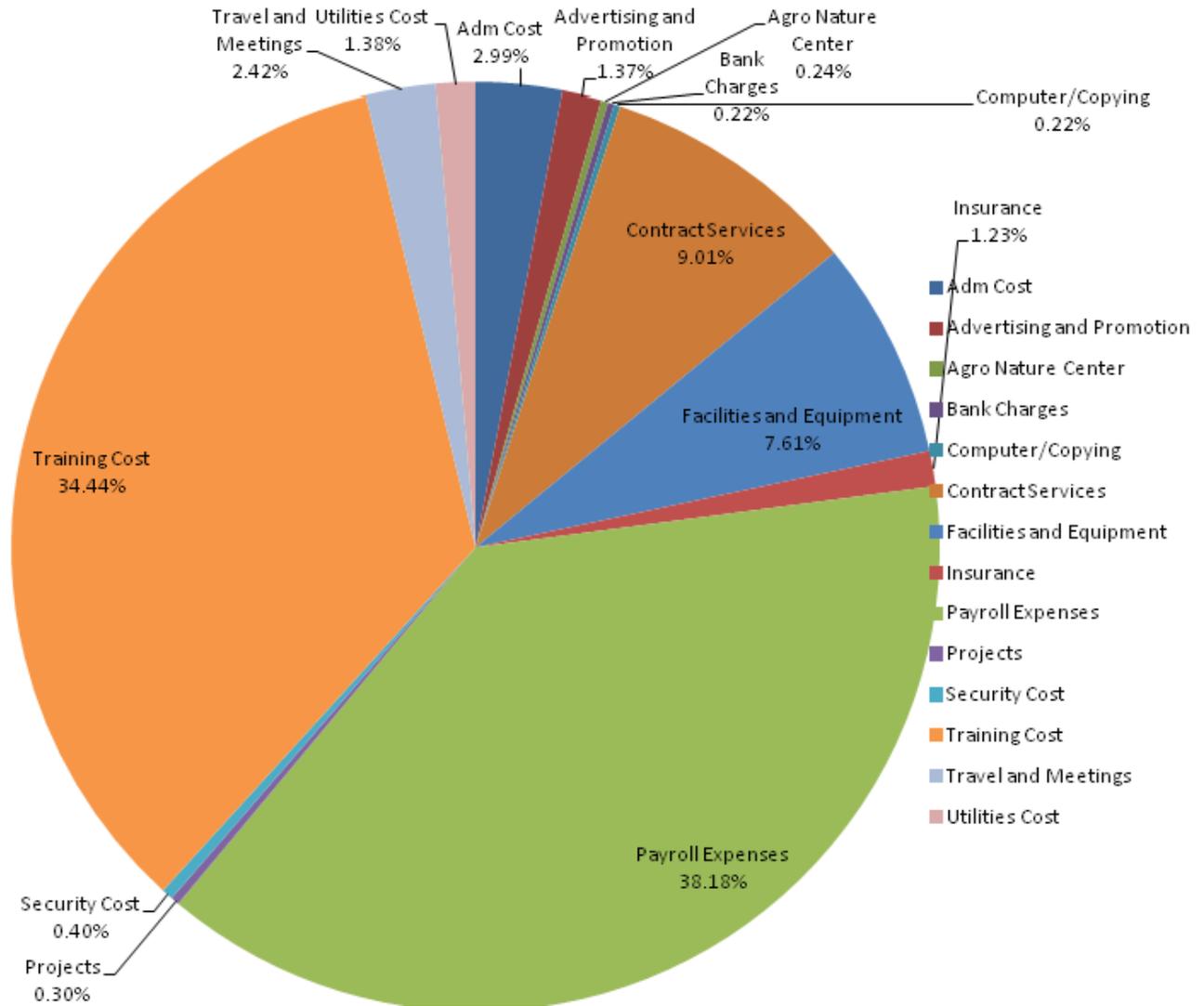
Income 2017-2018



Income

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Other Income	112,840.56	33.00%
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Expenses 2017-2018



Expense

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Total Expense	<u>716,078.75</u>	

Acknowledgements

As we enter our 28 years of existence, and look back, there has been so much that has changed, so many who have been recipients of our programs, new partners as well as the continuous of the old, new friends, additional staff, new classroom buildings and equipment and most of all the continuous Hand of God upon our work and struggles.

A sincere appreciation is given to the European Commission for agreeing to partner with us once again in a strategic project that continues to help us carry out our mission. Many thanks to the Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute who so willing provided their kitchen/classroom facilities for the Baking and Decorating and Professional Bar and Beverage courses. We truly value our partners. Many thanks to our Friends of GARD Center, the volunteers and to our graduates who are the best promoters of our programs. We are indebted to the media houses who support our efforts and are always willing to cover our activities.

