

GILBERT AGRICULTURAL & RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER



the
GARD
center

25 YEARS

NOVEMBER 1989-2014

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Sept 2014 -
Aug 2015

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GAARD Center
Annual
Report

25th

Anniversary Issue

September 2014 – August 2015

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Objectives, Vision and Mission

Objectives

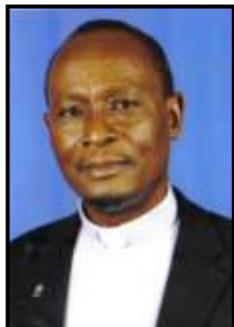
To develop skills of men and women between the ages of 16 - 30 years, to be able to establish and operate viable farms or other agricultural and rural based enterprises, at a universally acceptable standard of living.

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 Chairman of GARD Center's Board of Directors



When an Institution has reached twenty five years of existence it begins to look back at the history it has been creating and it also considers its own place in history.

The Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center (GARD Center) has joined those institutions of Antigua and Barbuda which have earned the right to be accorded a place in the annals of this country. The fact that it is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) makes it a most proud moment for the institution because many which came into being after GARD Center are now only footnotes in the history of NGOs in our nation. The Board has agreed that in marking the twenty-fifth anniversary, the twin buildings given by the government of Japan are to be named the **Rev'd Eric St. Clarke Building** and the **Roberta Williams Building**. This is in recognition of the two individuals who were instrumental in making GARD Center a reality.

With its theme: Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees (Isaiah 35:3) GARD Center has remained true to its objectives which aim to develop the skills of young men and women and to promote rural based enterprises such as agriculture. The pages of this report will highlight what GARD Center has done in its twenty- fifth year.

I am delighted to acknowledge all those who have been faithful in keeping the vision of GARD Center alive and through difficult times have continued to believe. I offer thanks to the members of the Board of Directors and on behalf of the Board offer our appreciation for the work of the Executive Director and the staff of GARD Center. We are especially pleased to acknowledge the tenacity of Mrs. Roberta Williams, the Executive Director.

As we give thanks to God for his blessings, I give thanks to all those partners, local and international, who have contributed to the work of Center. Contributions to GARD Center, whether large or small, are well spent and its accounts are annually audited. This institution has been playing an important role in the social development of the country. I am mindful of the difficult economic times, but I believe the case for contributing to GARD Center is made: GARD Center is worthy of your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Otto Wade'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Otto Wade
Chairman, Board of Directors

Executive Director's Message



Another amazing milestone has been reached for the GARD Center. Just imagine, twenty-five years we have survived despite the many challenges that we have faced as a Nongovernmental organization, to grow from one desk, one file cabinet and five trainees to an internationally recognized institution that has touched the lives of many young men and women. These same young persons who came through our doors with low self-esteem, poor literacy levels, lack of technical and work related skills, are now many of them entrepreneurs or gainfully employed because of their acquired employability status.

We all came together to praise and thank God during our Anniversary church service for His guidance and Hands on our Center and for the many individuals and organizations who came on board to support our efforts and share the vision that the Center has always held with passion, according to our scriptural theme, “strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees” Isaiah 35:3.

The Trust of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas made a bold step in 1989 under the leadership of the late Rev. Eric Clarke, when they formed a partnership with the Canadian Government and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to encourage young people to get into the agriculture sector. We have never changed or waived from our original mandate, however the GARD Center, has expanded its boundaries both in terms of training disciplines and target group, focusing more on the most vulnerable and filling a tremendous gap in our society for those who need a second chance.

On the next few pages of this report contains a list of the highlights, milestones of our 25 years. Just imagine a small NGO which started with so few resources has been able to accomplish what you see below. A small staff compliment, volunteers and partner organizations brought this Center into the limelight standing on three major pillars, agriculture, youth, and entrepreneurship.

I hereby take great pleasure in submitting this annual report to the GARD Center Board of Directors.

Yours faithfully

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

Roberta Williams
Executive Director

2014 - 2015 Board & Advisory Committee Members

Board Members

- REV. OTTO WADE, CHAIRPERSON
- DAME EUSALYN LEWIS, VICE CHAIRPERSON
- REV. PATMORE HENRY, SECRETARY
- MR. KIRTHLEY MAGINLEY, MEMBER
- MRS. MAUDLYN RICHARDS, MEMBER
- MR. NEIL GOMES, MEMBER
- MS. DENISE HODGE, MEMBER
- MR. JOHN MUSSINGTON, MEMBER [BARBUDA]
- MR. AVONDALE THOMAS, MEMBER
- MS. JACQUELINE YEARWOOD, MEMBER
- PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
- MRS. ROBERTA WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MEMBER

Advisory Committee

- PROF. RICHARD BRAITHWAITE, UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, TRINIDAD
- DR. BRIAN COOPER, AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANT
- MRS. KATHLEEN FORDE, AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANT
- MS. JENNIFER MAYNARD, AGRO-TOURISM CONSULTANT TO THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Highlights / Milestones – the first 25 years

| | |
|------------------|---|
| October 24, 1989 | The Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) conference in Jamaica approved the partnership with the Canadians in the Young Farmers Training Pilot project. |
| November 1989 | Signing of the Young Farmers Training Pilot Project agreement with partners the MCCA, the Canadian Government and the Antigua and Barbuda Government. The MCCA contributed 5 acres of land for the demonstration farm, an office and classroom; The Canada Training Awards Project (CTAP) provided the funds for consultant fees, project manager salary, tutor fees, equipment and training materials. The Ministry of Agriculture offered their technicians as tutors, equipment for land preparation and APUA assisted with utilities. |
| 1990 | An advisory committee was established with local representation and a CTAP Representative based in Barbados. |
| January 1990 | Mr. Frankie Slowe was hired as the first project manager. |
| March 28, 1990 | First batch of trainees started a 5 month training program in agriculture. |
| 1990-1991 | The first recruits assisted in building a-500 layer poultry unit, a rabbitry & plant nursery. |
| August 14, 1990 | First graduation of 5 young men. Also graduating were 14 persons from Sawcolts and Pigotts who participated in the evening outreach training programs. |
| 1991 -1993 | Regional training was offered with assistance from CTAP to Young farmers from Tortola, and Anguilla, who received training in Egg Production, Pig Production and Beekeeping. |
| 1992 | Official ending of the 2 year Young Farmers Training Pilot Project. Canadian funding decreased and the project was fully operated by the MCCA. The project now becomes The Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center. |
| 1992-1993 | Difficult times in the early stages of the Center. The MCCA was unable to source sufficient funding to pay salaries and other operating costs. |
| March 1993 | The Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) made significant financial contribution to assist the Center. |
| 1993-1999 | The Center continues to expand and diversify its programs and partnerships with regional and international organizations. |
| 1999 | Director of GARD Center awarded the Inter-American Award for the Participation of Women in Regional Development. |
| April 1999 | New Management Committee installed. |
| April, 2002 | Launched 8 new handicraft entrepreneurs at first Trade Exhibition “Mek with de Hands.” |
| 2002 | A new strategic partner, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), injects funds into the demonstration farm. |
| May 20, 2003 | The Center occupied its new headquarters at the old Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Service (ABS) radio station at Mercers Creek. |
| June 27, 2003 | The GARD Center becomes incorporated as a non-profit company under the Companies Act of Antigua and Barbuda 1995. A Board of Directors was formally constituted by 2004 |
| January 2004 | The Center received a Cabinet decision to support the Center with a monthly subvention. |

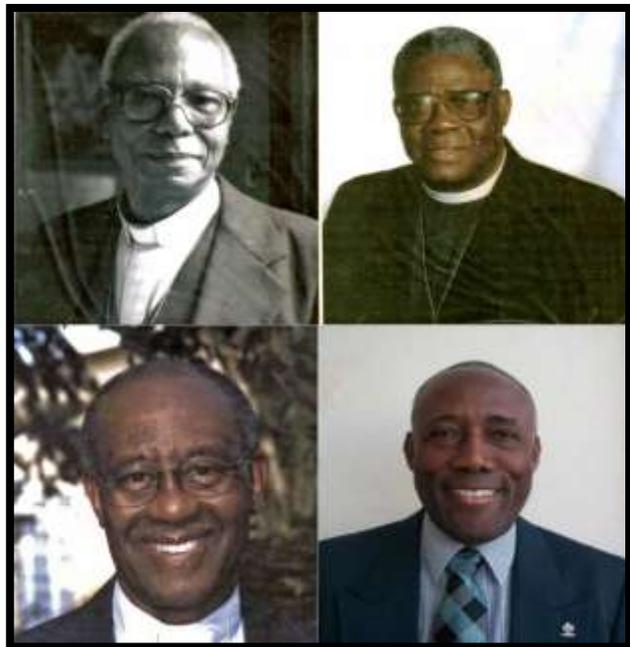
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|------------------|--|
| November 2004 | New partnership with the Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) provided significant assistance to the Center. |
| October 26, 2006 | Hosted the first Sir Robert Hall KCN Memorial Day, to honor the Nation's first Minister of Agriculture. |
| July 2007 | PDV Petro Caribe project partnered with the Center to train agro-processors in solar drying techniques and the construction and testing of an African model solar dryer. |
| 2008 | The Center launched a Partnership in Opportunities for Employment through Technology in the Americas (POETA) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Center. |
| 2009 | GARD Center further expanded its programs for "youth at risk" forging strategic partnerships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Part of a regional project entitled the Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program (CYEP). |
| November 2009 | GARD Center celebrates 20 years as a development Non-Governmental Organization. An official launch was held under the patronage of the Governor General Her Excellency Dame Louise Lake-Tack. Theme: "20 years: Building Self-Esteem through Entrepreneurship." Activities throughout the year included media interviews, newspaper articles, a feature in Business Focus, photographic display, "Faces of GARD Center," a Flower and Garden Show, in collaboration with the Antigua and Barbuda Horticultural Society; and a Closing Thanksgiving Service and Graduation. |
| December 2009 | Executive Director awarded the 5th Annual Tim Hector Award in recognition of her services to the Nation in agriculture. |
| 2010 | GARD Center partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Marine Resources, Housing and the Environment, GEF, and the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) in two strategic national projects. |
| 2011 | A partnership with the Mill Reef Fund launched a collaborative effort to provide Backyard Gardening courses, equipment, support for the Gilbert Agro-Heritage Nature Park and Camp Grow, for children to learn more about agriculture and the natural environment. Camp GROW launched in July 2011 |
| | Executive Director receives National Award for her services to youth development. |
| | Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago sponsored two new classrooms. |
| November 2011 | Computer lab upgraded with 20 flat screen computers donated by the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, Telecommunication, Science and Technology. |
| 2012 | A consortium formed to strengthen and expand the Center's programs—Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute, Antigua and Barbuda Institute for Continuing Education, and the Directorate of Gender Affairs |
| December 2012 | Partnership with the European Union. Largest grant given to a NGO in Antigua and Barbuda |
| | CIBC/First Caribbean International Bank continued financial support of our youth programs. |
| | The Center upgraded its capacity to generate valuable statistics through the creation of M & E- mechanism and a web-based portal database called "Trainee Live," was designed. |

- 2013 GARD Center launches its new Business Development Unit in St. John's. November 2013 Executive Director, Mrs. Roberta Williams received a prestigious award, the Grand Officer of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit (GOM), from the Governor General, Dame Louise Lake-Tack. This national award was for her work over the last twenty-four (24) years with youth and community development through the GARD Center.
- 2014 PDV Petro Caribe, GARD Center and LCP Industries, a youth agricultural enterprise, enters a partnership in onion production, export and marketing.
- November 2014 GARD Center becomes 25 years old. A year of activities has been planned to celebrate this Milestone, starting with a Thanksgiving church service at Ebenezer Methodist Church.
- National Youth Award presented to GARD Center for its work in youth development.
- 2015 A second classroom building construction is launched with the support of the Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago through the Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects. Two counseling rooms and a workroom for technical vocational training is under construction.

25 years under the leadership of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas

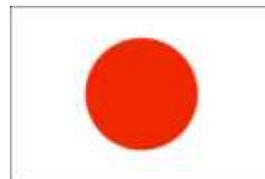


Rev. Otto Wade



**Former Presidents:
Top left: The late Eric Clark, and
Rev. William Watty
Bottom left: Rev. Bruce Swapp
and Rev. Dr. George Mulrain**

Some Major Partners over the Years



Staff



STAFF: Top row, left to right: Roberta Williams, Executive Director; Angela Ephraim, BDU Administrator / Communication Officer; Kareem Francis, Program Coordinator; Second row L-R: Jay Peters, Operational Foreman; Cariene Winston, Jr. Clerk; Joycelyn Humphreys, Principal; Third row L-R: June Jackson, Job Placement Officer, Kraig Moore, Accountant; Kathleen Forde, Project Manager, PDVCAB/GARD Center Agricultural Youth Project; Bottom row: Johan Oliver, BDU Officer

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR

The GARD Center reaches another milestone, 25 years and launches a year of celebration activities under the theme: *Celebrating 25 years of Service through Training: Inspiring, Empowering, Motivating the Lives of Young Men and Women*

GARD Center hosts the 7th Sustainable Livelihood and Youth Entrepreneurship Conference sponsored by the CoESL

GARD Center receives National Youth Award for its contribution to the youth of this Nation

GARD Center launches the 1st Farm to Table event in Antigua and Barbuda

Close to 200 persons attended a luncheon style outdoor event with local chefs and farmers providing locally grown and cooked cuisine.

The Embassy of Japan partners with the GARD Center to build a second classroom. Breaking of ground took place on 6 March, 2015

New partnership established with the Cégép de la Gaspésie et des Îles in the CARICOM Education for Employment Program (C-EFE)

MILESTONES FOR THE YEAR

Visitors

Several persons visited the GARD Center during the year. World Bank official, Mr. Juan Moreno and a team from the Ministry of Labour, met with the Executive Director to discuss the progress of the Antigua and Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Programme (ABSTEP) which the GARD Center has been contracted to conduct both technical vocational and life skills training for unemployed men and women. Mrs. Musette Morgan, Chair, of the Mill Reef Fund held discussions with the staff and Executive Director concerning further collaborative work between the Fund and the Center. The Mill Reef Fund has been a strategic partner for several years supporting Camp GROW and other programs at the Center.

Mr. Vier Dublin of the National Training Agency and Dr. Linda Cooke from the Technical Vocational Educational Training Program in Canada, made a visit to discuss the involvement of the Center in a new collaborative effort with the CARICOM Education for Employment Program (C-EFE)

Broke ground for the new classrooms. The Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Takafumi Ura arrived to participate in the activities. (read more on page 25)



The Rotary Club of Antigua Sundown under the leadership of President Ato Kentish held discussions over several months with the Executive Director about the needs of the Center. We are extremely grateful that these discussions materialized into donations of five computers, three UPSs, two projectors and a tool kit for maintenance of computers. As a result of these donations we were able to expand the Center's computer lab and the additional projectors allow for several tutors to have a projector and conduct sessions simultaneously.

Staffing & Staff Development



The Executive Director, Mrs. Roberta Williams was invited to address the Commonwealth Youth Minister's Meeting held in Antigua and Barbuda in April, 2015. Her presentation was entitled *Case Study: The GARD Center, Addressing Youth Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods*



Kareem Francis, the Center's Program Officer was given the opportunity to travel to Japan on a marketing and branding course. She attended lectures on marketing, both tangible and intangible products, the difference between brand and logo, how to brand items, she also went on conducted tours to local businesses to investigate marketing, merchandising and branding methods, visited local historical sites, and interacted with a Japanese family during her home stay. She has developed an action plan which will be used for creating product and service lines for the Nature Center and income generation.

Many thanks to Ambassador Anthony Liverpool and Board Member Jacqueline Yearwood for arranging this golden opportunity.



The GARD Center also welcomed a number of interns from the Government Work Programme, who took up positions as Junior Clerks. Misses Eureka Mack, Camelar Francis, Tamisha Bryan and Cariene Winston. Mrs. Angela Ephraim, the Center's Business Administrative /Communication Officer was selected as Head Judge of the Home Families Gardens Festival competition, which is held annually by the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development.



The Center was honored on January 31st, 2015 at a gala event hosted by the Department of Youth Affairs in the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Social Transformation and Human Resource Development. GARD Center was awarded the Life Time Service award for its service to the nation's youth. Mrs. Angela Ephraim and the Executive Director received the award.

Some of the other opportunities which were available for the staff are recorded in Table 1. The GARD Center continues to widen its networks and exposure for its staff members.

Table 1

| Staff Member | Activity | Location/Dates |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Roberta Williams | Commonwealth Youth Minister's Meeting | Antigua/April, 2015 |
| Kareem Francis | CAR-12 Youth Skills Program- Inception meeting | St. Lucia/ May 2015 |
| Kareem Francis | Merchandize Branding and Marketing by Local Resources | Okinawa, Japan/ July 2015 |
| Johan Oliver | 3rd Annual Caribbean Growth Forum | St. Lucia/ June 2015 |
| Angela Ephraim | Web 2.0 & Social Media Learning Opportunity Workshop | Antigua, July 2015 |
| | Protocol Training Workshop | Antigua, May 2015 |
| Joycelyn Humphreys | OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project | Antigua/ March 6 & 7 2014 |
| | National Centre for State Courts' Regional & National Policy Framework for Diversion Workshop | Antigua/October 13-14 2014. |
| | Civil Society and Private Sector Consultation on the Development Agenda of the OECS Region | December 1-2, 2014 |
| | Juvenile Justice Reform Project Magistrate Conference | Antigua/ February 2015 |
| | Sub-Regional Capacity Building workshop on Sustainable Finance & Resource Mobilization for Biodiversity for CARICOM Member States | Antigua/ May 2015 |
| June Jackson | Ministry of Labour Work Employment Program Workshop | Antigua/June 2015 |

Courses and Workshops

The major courses conducted during this period of reporting were under the EU Women Empowerment Project, (Table 2). Trainers were drawn from the private sector and the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition to this, the Center hosted the 7th Regional Sustainable Livelihood and Youth Entrepreneurship Conference sponsored by the Caribbean Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Livelihoods (CoESL) under the theme "Getting Regionalism Right – A Strategy for Sustainable Development" from 27 – 29 October. Participants came from Barbados, Montserrat, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Kitts & Nevis, British Virgin Islands,

Guyana, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and host country Antigua and Barbuda. The Center also partnered with the CoESL and the Bank of Nova Scotia’s “Bridging the Gap Project.” A Mentoring Workshop was conducted for young entrepreneurs.

Table 2

| Course | No. of Participants | Date Held |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| EU Courses | | |
| Agriculture | 22 | Sept. 8, 2014 |
| Basic Baking & Decorating | 17 | Sept. 8, 2014 |
| Business enterprise | 8 | Sept 8, 2014 |
| Yacht Maintenance | 12 | Sept. 8, 2014 |
| ICT | 20 | May 11, 2015 |
| Parks & Maintenance | 13 | Jan. 12, 2015 |
| Other courses/workshops/conferences | | |
| Bank of Nova Scotia Mentoring Workshop “Bookkeeping- Leveraging and Separating your Personal and Business Finances” | 9 | August 2015 |
| 7th Regional Sustainable Livelihood and Youth Entrepreneurship Conference coordinated by the CoESL | 40 | 27 – 29 October, 2014 |

Exchange Trips

Mr. Jasiel Murphy, Environment Officer with the Environment Unit of the National Parks Authority received the opportunity through the Center to attend the Civil Society Climate Change Symposium in St. Lucia, in July 2015. This symposium is an example of a vital platform for discussing climate change and its related impacts on the region.

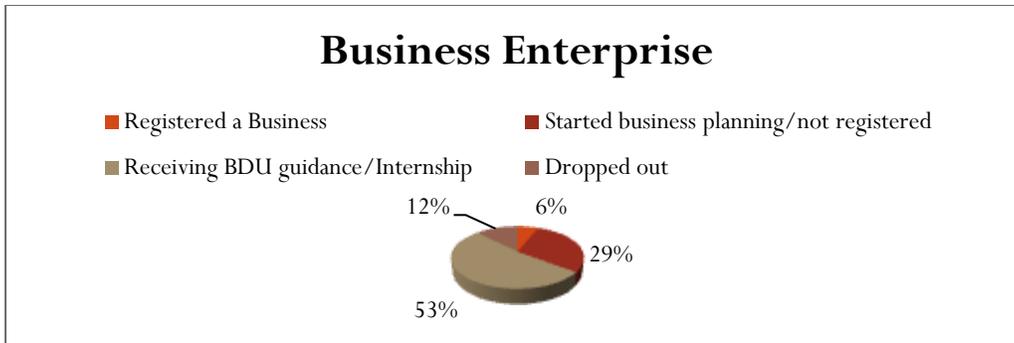
Business Development Unit

Development Unit:

From the start of the EU project until now, the Business Development Unit (BDU) has worked with approximately **201** individuals, consisting of Business Enterprise trainees, Mentors, Non-trainees (GARD Center graduates and outside entrepreneurs) and other trained GARD Center students (agriculture, craft, soap making courses, etc.).

Business Enterprise:

82 students took part in the Business Enterprise Courses (day & night). **100%** of these students either received assistance from the Business Development Unit in relation to business start-ups, or got the opportunity to receive additional job/professional training through internships.



Of the **82 students** who participated in the Business Enterprise courses, a total of **5** entrepreneurs went on to registering businesses, which amounted to **6%**. Although all of the students received BDU assistance and guidance at some point, there were **10 students** who dropped out, and abandoned services by the BDU, this amounted to **12%** of the Enterprise students. Despite those dropouts, **67 students** continued planning and working on business plans, and receiving BDU guidance or accepting internship opportunities. Those figures amounted to **29%** of those who started their business planning, and **53%** continue to receive BDU guidance or placed on internship.

Non-trainees:

75 non-trainees so far have received BDU guidance, where they either registered or had a business registered, or were unregistered and seeking to register a business while receiving business guidance.

Non-trainees are those persons who were not a part of the GARD Center's program courses, but received assistance through the promoting and networking of the BDU. All non-trainees (**100%**) not only received business guidance/assistance and mentorship aid, but were also made aware of financing opportunities through the GARD Center Revolving loan and other funding opportunities from our local financial institutions and grant funding agents. **13** of the **75 non-trainees** had or registered a business, while the remaining **62 non-trainees** received BDU assistance/services. A total of **2 non-trainees have been** placed with Mentors to date.

Other GARD Center Students:

26 other GARD Center students received BDU assistance, which included mentorship, business registering and funding opportunities.

The other GARD Center students consisted of persons in the agricultural, baking, craft, garden technician and soap making courses. Of the **26 students**, there was a 50-50 split between those who actually registered a business, and those who are in the planning of starting a business. Also, **13 entrepreneurs** were placed with Mentors, while the other **13** are awaiting placement.

Mentors:

There are a total of **17 mentors** who have been recruited and have worked along with our trained and non-trained entrepreneurs. These mentors have worked with the GARD Center students in training, past students/graduates, and non-trainees who have been guided in business through the BDU.

The BDU has participated in and hosted entrepreneurial workshops, exhibitions and training on a local and regional level, which included high school students, college students, local/regional entrepreneurs and corporate institutions. Partnerships were also garnered with reputable and corporate organizations such as local banks and credit unions, the Antigua and Barbuda Coalition of Services Industries, Antigua and Barbuda One Stop Employment Center, and the Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority.

Much recognition has been made through the GARD Center's partnership with Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) - Global Entrepreneurship Week, CoESL- Caribbean Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Livelihoods, and our local public and private business partners.

This year, GARD Center and the BDU celebrated GEW by hosting the launch of CoESL, which welcomed other Caribbean territory members such as St. Vincent, Barbados, Tortola, Trinidad & Tobago, and Montserrat. During this launch process Scotiabank around the region signed a MOU in becoming a partner in entrepreneurial endeavours with all participating CoESL countries.

Exhibitions & Displays

The Center participated in the **Annual Antigua Horticultural Flower and Garden Show** with an information booth.

Participated in Gender Affairs' **International Women's Day** street fair. The Center handed over pamphlets to the Director of Gender Affairs during the Opening ceremony. These were produced with financial assistance from the EU project. The pamphlets were developed in a user-friendly format concerning women rights.

25th Anniversary Celebrations Service: *Celebrating 25 years of Service through Training: Inspiring, Empowering, Motivating the Lives of Young Men and Women* was the theme for the 25th anniversary celebrations. A heartwarming service was planned by Board Vice Chair, Dame Eusalyn Lewis with a small sub-committee. Although the attendance was somewhat disappointing, the service officiated by Reverends Wade and Henry gave God all the thanks and glory for what He has done throughout these 25 years.

The Executive Director prepared a short voiced slide presentation on her reflections of the Center's 25 years. She also took the opportunity to present the longest serving member of staff, Mrs. Angela Ephraim with a clock plaque, thanking her for her commitment and passion for the work at the GARD Center.

Projects

EU/GARDC: Empowerment of Young Vulnerable Women of Antigua and Barbuda in their Income Generation Project

Project Achievements

- **220 young women graduated in varying disciplines**
- **134 were gainfully employed**
- **8 pursuing entrepreneurial ventures**
- **Established and launched a Business Development Unit in the city of St. John's**
- **Established a Business Mentoring program**
- **Published a series of business development brochures on various topics**
- **Published two case studies**
- **Released a promotional video highlighting women in non-traditional roles**
- **Published brochures and factsheets on Women Rights in Antigua and Barbuda**



On 16 December, 2014, the final cohorts of trainees graduated 137, totaling 209 graduates during the last two years. Agriculture, Basic Baking and Decorating, Business Enterprise, Computer Repair, Exceptional Hospitality Executive Provisioner, Food and Beverage, Yacht Maintenance, ICT, Weaving and Textile, were the courses offered during the last cohorts. The final graduation saw a packed church both upstairs and down at the Ebenezer Methodist Church, with His Excellency Dr. Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General attending and, the Honorable Melford Nicholas, Minister of Information and Technology, who addressed the graduates. The ceremony ended with a wonderful rendition of “Light your Candle” by the Master of Ceremony and entertainer Ms. Patrice Martin.



His Excellency Dr. Sir Rodney
Williams and Graduate



Hon. Minister Melford
Nicholas and Graduate

Petro de Venezuela Caribe Antigua and Barbuda (PDV CAB)

PDVCAB is a government owned company which conducts activities connected to the PetroCaribe Initiative, which supports social projects related to the socio-economic inequalities in the nation. A contractual agreement was established between the GARD Center and the PDVCAB. A Crop Initiative Project involving onion production for export was presented by LCP Industries, a youth agro enterprise company, and the Center to PDVCAB. The project was slated to include the production of onions on 30 acres, involvement of contract farmers and the training of 29 youth in agricultural production, small farm equipment, life skills and other pertinent skills.

Throughout this project Antigua and Barbuda and the rest of the Eastern Caribbean have been experiencing a serious drought which has had tremendous impact on the agricultural sectors. 2015 will go down in meteorological history as the driest year on record for Antigua and Barbuda in nearly 150 years. The island-average rainfall was a paltry 574.5 mm (22.62 in), the lowest in a series from, at least, 1871, (<https://anumetservice.wordpress.com/>). Locally, the project's onion production plans came to a halt with only 5000 pounds being harvested on one acre. Despite efforts to find alternatives to the water crisis including investigating the possibilities of accessing an osmosis plant, no further planting of onions was possible.



Although very disappointing, 70% of the project was successfully completed with the purchasing and assembling of the farm and post harvest equipment valued over \$ 900,000, preparation of lands, purchase of irrigation equipment, seeds and chemicals. The social component of the project graduated 31 youth in agricultural practices with cross cutting sessions in ICT, life skills and remedial Math and English. Internships were an option with placements at the Ministry of Agriculture i.e. Dunbars Crop Research Station, Christian Valley Plant Propagation Station, Cotton Station; Purcell's Farm, Coles Farm, Faraquat Farms, Antigua Beekeepers Cooperative and the GARD Center. A total of fifteen experienced farmers/entrepreneurs have confirmed their intentions of being involved in the project. The GARD Center is committed to working with LCP Industries to bring this exciting and potentially impactful program involving a number of Young farmers to fruition.



Camp GROW

Camp GROW celebrated five years of making a difference in the lives of young Antiguan and Barbudans. Camp GROW 2015 was hosted from August 10th- August 21st by the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) and the Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center (GARD Center). For two weeks, 48 Antiguan children between the ages of 8 – 11 years came together to cultivate an appreciation for, and understanding of, the natural world. This was accomplished through a variety of outdoor and practical learning activities. Camp GROW was geared towards raising the environmental awareness of its participants and offered the teachers and counselors a golden opportunity to work with resourceful and passionate young people.



Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroot Human Security Project



The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the above mentioned, was held on Friday, 6 March on site at the GARD Center. Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, Mr. Takafumi Ura, represented and signed the Contract on behalf of his Embassy. Construction of the counseling rooms and training workshop is well underway.



Mill Reef Fund

The Mill Reef Fund continues to be a valuable partner contributing to the work of the Center. This past year their funds supported one of the Center's Ground Maintenance courses which was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Agriculture. Further details of the course outcome, refer to page 28 under ABSTEP. Many thanks to the Mill Reef Fund for their continued interest and support of the Center's programs.

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

The UMW has been very supportive of the Center's programs over the years. Funds for this reported period were used in a project which addressed the needs of the most vulnerable women and was aimed at engendering greater access to and control of income generating opportunities, increasing control over labour time and labour power and providing access to resources of production.

The project aimed at combining a multi-sectoral approach and providing vulnerable women with needed vocational and entrepreneurial training as well as access to job markets (for vocational track) and / or access to financial and business development services (for entrepreneurial track) and provided support services such as childcare in the initial stages. One of the project's ambitions was to alter the public discourse featuring the income generating possibilities and strategies for vulnerable women.

Furthermore, the project built on pre existing public and private partnerships that would be further developed bringing together e.g. Directorate of Gender Affairs, governmental and non-governmental training institutions as well as financial service providers.

ABSTEP: Parks and Recreation Ground Maintenance Training Program

The six month Parks and Recreation course in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour has been displaying great results as the trainees continue to acquire skills in pruning techniques, pest identification, fertilizing, trail blazing, pathway development, planting and watering, production of seedlings, operation of equipment, stone work, minor carpentry and masonry. These trainees will be able to either establish their own businesses or work at hotels and other businesses with landscapes. A second cohort will start in October, 2015 of 15 new recruits.



Farm-to-Table

ANNUAL FARM TO TABLE LUNCHEON: *Where Cuisine Goes, Agriculture Follows:*

Farm-to-Table refers to a movement concerned with producing food locally and delivering that food to local consumers. The GARD Center as a part of their 25 years as a vocational and entrepreneurial training institution for vulnerable youth, providing them with a second chance to become skilled and competitive in a global environment; decided to celebrate our producers and to highlight the good quality and healthiness of our local foods. This event is expected to be an important fund raiser for the GARD Center's programs and services for vulnerable youth.

An organizing committee brought together chefs, farmers, agricultural and tourism professionals and a number of volunteers, organizations and government ministries. Close to 200 persons patronized the event including the Governor General. There were chefs from several hotels. Four major chefs developed the menus and cooked. Twelve (12) farmers donated their produce. The GARD Center graduates of Food and Beverage training were the servers. The Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality and Training Institute (ABHTI) donated some of the cutlery and crockery.

The event was quite an affair to organize, however a special thank you to the Center's staff who really worked beyond the call of duty selling tickets, and on that day, bringing their family members to volunteer and help to prepare the site, serve, park cars and even wash dishes. A sincere thank you also goes to the advisory committee. Despite the challenges, most people want this to be an annual event.



New Partnerships

CAR 19 Yacht Maintenance Course

“Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan), in partnership with Caribbean ministries and training institutions, developed the CARICOM Education for Employment Program (C-EFE), a program which is funded by Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), and the Youth Skills Development Programme (YSD), a program funded by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID)”¹.

The GARD Center through the Antigua and Barbuda National Training Agency has joined this institutional partnership to engage unemployed youth in vocational technical training and entrepreneurial skills. The age group being targeted in this program is between the ages of 15 and 29 years. The Center will be collaborating with a university, Groupe Collegia-Cegep de la Gasdesie et des Iles of Quebec, Canada, who will be assisting in developing a curriculum model for Yacht Maintenance and establishing awards for CVQ certification.

The Car 19 Yacht maintenance program begins Sept 1st 2015. The course will run for 12 weeks to include a 2 week internship. Forty two trainees, comprising 40 males and 2 females, have registered. They will be trained in the disciplines of welding, fiber-glassing, varnishing and boat repair.

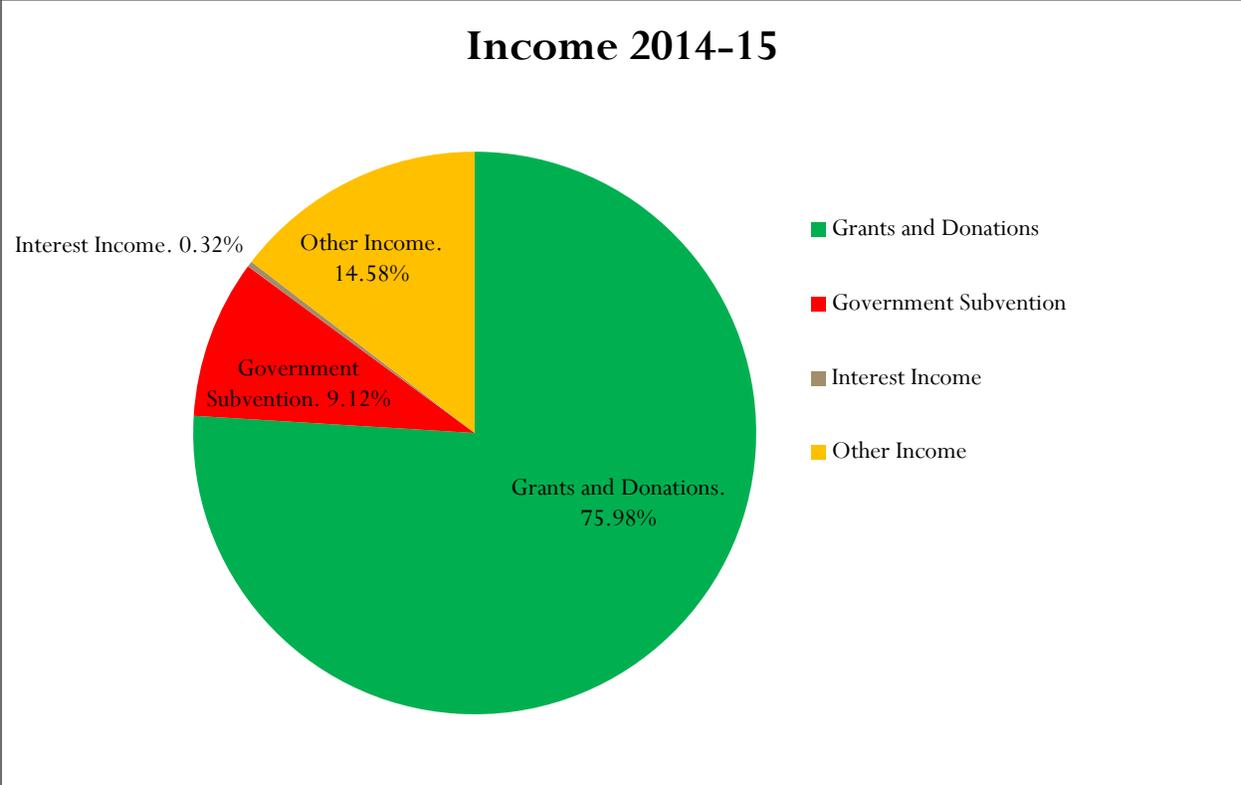
¹ C-EFE/YSD Pre-Technology Partnership 18-month workplan: AND TEMPLATES FOR PREPARATION OF IIP AND BUDGET 2015



Financial Statements

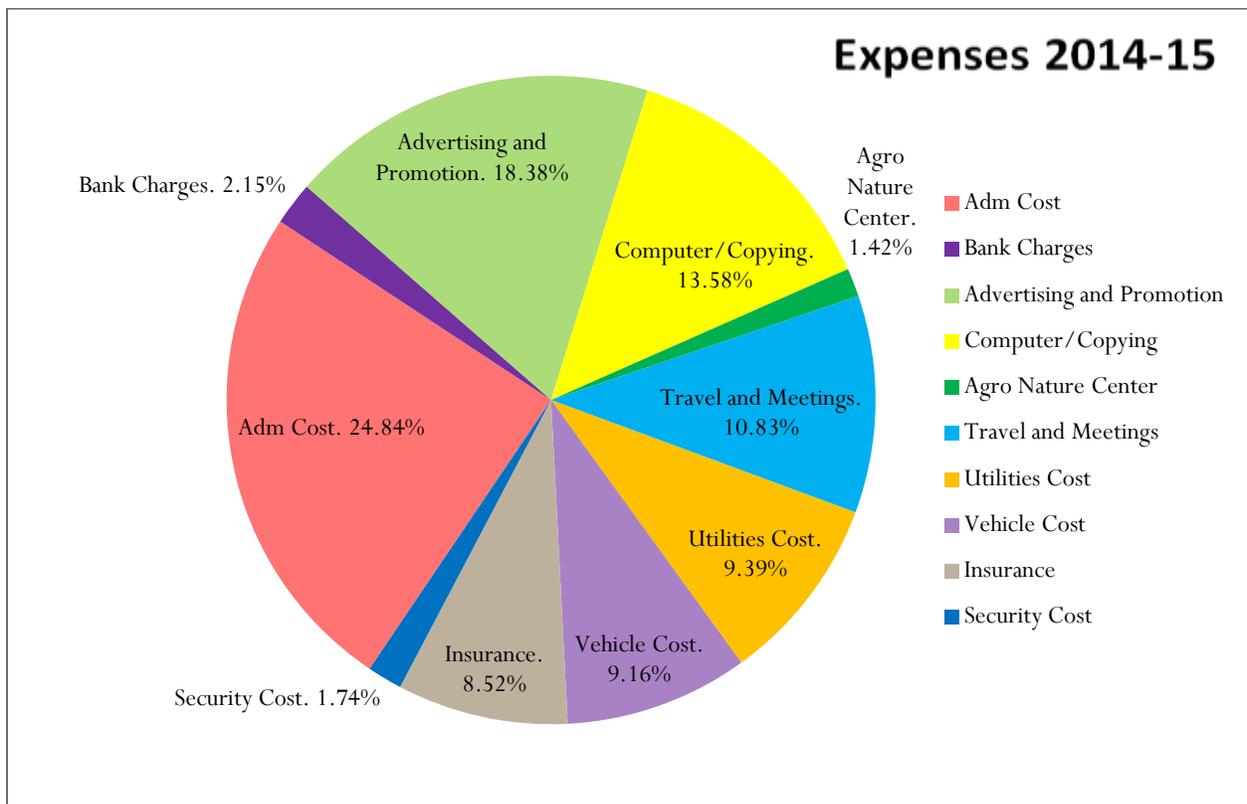
Revenue September 2014- August 2015

| Income | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Grants and Donations | 659,895.10 | 75.98% |
| Government Subvention | 79,200.00 | 9.12% |
| Interest Income | 2,811.41 | 0.32% |
| Other Income | <u>126,654.99</u> | 14.58% |
| Total Income | <u>868,561.50</u> | |



Expenses September 2014 – August 2015

| Expenses | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Payroll Expenses | 331,476.55 | 31.20% |
| Training Cost | 254,925.94 | 24.00% |
| Projects | 193,936.91 | 18.26% |
| Contract Services | 88,965.00 | 8.37% |
| Facilities and Equipment | 84,147.93 | 7.92% |
| Adm Cost | 27,044.09 | 2.55% |
| Bank Charges | 2,338.93 | 0.22% |
| Advertising and Promotion | 20,015.78 | 1.88% |
| Computer/Copying | 14,784.50 | 1.39% |
| Agro Nature Center | 1,548.00 | 0.15% |
| Travel and Meetings | 11,791.58 | 1.11% |
| Utilities Cost | 10,225.09 | 0.96% |
| Vehicle Cost | 9,970.17 | 0.94% |
| Insurance | 9,279.00 | 0.87% |
| Security Cost | 1,896.30 | 0.18% |
| Total Expense | 1,062,345.77 | |



Acknowledgements

(Excerpt from the Executive Directors' presentation at the 25th Anniversary Church Service, Ebenezer Methodist Church)

I want to humbly and sincerely say thank you to the GARD Center staff both present and those who have served throughout the years, for going beyond the call of duty so many times to meet the needs of our youth despite the Center's limited resources. To the tutors and volunteers who have shared their talents and skills and often "wore many hats" in order to ensure successful programs. To our partners, internationally, regionally and locally who agreed to support our efforts and who helped to mobilize valuable resources, avoiding wasteful duplications and unnecessary competition for the same.

I have to especially mention the original tripartite relationship that was established in 1989, The MCCA, the Government of Canada and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. We are indebted to the MCCA for their social investment in the youth of this Nation and for their contribution of land, a classroom and office which served us for the first twelve years.

To the Canadian Government through the Canada Training Awards Project for not only the funding that was offered for the first two years but also for understanding and allowing the Center the flexibility to shape and mold the initial project to better meet the needs of youth in this country. And finally, a special thank you to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda who have been providing a monthly subvention, a building which houses our administrative offices, classroom and computer lab, utilities and technical resource persons, especially from the Ministry of Agriculture.

May the God who has been the shade upon my right hand bless each and every one of you. Thank you for helping to "Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees Isaiah 35:3.

