



the
GARD
center

GILBERT AGRICULTURAL & RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Annual Report

September 2018 – August 2019

*Strengthen the
weak hands and
make firm the
feeble knees.*

Isaiah 35:3

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Table of Contents

Executive Director’s Message	3
MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON OF GARDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:	4
2018-2019 Board of Directors & Advisory Committee Members	6
Highlights of Achievements during the year 2018 - 2019	7
Highlights	7
Training Courses	10
Internship / Job Placement	12
Graduation	12
Stakeholder Partnerships	12
Mother-to- Care Programme	13
New Hires	13
Staff Development	13
Visitors	15
Challenges at GARD Center	15
Fundraising	16
Post Valentine Extravaganza	17
Financial Report	18
Acknowledgement	22

GARD CENTER

ANNUAL

REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2018- AUGUST 2019

Executive Director's Message

"Sometimes second chances work out better than the first, because you learn from the mistakes."

The year started with an Executive Director (Ag.) in the position. This was a learning experience and an opportunity to be able to work with a dedicated team whose passion for the Center was very evident on a daily basis. This year September 2018 – August 2019 was a busy one filled with activities; much of which emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnering with key stakeholders to bring these activities to fruition.

The Center wishes to express its gratitude to all Donor Partners, whose support throughout the year positively impacted the lives of the youth in this twin-island state. Training and other components shared with many, especially the youth would not have been possible.

The Center was successful in receiving grant funding from Sandals Foundation through a Project: "Youth Empowerment Climate Smart Agriculture." The opportunity to empower youth while bringing awareness to how they can further contribute to agriculture in the 21st Century. This promoted the use of climate smart practices in Agriculture and combating the Effects of Climate Change' on the local Agricultural Sector for sustainable livelihoods.

Our 5th Annual Farm-to-Table benefit luncheon event and Awards presentation (2019) celebrated the James and Maginley Charity and Care Foundation as Premier Sponsor. From all feedback this event was very good and before end of the year we received calls to reserve tickets for the 2020 event.

We give God all the praises as he continues to direct us in the work we are doing in the community with our Youth. The introduction of Climate Smart Agriculture with special emphasis on Hydroponics peaked great interest among the youth, secondary schools, men, and women backyard gardeners.

Sincerest thanks to all of our partners, volunteers, and friends of GARD Center for a year where we were able to engage the youth in a different form of training. May God continue to bless us as we forge forward to "strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees". It is a pleasure to submit this Annual Report to the GARD Center Board of Directors.



June Jackson
Executive Director (Ag.)

MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON OF GARDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The year under review, September 2018 to August 2019, was a very encouraging one, notwithstanding the various challenges. The Board of Directors, Friends, Partners, Clients and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda can be justly proud of the achievements of GARDC. Despite the insufficient financial resources to undertake and support many activities, the frequent burglaries and the loss of significant pieces of equipment due to robberies, the small but very dedicated staff has provided commendable services. Today we can confidently say that the vision and purpose of GARD Center is alive.

During the year GARDC celebrated its thirtieth (30th) anniversary as an NGO in Antigua. Those who participated in the service of Thanksgiving held at the Ebenezer Methodist Church were reminded that 30 years is normally used as a sign of physical and mental maturity. Over these 30 years we have witnessed the evolution of GARD Center from a facility for the training of young farmers in the OECS sub-region to one which offers a wide range of training opportunities including Solar Installation and Improving Opportunities for At-Risk, Probationary and Incarcerated Youth in Antigua and Barbuda.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I say *thank you!* to all contributors who assisted in giving vulnerable young men and women a second chance. Special thanks to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, our international partners, the private and governmental institutions who facilitate the job-placement program, the Mill Reef Club, Sandals Foundation, farmers, sponsors and hotels who contributed generously to the very successful “**Farm to Table**” event.

Special commendation to Acting Executive Director, Mrs. June Jackson and her Staff for their wholehearted involvement in the many Course Offerings and activities of the GARD Center.

We are grateful to the members of the Board of Directors for the willingness to give of time, wisdom and resources to ensure the success of this organization.

Finally, I thank God for all that is being done at GARD Center and pray for continued blessings on the activities and future endeavours.

Everald Galbraith
Chairman, GARDC Board of Directors

OBJECTIVES

- To develop skills of men and women between the ages of 17-35 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

VISION

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

MISSION

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

2018-2019 Board of Directors & Advisory Committee Members



Board Members

Bishop Everald Galbraith
Chairperson

Dame Eusalyn Lewis
Vice Chairperson

Rev'd Glenna Spencer
Secretary

Mr. Kirthley Maginley, **Member**

Mrs. Roberta Williams, **Member**

Mr. Neil Gomes, **Member**

Ms. Jacqueline Yearwood, **Member**

Permanent Secretary, **Member**
Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. John Mussington, **Member**

Ms. Denise Hodge, **Member**

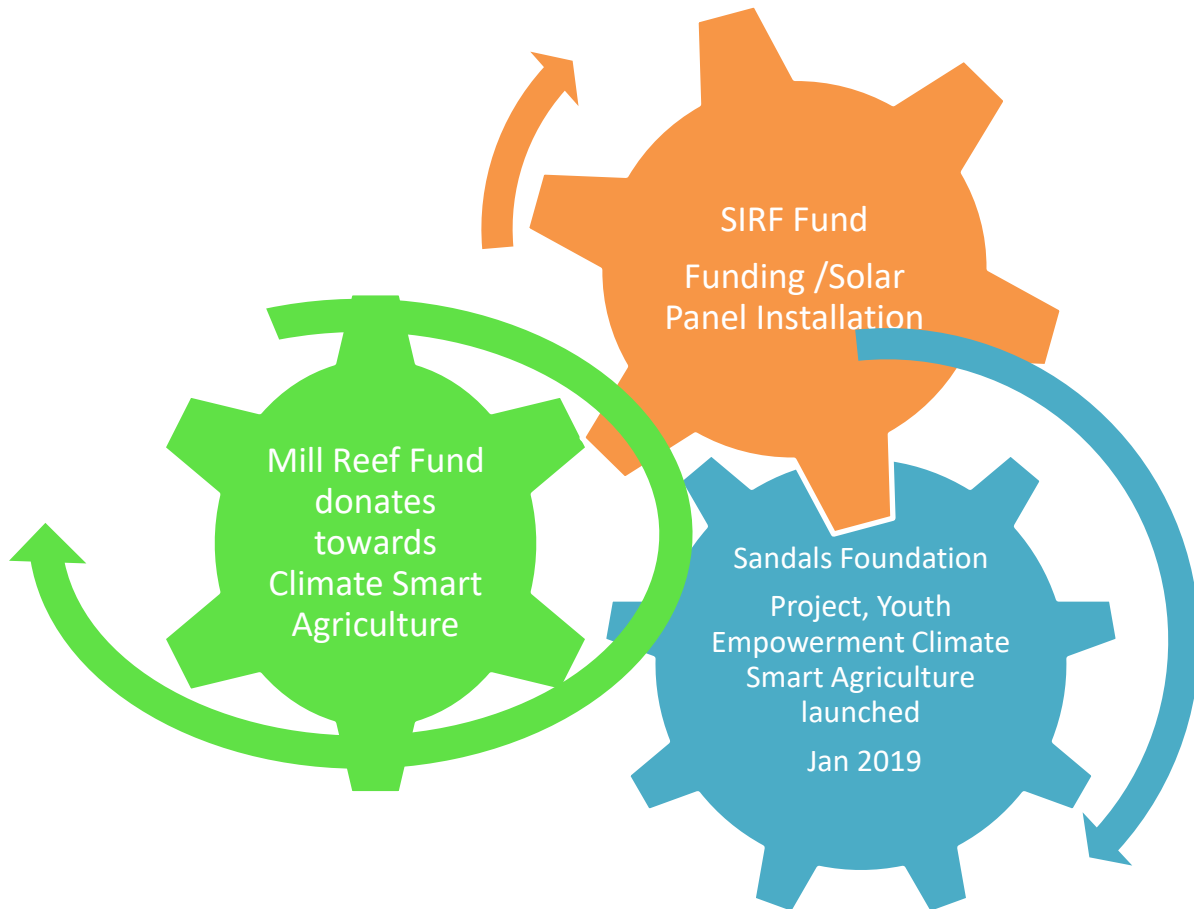
Advisory Committee

Dr. Brian Cooper, **Agricultural Consultant**

Mrs. Kathleen Forde, **Agricultural Consultant**

Ms. Jennifer Maynard, **Agro-Tourism**
Consultant

Highlights of Achievements during the year 2018 - 2019



Highlights

Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund (SIRFF) - Grid Interactive Solar PV System Installation Project

The launch of this project was held on September 18, 2018 at GARD Center. We received funding of US\$50,000, through the Department of Environment in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Environment. Media was present from ABS TV and Crusader Radio. The Environment Management Consultant, Ms. Lucia Mings and the Solar Panel Installation Contractor, Green Tech Solar-ACT, was also represented. GARD Center Environmental Monitors created a Slogan, "*GARD Center, Guardians of the Environment, Guardians of our Youth.*"

We were able to successfully conduct a training course during the period of this project in 'Solar Panel Installation Assistant Technicians' so that youth benefited from this opportunity.

The SIRFF Project encountered a delay in the Solar Panel installation process as Green Tech Solar-ACT, Antigua was awaiting the arrival of the batteries from Tesla Inc. to supply power to the panels. Meetings were held between GARD Center, Green Tech Solar-ACT and the Department of Environment. A decision was made to wait for the worldwide backorder on these batteries to be cleared. Indication was given that the Center would be receiving the first set of these batteries with a 25-year warranty.

Solar Panel Installation Ceremony



Group Photo (l-r) Operations Manager, Green Tech Solar-ACT, Vice-chair BOD, GARD Center, Chief Environment Officer (DOE), Project Coordinator (DOE), Executive Director (GARD Center), ACT Technician, GARD Center Consultant, Tesla Inc. –Cayman Islands Technician

Sandals Foundation

The GARD Center received funding in the amount of US\$42,620, from Sandals Foundation: "Youth Empowerment Climate Smart Agricultural Project." A launch was held on January 7th, 2019 at Mercers Creek. At the launch, Sandals Foundation Project Manager, Jamaica, Karen Zacca was in attendance accompanied by two personnel from Sandals Resort & Spa in Antigua. Also, in attendance were representatives from GARD Center's Board of Directors; IICA; Ministry of Agriculture and the Student Body. (see photo below)

Mrs. Roberta Williams, former Executive Director, GARD Center was contracted as Consultant on the project.



Mill Reef Fund

The funds received during the period under review from the **MRF** was US\$20,000. These funds were used to compliment the Australian Project in 2018, as well as Sandals Foundation Project in 2019 and to help subsidize the training in Beekeeping with components in Soap Making, Bee Box Construction, Business Management, and Creams making and Hydroponics in the rural community; hence the need to use the funds to cover the areas of training.

European Union Community Outreach

As the European Union two-year Project under the theme “Improving Opportunities for At-risk, Probationary and Incarcerated Youth in Antigua and Barbuda,” for young men and women between the ages of 16 – 35 came to an end in February 2019. In addition to its training component the GARD Center conducted Outreach Programmes to pull together and strengthen the groups within two communities, Cashew Hill and Grays Green. These were conducted by Ms. Brenda Carrott, Consultant for this aspect of the project. These communities according to information received from the Community Development Division and the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda were identified as high crime areas. There were six (6) sessions held in the Grays Green Community with great participation and co-operation.

Japanese Classroom Building

The grant funding for a new training facility under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP) “Project for the Construction of Hospitality Training Facility at Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center” building was prepared and the Center is currently awaiting the approved plan from the Development Control Authority.

Training Courses

Solar Panel: This is a new course on offer and was well received, especially now that the government is focusing on reducing the use of fossil fuel. The tutor Mr. Girvan Pigott attached to the APUA Electricity Department was very happy to deliver the basic areas and practical experience on solar panels to prepare trainees in the Solar Panel Assistant Technician Course. Ms. Yvana Ephraim did an excellent job also in tutoring the Physics component of this course and the trainees' reaction was very receptive.

Mr. Nigel George was contracted to tutor the Electrical aspect of the course, however due to his workload, was unable to complete and Ms. Ephraim was happy to jump on board to bring it to closure because she was knowledgeable with the topic.

Professional Hospitality Service - was also a popular course. Mr. Vincent Andrew conducted this training, however during this course a permanent job offer availed itself and he had to leave. However, he recommended Ms. Maudrina Jn. Paul to teach the remainder of the course. Ms. Jn. Paul added the component of allowing the students to plan and execute a 'restaurant' day. The students were responsible for this practical exercise of organizing a luncheon from beginning to end. Some of the proceeds received from the lunches prepared went towards the continuous work of the GARD Center. This course ended on 14 December 2018.

Office Administration was most popular and because of the over whelming number of applications the class had to be divided in two (2) groups to adequately prepare them for the world of work.

Remarkable Hospitality Service / Customer Service

During the promotion of this course it was observed that quite some of the young people were hesitant in applying for the training. This was mainly because they were not familiar with this area even though they were aware it was connected to the hospitality industry. However, after course commencement the word got around and the training was successful

Climate Smart Agriculture

The Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Project with a focus on hydroponics was designed to empower young men and women to be aware of the contribution they can make in the agriculture sector for a better future, especially through the application of climate smart practices in agriculture and combating climatic risks while enhancing their livelihoods. The project made some exciting inroads causing quite an interest, especially in the area of hydroponics and its many benefits for food production.



Hydroponics

The ten-week course as with all of the Center's holistic programs in addition to the agricultural technology sessions, included, life skills and IT. The Life skills sessions dealt with youth issues such as self- esteem, managing and understanding anger and conflict and working with/ respecting others

The enthusiasm amongst the trainees was very refreshing. Discussions in the classroom were vibrant with many questions and ideas. The appreciation that practices in agriculture must be more environmentally friendly (climate smart) was displayed in their eagerness to get more information on CSA technologies.



Internship / Job Placement

The following companies continue to willingly accept and, are supporting our internship/ job placement programme and offer opportunities for our trainees. During the period under review the following companies assisted:

1. Antigua Computer Technology
2. Blue Waters Hotel
3. Galley Bay Resort and Spa
4. Trade Winds Hotel
5. Pineapple Beach Resort
6. Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa
7. VJ'S Bakery
8. Goddard Catering Group (Antigua) Ltd
9. Epicurean Fine Foods and Pharmacy
10. Curtain Bluff Hotel
11. South Point Hotel
12. Mount St. John's Medical Centre
13. Unicomer (Courts) Antigua and Barbuda Ltd
14. Social Security Scheme
15. Blue Waters Hotel
16. Carlisle Bay Resort
17. Velvet Touch Spa
18. Goddard Catering Group (Antigua) Ltd

Graduation

February 19, 2019 a Graduation Ceremony was held at the Ebenezer Methodist Church Hall where trainees from Basic Baking and Decorating, ICT, Carpentry and Plumbing, Office Administration, Professional Bar and Beverage Service, Professional Hospitality Service, Solar Panel Installation Technician Assistant and Beekeeping Course. Of the one hundred and twenty youth enrolled during September – December 2018, we are pleased to report that one hundred and four (104) graduated.

Stakeholder Partnerships

The National Training Agency (NTA) selected GARD Center (Ms. June Jackson) as a member of the Lead Body with responsibilities in to assist with the vetting of the Occupational Standards – Business Administration for CVQ certification in Antigua and Barbuda.

Mother-to- Care Programme

It is a part of the Integrated Health Outreach organization which assists in helping young single mothers become sustainable. Nicola Bird PhD, Director of this organization with a team visited the Center. The main goal was to expose these young mothers to another level of self-development through training. Dr. Bird and her team were very pleased with the presentation and overview given by Mrs. Joycelyn Humphreys and Mrs. June Jackson. Dr. Bird Through her organization committed to paying the registration and tuition fees for the mothers who registered to be trained at the GARD Center.

New Hires

GARD Center welcomed a new staff member who was hired through the European Union/GARD Center Project, Ms. Makalsia Shepherd as Junior Clerk/Admin Assistant replacing Ms. Soyini Warner who migrated during the period.

Recruiting for an Office Administration Tutor resulted in the hiring of Mrs. Kerrie-Faun Nathan for the paid course conducted September – December 2019.

The Department of Labour under its New Work Empowerment Programme Initiative extended the period for Mrs. Judy Dease-Richards at the Center after her maternity and vacation leave. The Center was grateful for this.

Staff Development

Staff Member	Activity	Location/Dates
Angela Ephraim (Principal/ Accounts Clerk)	Basic Quickbooks Training	Antigua, March 2019
June Jackson (Executive Director Ag.)	International Business and Economic Forum (IBE Forum)	St. Kitts, April 2019
Angela Ephraim (Principal/ Accounts Clerk)	International Business and Economic Forum (IBE Forum)	St. Kitts, April 2019



GARD Center Staff

Visitors

Mr. Andy Williams, Executive Director of Nobeah Foundation (Caring through innovation) visited Antigua & Barbuda to conduct presentations with various stakeholders regarding “Collective Intelligence Approach” which includes a value chain pilot project in the Agricultural Sector. Its intention is to have the stakeholders invest and develop this consortium that would then benefit farmers in Antigua and Barbuda. We are yet to receive further update on the information received from all the stakeholders that were interacted with on his initial visit.

Mr. Vernon Grigg, one of Antigua’s artist residing in the United States visited to engage the trainees of GARD Center in a volunteer activity under the slogan “***Guardians of the Environment, Guardians of our Youth.***” A mural on site was created under the supervision of Mr. Grigg and Jay Peters.



During the summer period, the Center was visited by a group of campers from the Special Needs Department, Ministry of Social Transformation, and Gracehill Moravian Vacation Bible School. A tour of the hydroponics display unit and surrounding areas was conducted by Facilitator/Tutor Mr. Ika Fergus, Agricultural Extension Officer.

Challenges at GARD Center

During the first quarter of the year under review, the Center was the target of theft of a number of items, including: a compressor, chain saw, weed wacker, 2 A/C units, face basin faucets, and septic fittings. Both Parham and Willikies Police Stations had to be called for investigations of which the perpetrators have not been found.

During the month of July 2019, it was discovered that the storeroom located on the farm was entered from an opening at the top of the inside roof. A gas bottle with gas for the lawn care, 2 boxes of vinyl tiles and an electrical drill set were stolen. Another incident

occurred on August 02, 2019 where the then Farm Assistant discovered that the refrigerator used to store students' food and drink was removed from the blue classroom building. Evidence of the stone used to break the door-knob was seen not far from the door with the pieces of metal from the lock. The police have been called and conducted investigations; however, to date we have not been able to get results or positive feedback on the items stolen.

NAGICO Insurance has received claims for stolen items. To date settlement has only been received for A/C units. The Center has invested in bar grids for the current A/C units on the second building which is located on the Agro Heritage site. It was also decided that it would be best to invest in security cameras (that will be accessible from cell phones) for the classrooms and perimeter. A few things need to be updated for this security system to be most effective.

Fundraising

Our 5th Annual Farm to Table Luncheon and Awards presentation was held on April 13th, 2019 under the Distinguished Patronage of Their Excellencies, Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams and Wife, Lady Williams. James and Maginley Charity and Care Foundation continued to be our Premier Sponsor.

As we celebrated our 5th Annual Farm-to-Table fundraiser luncheon, we saw the need to recognize our Partners who consistently supported the Center with this effort over the years. James and Maginley Charity and Care Foundation; Goddard Catering Group, Antigua Ltd.; Tamarind Hills Luxury Resort; Chefs and Producers were awarded.

The event saw a new partner L A Development Inc who sponsored the Awards segment. This year's annual event from all feedback, was the best, so far. See pictures of the Farm-to-Table Event, below.



Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams (L) presenting to Mr. Mario Colindres, GM, GCG



GARD Center graduate volunteering at Farm to Table

Post Valentine Extravaganza

An event in honor of the retirement of Mrs. Roberta Williams in serving the GARD Center during the years 1989 – 2018. The theme highlighted at this event was “**A ARWE MEK UM**” featuring an exposition of work done by some of the graduates of GARD Center in the areas of art, craft, jewelry, agriculture and Agro-processing. The attendance was below expectation especially knowing that over 5000 trainees would have benefited from the work during those years under Mrs. Williams’ leadership. We are hoping that this fundraising activity in 2020 would be much better as the Alumni will be more active in the preparation of the activities to be scheduled.



Pictures from the Inaugural “A ARWE MEK UM”

Financial Report

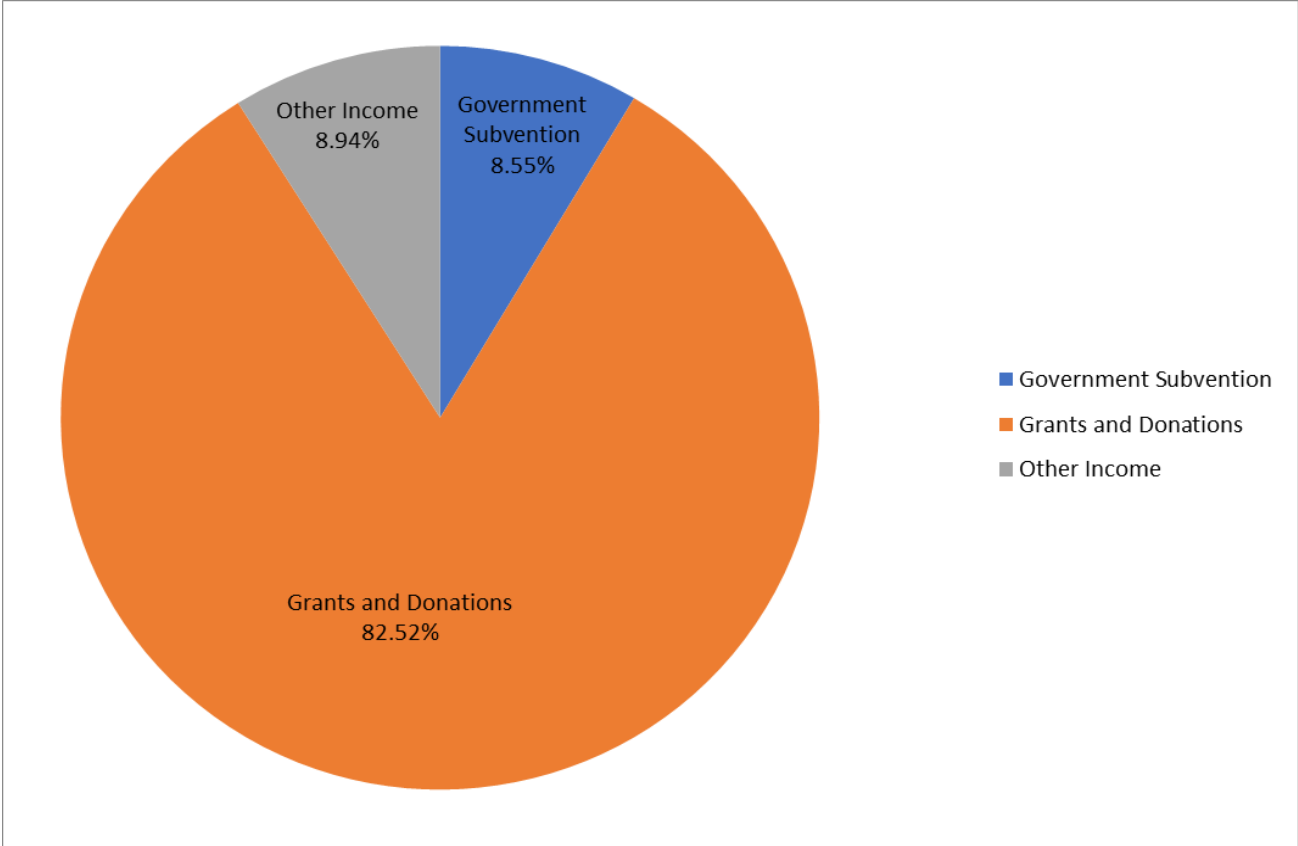
All figures are quoted in Eastern Caribbean currency.

1US\$ = 2.70EC\$

Sep '18 - Aug 19

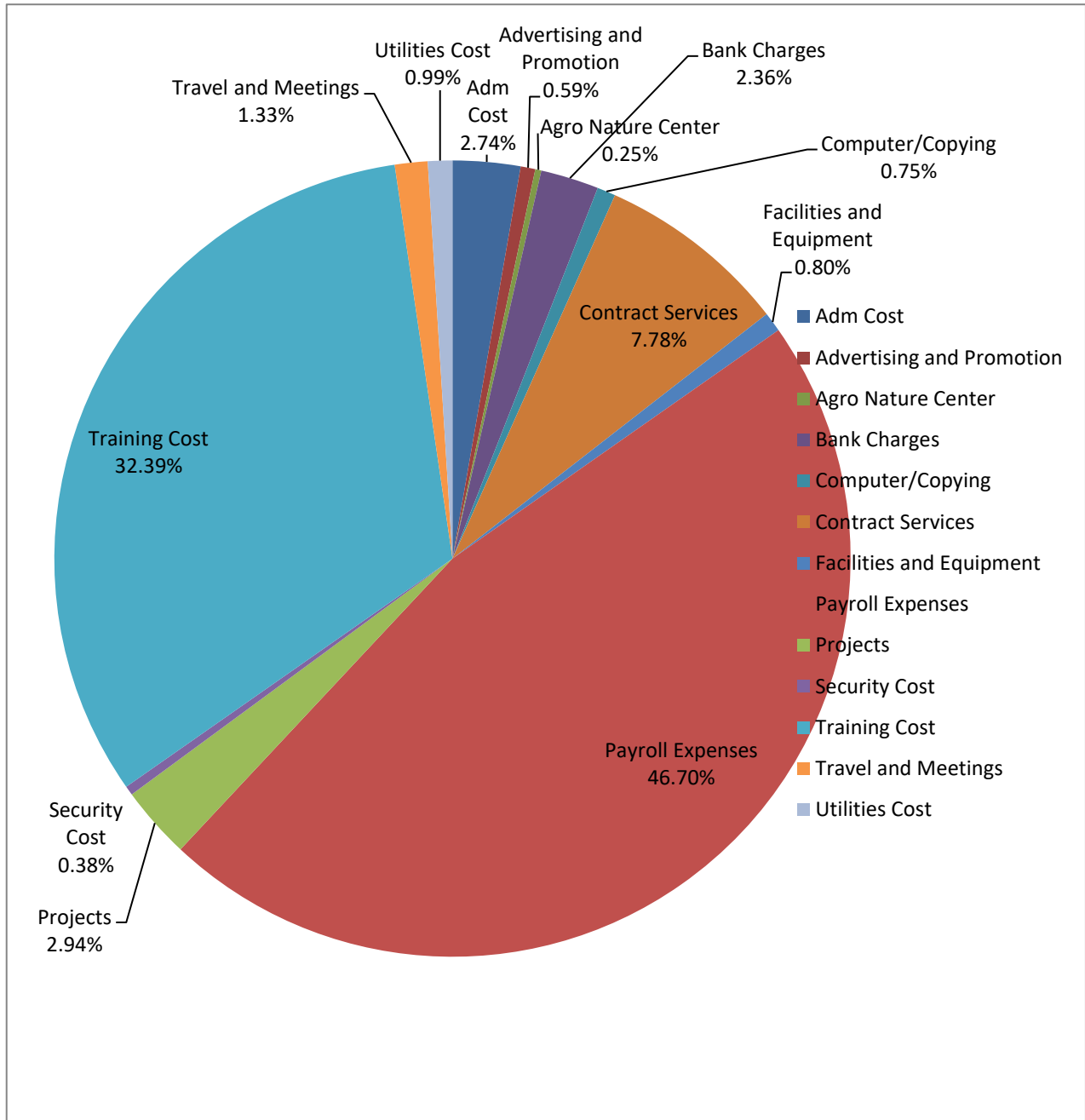
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Government Subvention	66,000.00	7.17%
Grants and Donations	743,345.70	80.71%
Other Income	111,640.77	12.12%
Total Income	920,986.47	
Gross Profit	920,986.47	
Expense		
Adm Cost	28,946.31	3.76%
Advertising and Promotion	20,551.38	2.67%
Agro Nature Center	6,575.78	0.85%
Bank Charges	2,560.06	0.33%
Computer/Copying	539.00	0.07%
Contract Services	101,644.24	13.19%
Facilities and Equipment	58,025.61	7.53%
Insurance	7,908.36	1.03%
Payroll Expenses	234,465.84	30.43%
Projects	125,406.28	16.27%
Security Cost	7,057.80	0.92%
Training Cost	145,903.54	18.93%
Travel and Meetings	21,803.91	2.83%
Utilities Cost	8,745.58	1.13%
Vehicle Cost	430.00	0.06%
Total Expense	770,563.69	
Net Ordinary Income	150,422.78	
Net Income	150,422.78	

Income 2018-2019



Income			
	Government Subvention	66,000.00	7.17%
	Grants and Donations	743,345.70	80.71%
	Other		
	Income	<u>111,640.77</u>	12.12%
Total Income		<u>920,986.47</u>	

Expense 2018-2019



Expense		
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Total Expense	<u>770,563.69</u>	

Acknowledgement

As the Center prepares to enter its 30th year in November 2018, we are blessed to have been and continue to receive support from our partner organizations, trainers, volunteers, friends and family members for their untiring support and commitment to this Center and the youth we serve in the nation of Antigua and Barbuda.

The human, financial and physical resources we received have increased our ability to expand and diversify much needed programs and services in our vulnerable communities. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

The GARD Center has been blessed with an amazing staff who has compassion for helping young people who face some very tragic and challenging circumstances. The Center is a family-oriented environment where nothing is done without God being the base. With God's Hands on us we have been able to accomplish immeasurable advancement with limited resources.