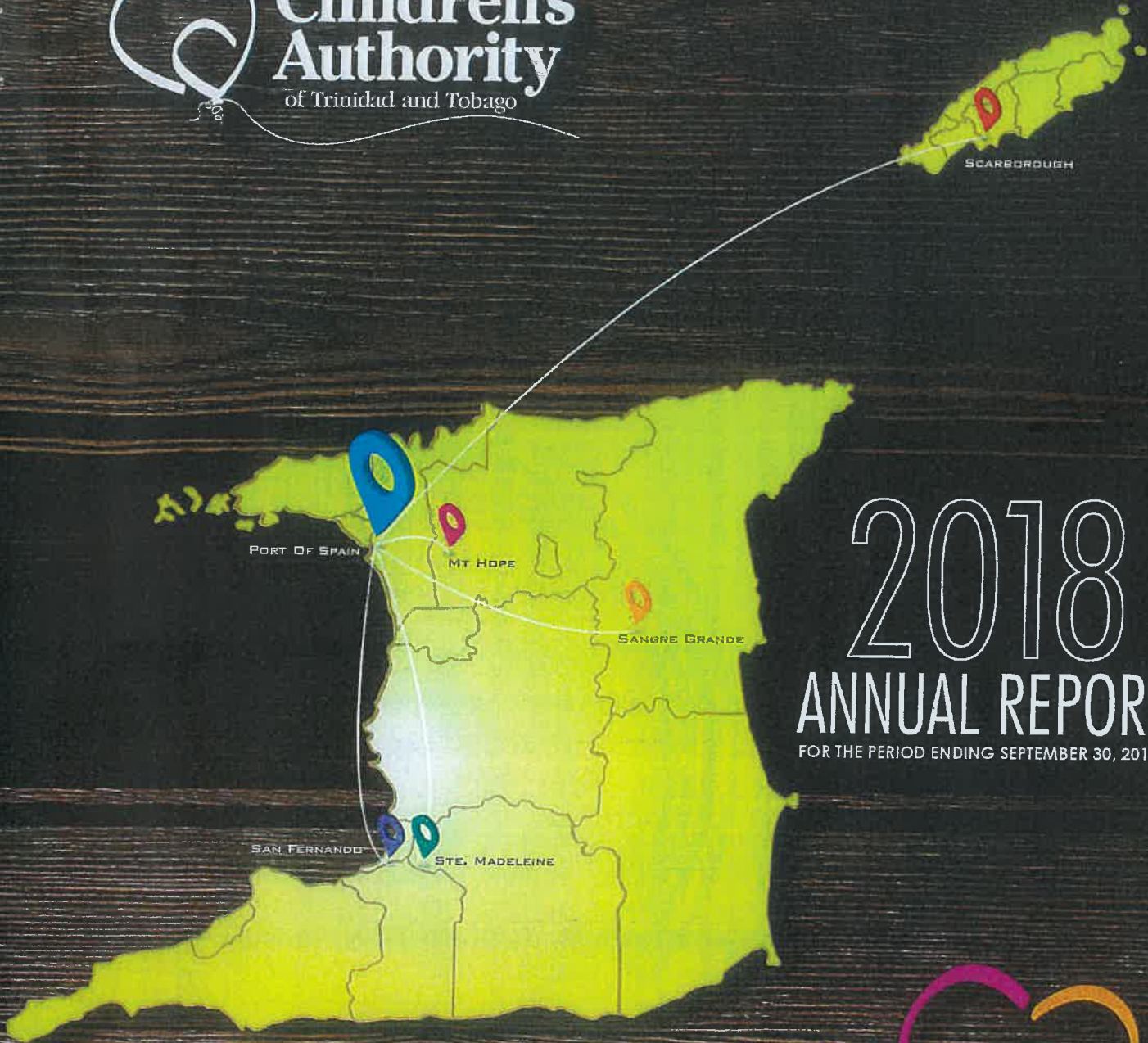




**Children's
Authority**
of Trinidad and Tobago



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2018



www.ttchildren.org

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CA	Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CC	Children Court of Trinidad and Tobago
CCRFCNA	Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act
CFSU	Child and Family Services Unit
CHATT	Children's Home Association of Trinidad and Tobago
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CPU	Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
CSA	Children's Services Associate
CSC	Child Support Centre
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CTU	Counter Trafficking Unit
DP	Development Programme
DHV	District Health Visitor
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ERT	Emergency Response Team
FAHSSE	Facilities, Administration and Health, Safety, Security and Environment
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FCDA	Family and Children Division Act
HSSE	Health, Safety, Security and Environment
ICCS	International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
ISP	Independent Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
JCP	Juvenile Court Project
JIFF	Juvenile Inventory For Functioning
L&M	Licensing and Monitoring
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPM (GCA)	Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PAP	Prospective Adoptive Parent
SOAP	Subjective, Objective, Assessment and Plan
SSSD	Student Support Services Division
TTPS	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
WAN	Wide Area Network
YLSCMI	Youth Level of Service Case Management Inventory
YTC	Youth Training Centre





LIST OF KEY TERMS

Adoption Order

An Adoption Order is made for the purpose of authorising the applicant to adopt a child. The Court will need to be satisfied that the welfare and best interest of the child will be promoted by the adoption and the applicant is a fit person to have the custody and sufficient ability to raise, maintain and educate the child. The application is made pursuant to section 18 of the Adoption of Children Act, Chapter 46:03 and must be supported by a recommendation from the Authority.

Affidavit

An Affidavit is a written statement of truth and facts. It is signed by a person who is swearing to the statements contained in the document. The affidavit is usually used as evidence in Court.

Care Order

A Care Order is made for the purpose of placing a child under the care of the Authority or a community residence. This order is usually pursued where, upon investigation, the Authority is of the view that the child is in need of care and protection and it would be in the best interest of the child to be received into care by the Authority. The application is made pursuant to section 25(c) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10.

Care Plan

A Care Plan is a written statement of the child's assessment needs. It highlights the social, mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, and medical needs of the child and the supports required in these domains for accomplishing these goals. It is a detailed outline of the specific requirements needed, and in essence, implements the recommendations of the treatment plan. In our setting, this will be done by external social workers assigned to the child or family, and will be guided by the treatment plan sent from the Assessment Centre. The Care Plan would then be monitored by the Children's Authority to determine whether it is being implemented, and to make recommendations for adherence.

Child Assessment Order

A Child Assessment Order is made for the purpose of ascertaining the status of a child's health, development or the manner in which the child has been treated, and may require the medical, psychiatric and psychological examination of the child. This Order is pursued where the Authority has reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer physical, emotional, mental or psychological harm or where it is unlikely that the assessment can be satisfactorily conducted without the Authority obtaining the Order. The application is made pursuant to section 25(d) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10.



LIST OF KEY TERMS CONT'D

Child in Need of Care and Protection

A Child in Need of Care and Protection means a child referred to in Section 22(1) of the Children's Authority Act, Chap. 46:10:

- a. has neither parent nor guardian who is fit to exercise care and guardianship
- b. is lost or has been and remains abandoned by his parent or guardian
- c. whose parent or guardian is prevented by -
 - i. reason of mental or bodily disease
 - ii. Infirmity or other capacity; or
 - iii. any other circumstances
 from providing for his upbringing, and there is no available person or persons capable, fit or willing to undertake the care of such child;
- d. is exposed to moral danger
- e. is beyond the control of his parent or guardian
- f. is ill-treated or neglected in a manner likely to cause him suffering or injury to health
- g. is destitute or is wandering without any settled place of abode and without visible means of subsistence
- h. is begging or receiving alms
- i. is found loitering for the purpose of begging or receiving alms
- j. frequents the company of any criminal; or frequents the company of any common or reputed prostitute not being the mother of the child.

Children in Conflict with the Law

The term "Child/ren in Conflict with the Law" is frequently used as an umbrella to refer to a child who has been suspected, accused, detained for, or charged with a criminal offence in Trinidad and Tobago.

The following legislation gives support to this proposed definition:

- Schedule 5 of the Family and Children Division Act (partially proclaimed)

"Child charged" means a child who has been charged with an offence and is awaiting the outcome of a hearing or trial;

"Child offender" means a child who has been convicted of a criminal offence;

Children in Need of Supervision (CHINS)

The term "Child/ren in Need of Supervision" is a new concept designed to replace the term "Beyond Control". The Family and Children Division Act (Schedule 5) sought to amend section 61 of the Children Act, 12 of 2012 by repealing the section and replacing it with the following:

(1) Where a parent, guardian or person with responsibility for a child proves to the Children Court that he is unable to control the child and he desires alternative placement for the child, the Court shall order that the child be brought to the attention of the Authority.

(2) Where subsection (1) applies, the child shall be termed "a child in need of supervision."

Research suggests that children classified as "Child in Need of Supervision", moderately to frequently display behaviours described as risky, such as engaging in "alcohol and drug abuse, early and/or unprotected sex, low academic performance, school desertion, crime, delinquency and violence" (according to the Inter-American Development Bank (2014))¹

¹The Inter-American Development Bank article entitled *At Risk Youth an urgent challenge for the Caribbean*



LIST OF KEY TERMS CONT'D

Children's Home

Children's Home means a residence for the care and rehabilitation of children and includes orphanages as defined in the Children Act.

Closed Adoption

In a Closed Adoption, the biological parents and adoptive parents do not share a relationship; neither party has any identifying information about the other and there is no contact. In this type of adoption, the child is matched with the prospective adopter based on the profile of the child requested. Closed Adoptions provide birth parents with a sense of closure.

Community Residence

A Community Residence means a children's home or rehabilitation centre and includes Industrial Schools and Orphanages referred to in the Children Act.

Emergency Protection Order

An Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is made when the Court is of the view that the child is likely to suffer physical, emotional, mental or psychological harm or if enquiries to determine the foregoing are being frustrated by unreasonable refusal of access to the child and the CA has reason to believe that access to the child is required as a matter of urgency.

Family Assistance Order

A Family Assistance Order is made for the purpose of providing counselling and any other relevant assistance deemed necessary for the well-being of the child. The application is made pursuant to section 25(a) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10.

Fit Person Order

A Fit Person Order is made for the purpose of placing a child under the care of a fit person. A fit person can be defined as a person or entity that is found by the Court to be suitable to care for the child based on the Authority's conduct of a successful suitability for placement assessment at the home of the potential fit person. The application is made pursuant to section 25(g) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10.

Foster Care Order

A Foster Care Order is made for the purpose of placing a child in foster care, which is defined as the assumption of temporary care, maintenance and parental obligations by an approved foster parent. This Order can be pursued where the Authority deems that a child is in need of care and protection. The application is made pursuant to section 25(i) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10.

Freeing Order

A Freeing Order is made for the purpose of declaring a child as free for adoption. This is necessary where the Authority accepts an application made by a person to place a child for adoption. Upon the grant of the Order, the child shall remain in the care of the Authority and can be placed with a foster parent or in a community residence until the child is placed with suitable adopters. The application is made pursuant to section 15 of the Adoption of Children Act, Chapter 46:03.



LIST OF KEY TERMS CONT'D

Home Study

A home study is the comprehensive screening of the Prospective Adoptive Parent (PAP), their family and their home environment. It seeks to educate and prepare the prospective parent for adoption and evaluate their capability and suitability to adopt.

Imminent Danger

Imminent Danger means the likelihood of physical, emotional, mental or psychological harm.

Open Adoption

In an Open Adoption, the biological parents and the adoptive parents share a relationship. The adoptive and biological parents can agree to have an arrangement that allows the biological parents to maintain a relationship with the child. An Open Adoption may often involve the adoption of a godchild, niece, nephew, grandchild, neighbour's child or the child of a spouse.

Recovery Order

A Recovery Order is made when a child, who is the subject of a Care Order, has been unlawfully taken away from the person who has parental care and responsibility for the child or if the child has run away or is staying away from the person who has parental care and responsibility for him/her or if the child is missing. It directs any person who is in a position to do so, to produce the child to any member of the TTPS or to any person authorised by the Authority. The Recovery Order also authorises the removal of the child by the TTPS or the Authority and further authorises the TTPS to enter any premises specified by the Order, to search for the child and use reasonable force, if necessary.

Rehabilitation Centre

A Rehabilitation Centre means a residence for the rehabilitation of child offenders, in which child offenders are lodged, clothed, and fed as well as taught and includes Industrial Schools as defined in the Children Act.

SOAP

SOAP is the acronym for Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan. It is a format for clinical documentation used in a range of social service and health care fields, which generates ongoing assessment and charts a client's progress and treatment success.

Supervised Access

Supervised Access refers to supervised visits between parents/guardians/families and their children. This can either be Court-ordered or recommended on an individual basis. The Child and Family Services Unit facilitates transport of children to these visits. In some cases, the Unit also provides supervision during the visits.

Supervision Order

A Supervision Order is made for the purpose of requiring either the child; the parents or guardians of the child; any person with care and control of the child; or any teacher or instructor of the child, to meet with the Authority or any probation officer, social worker or counsellor designated by the Authority, so that the manner in which the child is being cared for may be supervised by the Authority.



LIST OF KEY TERMS CONT'D

This Order is pursued in the case where the Authority wishes to intervene and provide the necessary counselling to the child and sometimes to the adults who are present in the child's life or to monitor the child's upbringing in cases where the child has been reintegrated with his or her family. The application is made pursuant to section 25(k) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10 as amended by Schedule 3 paragraph 6 (b) and (c) of the Children Act, 2012.

Treatment Plan

The formulation and implementation of treatment plans fall within the responsibility of the Children's Authority, as stated in Section 14 (4) (a) and (c) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10. A Treatment Plan refers to an individualised treatment guide that is derived by a multidisciplinary team after the initial assessment and diagnostic summary of a client's case. In our setting, it refers to the deliverable of the multidisciplinary case conference at the Assessment Centre.

This Plan outlines the overarching presenting problem, a breakdown of the problems related to this larger problem, the therapeutic goals and objectives for the child as they relate to the solution of the problems identified, therapeutic interventions to achieve the objectives and goals, as well as a time estimate to achieve those. These would then inform the necessary referrals, and provide recommendations to such agencies about the needed interventions that are to be further developed. The Treatment Plan therefore forms part of the larger care plan.

Wardship Order

A Wardship declaration mandates that any fundamental decision which would affect the child must be made with the consent of the Court, including any change to the current residence/placement of the minor. The application is made pursuant to section 35 of the Family Law (Guardianship of Minors, Domicile and Maintenance) Act, Chapter 46:08 and Part 34 of the Family Proceedings Rules, 1998.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Report for the period October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018 of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, highlights the organisation's achievements and challenges during the year. However, the abusive situation experienced by the country's children, for whom the Authority is mandated to protect, is highlighted early in the document. It gives a clear picture of the monumental task that the Authority and the country must relentlessly address.

While the Authority has received more reports of children being abused and maltreated in the age group 10-13 years old, lower numbers are recorded in the age groups under 1-year-old and up to 3-years-old. This data in no way can be interpreted as children in these age groups are less vulnerable. In fact, it can be argued that these groups of children are more susceptible to abuse and maltreatment, since they are often unable to adequately express themselves. Therefore, it is even more incumbent upon parents and guardians to monitor children in these age categories and identify any changes that may warrant the intervention of the Authority.

A notable change in the data for the administrative districts in Trinidad, is the increase in the number of reports for Tunapuna-Piarco. In previous data presented by the Authority, San Juan-Laventille always recorded the highest number of reports of abuse and maltreatment, with Tunapuna-Piarco ranking second. Changes occurring in the data will be keenly monitored and public education strategies enhanced to improve reporting throughout the country.

With respect to the types of abuse perpetrated against children, the data continues to be consistent, with sexual abuse, neglect and physical abuse recorded as the highest reported categories.

The Authority is confident that through sustained education and public discussion about the various types of abuse and the confidential nature of reporting, the public has become more emboldened to make reports to the Hotlines 996 or 800-2014 and the Police.

The Annual Report is therefore a reminder that child abuse must be vigorously addressed by all sectors of the society.





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

August 25, 2018, marked my one-year anniversary as Chairman of the Board of Management of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. I wish to thank the members of the Board of Management for standing with me and sharing the vision to have the Authority deliver on its mandate.

Although the task is challenging, through the combined efforts and competencies of the Board, along with the Director, Executive and staff, the Authority has been able to find innovative solutions to address the needs of clients.



HANIF E. A. BENJAMIN

"Collaboration is the foundation upon which the Authority was built, as it increases the chances of the child protection system being responsive and working in the best interest of children."

I wish to pay special tribute to Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye, who received the Hummingbird Medal (Gold) at the 2018 National Awards Ceremony for her loyal and devoted service to Trinidad and Tobago in the fields of public service and youth development. Mrs. Thompson-Ahye serves as Deputy Chairman of the Board of Management, Chair of the Authority's Adoption Committee and the Tenders Committee. She also serves as a member of the Human Resources Committee and the Stakeholder Engagement Committee. The Board of Management,

Executive and staff applaud Mrs. Thompson-Ahye for her sterling contribution to Trinidad and Tobago and by extension, the Children's Authority.

In my Annual Report 2017 message, I set out a number of deliverables as a Board. The Board knew this agenda was indeed a mammoth task; however, every member of the team was very committed.

The areas under focus were:

- *To promote the adoption of older children*
- *To develop policies for children with mental health disorders and developmental disabilities*
- *To conduct an HR Audit to ensure the Authority has the required number of skilled staff to meet the needs of those we serve*
- *To develop more strategic partnerships*
- *To sign a Memorandum of Understanding with key stakeholders*
- *To amend laws which would cater to the needs of children*
- *To expand the outreach campaign and connect with the public*

I am pleased to report that during Fiscal 2018, the Board of Management achieved the milestones it had charted in the first few months of operations and listed in my 2017 message. At the top of the agenda was the revision of the Strategic Plan, since the last document was developed for the period 2013 to 2016.





The development of the Plan was a collaborative effort hammered out over a weekend, between the Board of Management and staff – both Executive and managerial. Our combined experiences and expertise led to the formation of a document that is based on a systems-strengthening approach, which will chart the course for the Authority over the period 2018-2021.

The result of these exercises will guide the organisation’s functions, processes, policies, protocols and projects, as the agency continues to grow and evolve over the next three years. There are also six new operational goals, which are geared towards the improvement of service delivery. As is often quoted, “Where there is no vision the people perish”, therefore the Board of Management is committed to ensuring that the ship that is the Children’s Authority, is set on the right course.


Some of our other achievements include the conduct of a Human Resource Audit to ensure a skilled workforce to meet the needs of those we serve. Therefore, a Human Resource Audit was conducted to comprehensively review the organisation’s functions, policies, processes, and protocols, in order to identify any areas that required upgrading. The exercise was successful and well received, as all levels of staff, and a wide cross-section of our stakeholders were allowed to participate during the review. The recommendations are currently being rolled-out throughout the Authority.

Collaboration is the foundation upon which the Authority was built, as it increases the chances of the child protection system being responsive and working in the best interest of children. In this regard, the Board of Management, through the Stakeholder Engagement Committee, was able to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Counter Trafficking Unit of the Ministry of National Security and the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development, Tobago House of Assembly.

Other agencies, which the Authority has engaged to develop MOUs in the shortest period, include all Regional Health Authorities, the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Student Support Services of the Ministry of Education, and the Tobago House of Assembly. It is expected that these will be signed during Fiscal 2019.

In an effort to ensure all our children receive timely and efficient service, we saw the opening of an Assessment Centre in Sangre Grande, which marked the continued expansion of the Authority’s services. During this fiscal, Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) and the Authority for the South Regional Office and Assessment Centre in Ste. Madeleine. This will be opened in the first quarter of Fiscal 2019. Additionally, we will soon establish the Chaguanas and Tobago Centres, as well as Regional Offices.

On the topic of Tobago, the Board of Management has set a target of full operations in the sister-isle during Fiscal 2019. This push began in fiscal 2017, and is well on the way, this includes a Regional Office, a Child Support Centre, and an Assessment Centre. The Child Support Centre will be opened in the first quarter of fiscal 2019. Furthermore, a full public education campaign has also been launched. Special thanks to the Authority’s Line-Minister, Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy, and Councillor Mrs. Agatha Carrington, Secretary of Health, Wellness and Family Development, for their immense support in making this goal a reality for those children in Tobago, who are in need of care and protection.



The hardworking and committed staff of the Authority inspired the Board of Management. The Board has therefore set clear mandates that will ensure staff members are able to continue delivering a high level of service to clients. These mandates include, but are not limited to,

- *A comprehensive review and change of the operating system*
- *An overall modification of the information management system*
- *Continued recruitment of staff for all areas of the Authority's operations and*
- *The full roll-out of the recommendation of the HR Audit*

A major focus of the Board would also be greater emphasis placed on Foster Care and Adoption, encouraging persons wishing to adopt to consider older children, children living with mental illness, different forms of disabilities, and other special needs.

There is a dire need for the establishment of the National Protocol on Child Abuse to guide the way the social services sector collaboratively addresses the needs of children, who present with varying types of abuse and maltreatment. While all the agencies in the sector have a range of strengths and resources, they will be more beneficial if pooled, in order to offer much-needed long-term service to clients, avoid duplication of services and or re-traumatisation of clients. The Authority will therefore, continue efforts to have the Protocol come to fruition, to ensure services are relevant and timely within Fiscal 2019.

During this fiscal the Authority, along with the Office of the Attorney General and other stakeholders, saw a number of amendments to our legalisation go before the Parliament. As we seek to strengthen the laws in relation to children and our operations, there is a constant need to strengthen the legislative mandate to encompass new challenges. As a result, discussions will continue with the relevant agencies to ensure that legislative reform occurs.

As Chairman, I am pleased with the work of the Board in all areas identified in the previous fiscal.

- *We set out to promote the adoption of older children. This was and continues to be realised as we participated in a number of outreaches within Trinidad and Tobago.*
- *We set out to develop policies for children with mental health disorders and developmental disabilities. We were able at the highest level of policymaking, to engage the national public as we appeared before a Joint Select Committee of Parliament and submitted a comprehensive report and recommendations before the said committee.*
- *We indicated that we would conduct an HR audit to ensure the Authority has the required number of skilled staff. This was successfully completed and the recommendations being implemented throughout the Authority.*
- *We sought to develop more strategic partnerships and to sign Memorandums of Understanding with key stakeholders. We were able to develop these partnerships and signed a few MOUs. This is ongoing and will continue in the new fiscal.*
- *We set out to amend laws, which would cater to the needs of children. This task was successfully completed, as the amendments went before the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. We will continue to further develop in this area.*
- *As a Board, we set out to expand the outreach campaign and connect with the public. This continues to be a major success, as we saw the advent of our Facebook presence and over 40 appearances on television and radio, print and other media platforms, our reach into the schools, communities and in places of worship.*



The Board of Management continues to set ambitious targets, which are achievable through partnerships with all stakeholders in the sector, whether they are government, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, or social service providers. The Board also recognises this cannot be done without the dedicated members of staff at the Authority.

While we also recognise that this is new to Trinidad and Tobago and we do not always get it right, this Board will continue to work assiduously to ensure accountability in all areas. We will ensure that we constantly improve our delivery of service and provide the best assistance to all the children we serve. We remain committed to finding strategic approaches to address the scourge of abuse, which is perpetrated upon the children of Trinidad and Tobago.

May God bless us all.

HANIF E. A. BENJAMIN
Chairman





MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Child protection is everybody's business!

Those words have been the Authority's mantra over the past three years, as it not only seeks to provide care and protection to children and their families, but to prevent child abuse.

The Authority is ever mindful that prevention is the best defence against child abuse. Through an increase in the awareness about the impact of child abuse and maltreatment, it is expected that public attitudes will change towards children and their protection. In fact, I am buoyed by consistent reporting to the Authority's Hotline, as well as the Police, since it shows the messages are making an impact.



SAFIYA NOEL

"A significant stakeholder for the Authority is the Government. In fact our line Ministry, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) has made significant efforts to provide the Authority with the resources it needs. One area in which we look forward to additional support from the Government is the provision of adequate placement options for children who must be received into care, to ensure that their safety and treatment needs are met."

As you comb through the Report, I wish to draw your attention to some significant successes in the Authority's core areas of business. It is in the Care, Legal and Regulatory areas that the lives of children and families, who come to the attention of the Authority, are impacted.

Below is a snapshot of some achievements that are contained in the report:


- Over 3,800 direct and Indirect interventions provided by the Child and Family Services Unit.
- Over 1,600 cases of child abuse thoroughly examined by the Investigation Unit
- Over 300 cases of child abuse cases still being investigated
- Over 19,000 calls fielded by the Registry Unit
- Over 360 emergency reports of child abuse responded to immediately
- Assisted the TTPS with 28 forensic interviews and 250 forensic medical examinations
- 121 full multidisciplinary assessments conducted

During the year under review, the Authority also expanded its reach beyond the website to social media, with the activation of Facebook and Instagram pages. This allows the organisation to engage with a wider cross section of its diverse audience.

The Authority has stated on several occasions, that even before its operations began, there was significant public anticipation for the agency to begin providing services. The child protection system in which the Authority began operating was considered fragmented with gaps in coverage, inadequate assessments and case management, re-traumatisation of children and insufficient physical infrastructure for the intake of children.

While the Authority has been able to address some of the areas of concern, the child protection system is far from perfect. In reality, it is impractical to expect any one agency to single-handedly contend with the growing numbers of children that often need long-term support.





A continuous cry by all agencies in the sector is the need for placement options for children who must be removed from their families. Children's homes, which for years have been the only viable option for several agencies, are often filled to capacity or unable to accommodate children with special needs, teenagers and children displaying challenging behaviours.

Even though the Authority has noted on several occasions that a placement crisis exists, we continue to receive calls from all quarters to find accommodation for children. Solutions are necessary, as the situation is untenable. We will therefore restructure teams within the Authority so that all children in children's homes are actively being case-managed to ensure that their stay is as short as possible.

The Adoption Unit has been tasked with reviewing the circumstances under which children are resident at the Homes throughout the country, in order to identify if there are any children who can be freed for adoption. No child should spend his or her formative years at a children's home and the Authority will do everything possible to ensure that does not happen.

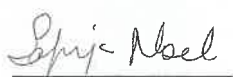
The Authority also plans to conduct rigorous training for Fit Persons and other family members who make the decision to provide support to a child in need of care and protection. The first phase in that child's rehabilitation is to be placed in a supportive family environment. However, when the placement breaks down it increases the likelihood of negative outcomes and can intensify emotional and behavioural problems. It is during those trials, which all families experience, that caregivers and guardians need to remain determined to not give up on the child.

Far too often the Authority has intervened in situations where a once amicable relationship breaks down and the child is unceremoniously ushered back into the system. Fit Persons and relatives will be trained to enhance their capacity to effectively deal with the children entrusted in their care.

A significant stakeholder for the Authority is the Government. In fact our line Ministry, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) has made significant efforts to provide the Authority with the resources it needs. One area in which we look forward to additional support from the Government is the provision of adequate placement options for children who must be received into care, to ensure that their safety and treatment needs are met.

Through the Authority's data collection system, a considerable number of reports are received of children being neglected and lacking in care and guardianship. During Fiscal 2018, the total of the two groups amounts to almost 33% of all reports received by the Authority of children in need of care and protection. This is significant and highlights a need for interventions at the level of the family. The Authority is appealing for state-provided professionals, to support families in private dwellings, so that they receive the necessary tools and training to parent consciously.

I am proud to lead this dynamic organisation and I am confident that through our collective skills, we will find innovative solutions to tackle the problems presented by children and their families.



SAFIYA NOEL
Director





INTRODUCTION

- **MANDATE OF THE AUTHORITY**
- **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**
- **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**





INTRODUCTION

The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago is clear on its legislative mandate, which is to provide care and protection to all children, particularly those who have been abused or who are at risk of abuse and maltreatment.

However, achieving the mandate requires the support of all agencies in the child protection sector. Therefore, over the past three years of operations, the organisation has been stridently seeking collaboration with all partners in the sector.

In Fiscal 2018, efforts were intensified to seek partnerships that would redound to the benefit of children and their families. This was a huge success for the Authority, as two Memoranda of Understanding were signed and there are plans to sign several more in Fiscal 2019.

The development of a new Strategic Plan was another major milestone for the organisation. Its development was based on the fact that an effective national child protection system needs to be cognisant of all actors, not only government institutions and stakeholders, but also the nation's children themselves, their families and communities.

We are heartened by the progress made in the children removed from abusive homes, as they thrive in the care of loving families and caregivers. Therefore, the increase in the number of persons who provide Foster Care is critical. While the Authority continues to advocate for children to grow with their birth families, it is always with the caveat, where possible, appropriate and in the best interest of the child. The organisation will continue to advocate for parents, guardians and caregivers to receive guidance and training to improve their parenting strategies. However, if a child must be removed from a harmful situation, the Authority will not hesitate to make that decision.

It is particularly worrying that over 1,200 of the reports being addressed by the Authority's Investigation Unit pertain to high-risk cases. Regardless of age or sex, all children are at risk and their protection must be our priority.





MANDATE OF THE AUTHORITY

The Authority's mandate is outlined in the Children's Authority Act Chap. 46:10, Section 5 (1):

The Authority may have and exercise such powers and functions as are conferred on it by this Act and in particular may -

- (a) provide care, protection and rehabilitation of children in accordance with Part III of this Act;
- (b) investigate and make recommendations with respect to the adoption of children in accordance with the Adoption of Children Act, 2000;
- (c) investigate complaints made by any person with respect to any child who is in the care of a community residence, foster home or nursery, that the said residence, home or nursery failed to comply with the requisite standards prescribed under the Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act, 2000 and any incident of mistreatment of children in such places;
- (d) investigate complaints or reports of mistreatment of children;
- (e) upon investigation, remove a child from his home where it is shown that the child is in imminent danger;
- (f) monitor community residences, foster homes and nurseries and conduct periodic reviews to determine their compliance with such requirements as may be prescribed.
- (g) issue, suspend and revoke licences of community residences and nurseries as provided under the Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act, 2000;
- (h) advise the Minister on matters relating to the operation of this Act; and
- (i) do all such things as may be necessary or expedient for the proper performance of its duties.





GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Board of Management

The Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10 states that the Authority "shall be managed by a Board of Management (also referred to as the Board) which will be in charge of the administration of the Act. The Board shall consist of no more than eleven persons and no less than seven persons who shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (hereafter referred to as "the President") and have the following professional qualifications and skills:

- a) Child Psychology; or
- b) Child Psychiatry;
- c) Social Work;
- d) Paediatrics;
- e) Education;
- f) Accounting; and
- g) Family Law

The persons selected shall include:

- (a) A person under the age of twenty-five years representing the youth appointed by the President;
- (b) A person nominated by the Tobago House of Assembly with experience in children's issues, and appointed by the President;
- (c) The Director of the Authority appointed under section 10 who shall be an ex officio member of the Board; and
- (d) A representative of a Non-Governmental Organisation which promotes the welfare and protection of children.

The Board comprises the following members:

Mr. Hanif E. A. Benjamin	Chairman	Social Work
Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye	Deputy Chairman	Family Law
Dr. Christine Descartes	Member	Psychology
Dr. Natalie Dick	Member	Paediatrics
Ms. Marsha Bailey	Member	Social Work
Mrs. Gail Joseph-Alleyne	Member	Education
Mr. Mitra Attai	Member	Accounting
Dr. Gillian Wheeler	Member	THA Representative
Ms. Dawn George	Member	NGO representative
Ms. Shurdelle Jennings	Member	Youth Representative





Board Committees

Over Fiscal 2018, the Board of Management held 12 meetings. In addition to the monthly meetings, the Board managed the affairs of the Authority via seven Committees, which were constituted by the Board and are responsible to the Board as follows:

The Adoption Committee is responsible for the adoption of a child. The committee was created in accordance with the provisions of section 7A (1) of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10, which provides that when a decision with respect to the adoption of a child arises, a committee of the Board to be known as the Adoption Committee shall sit to take such decision, which must then be ratified by the Board of Management. The Act also prescribes which Board members shall serve on this Committee, joined by the head of the Adoption Unit. During the period under review, the Committee held 11 meetings and granted nine Adoption Orders.

The Care Committee is responsible for the approval of Treatment Plans which identify the optimal placement of the child and the rehabilitative interventions to accompany such placement. In addition, foster parents are approved, and matters relating to the licensing and monitoring of community residences are considered. During the period under review, the Committee held 10 meetings, considered 94 Treatment Plans, approved five Foster Care providers and licensed three community residences, in conformance with the Act.

The Facilities Committee is responsible for overseeing the acquisition and maintenance of physical accommodations for the Authority and for ensuring that the Authority is in compliance with the required standards set out in the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act 2004 (as amended). During the period under review, the Committee held seven meetings.

The Finance Committee is responsible for monitoring the financial status of the organisation through the reports submitted to the Board and other financial information provided to governmental bodies or the wider public. The Committee also has oversight of the Authority's system of internal controls regarding finance, accounting, legal compliance and ethics that Management and the Board have established. The Committee also closely examines the Authority's auditing, accounting and financial reporting processes. During the period under review, the Committee held seven meetings.

The Human Resources Committee is responsible for ensuring that there is an effective human resources strategy in line with industry and market trends that will enhance employee and Board effectiveness. During the period under review, the Committee held 15 meetings.

The Stakeholder Engagement Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Children's Authority has an effective and Board-approved Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and for ensuring that the appropriate processes are in place for the engagement and re-engagement of stakeholders and determining initiatives that will enhance stakeholder relationships and engagement. During the period under review, the Committee held eight meetings.

The Tenders Committee is responsible for the implementation of policies on tendering, procurement and contracting; ensuring that accountability and transparency are maintained in all matters pertaining to tendering and procurement of goods and services; ensuring that the selection of all contractors and service providers is made on sound, transparent, fair and cost-effective bases and to assist the Board in considering tenders with a contract value above TT\$500,000 up to a maximum of TT\$1,000,000. During the period under review, the Committee held four meetings.



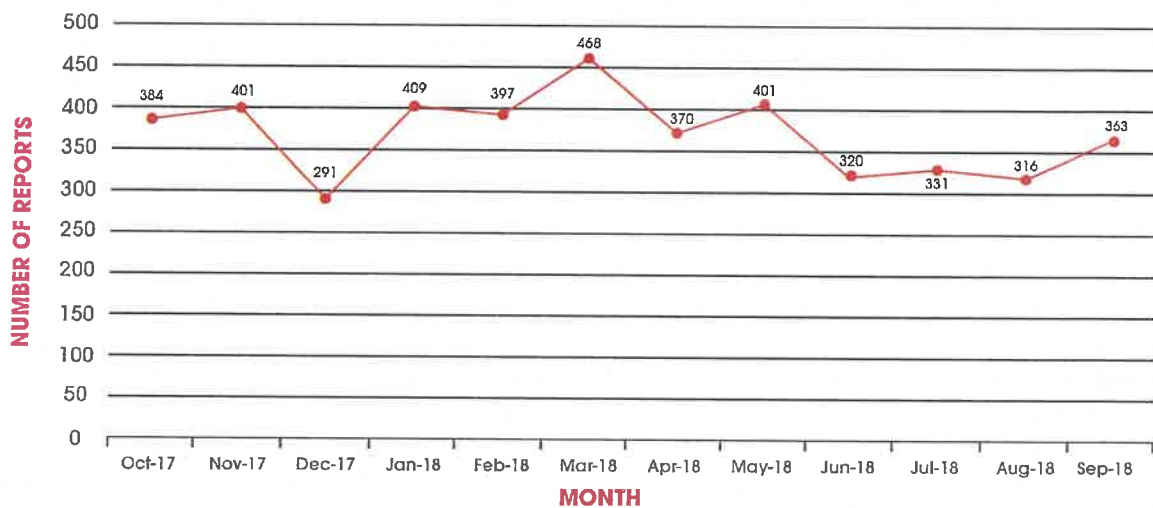


SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The data presented in this chapter provides a snapshot of the cases of children in need of care and protection as reported to the Authority for the period October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018. During Fiscal Year 2018, 4,451 reports of child abuse and maltreatment were recorded on the Authority's Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS).

As seen in Figure 1, the number of cases of child abuse and maltreatment reported to the Authority, fluctuated on a monthly basis. Throughout this time, the highest number of cases were reported during the months of March and January 2018 at 468 and 409 respectively with an average of 371 cases recorded per month.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED TO THE AUTHORITY DURING FISCAL 2018

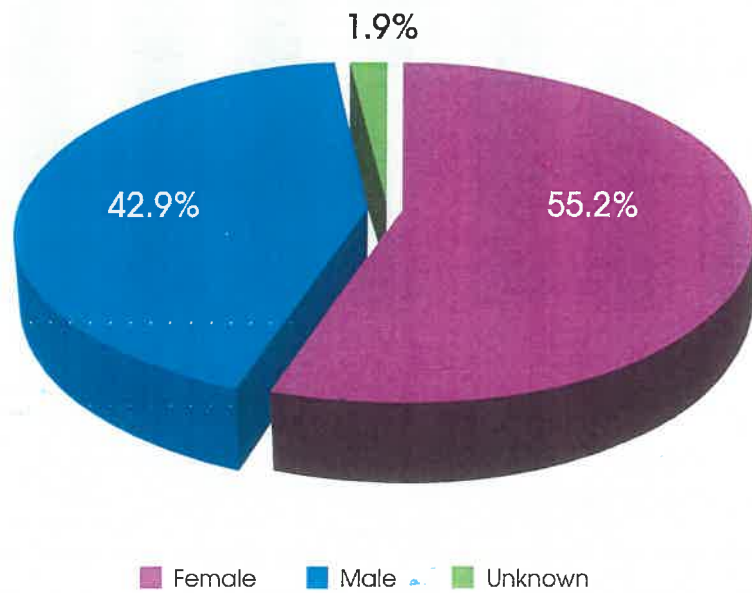




DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CLIENTS

During Fiscal 2018, the majority of cases brought to the attention of the Authority were female (55.2%) while 42.9% were male. Of the 4,451 reports made, only 1.9% of the reports did not identify the gender of the child. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

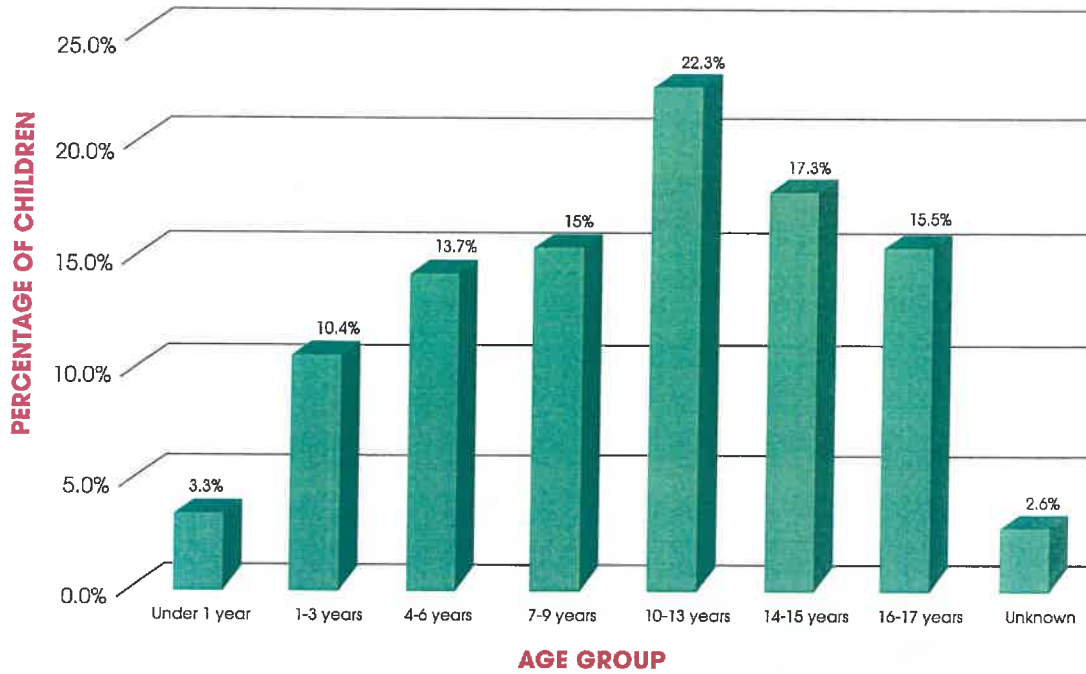
FIGURE 2: GENDER OF CLIENTS





The children brought to the attention of the Authority during Fiscal 2018 belonged to varying age groups with the majority of children between the ages of 10 and 13 years old (22.3%). The age range of clients are observed in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: AGE OF CLIENTS

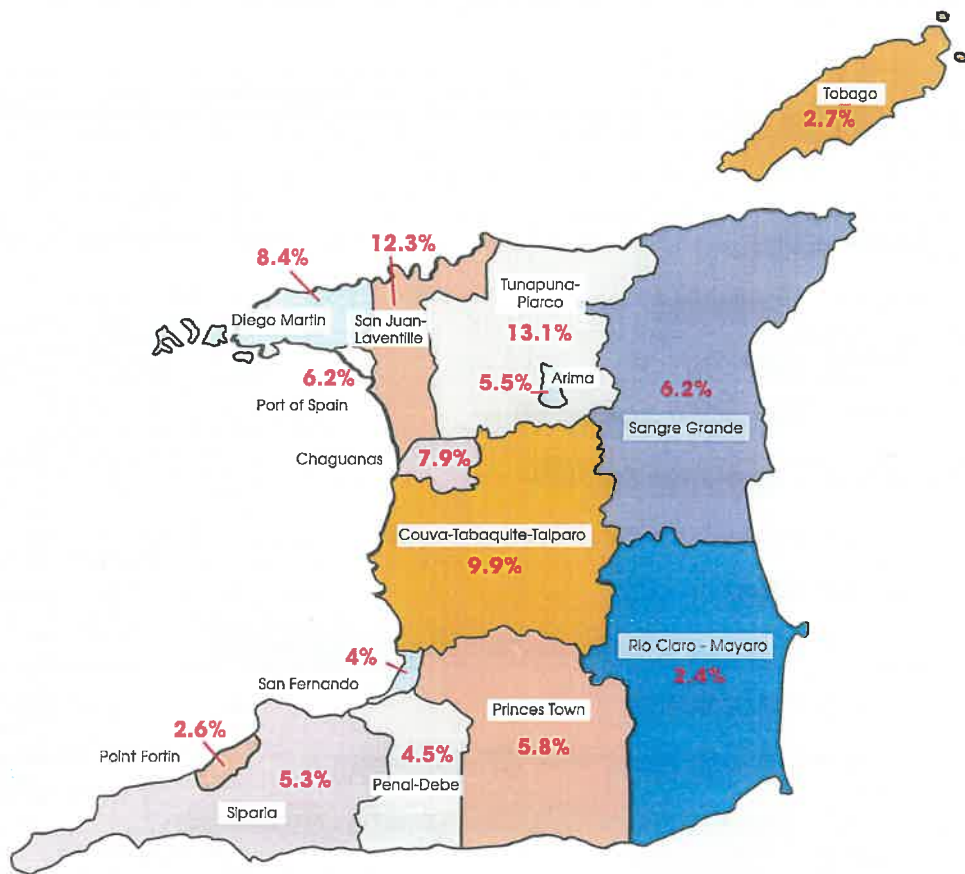


During this period, 17.3% of children belonged to the 14 to 15-year age group while 15.5% of all children were between the ages of 16 and 17 years old. Children in the age range of 7-9 years old accounted for 15% of all reports, while children between the ages of 4-6 years old accounted for 13.7% of all cases.



Reports of children in need of care and protection emanate from all administrative districts across Trinidad and Tobago. Figure 4 highlights the geographic location of reports of children suspected of being in need of care and protection, brought to the attention of the Authority during Fiscal Year 2018.

FIGURE 4: GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS OF REPORTS



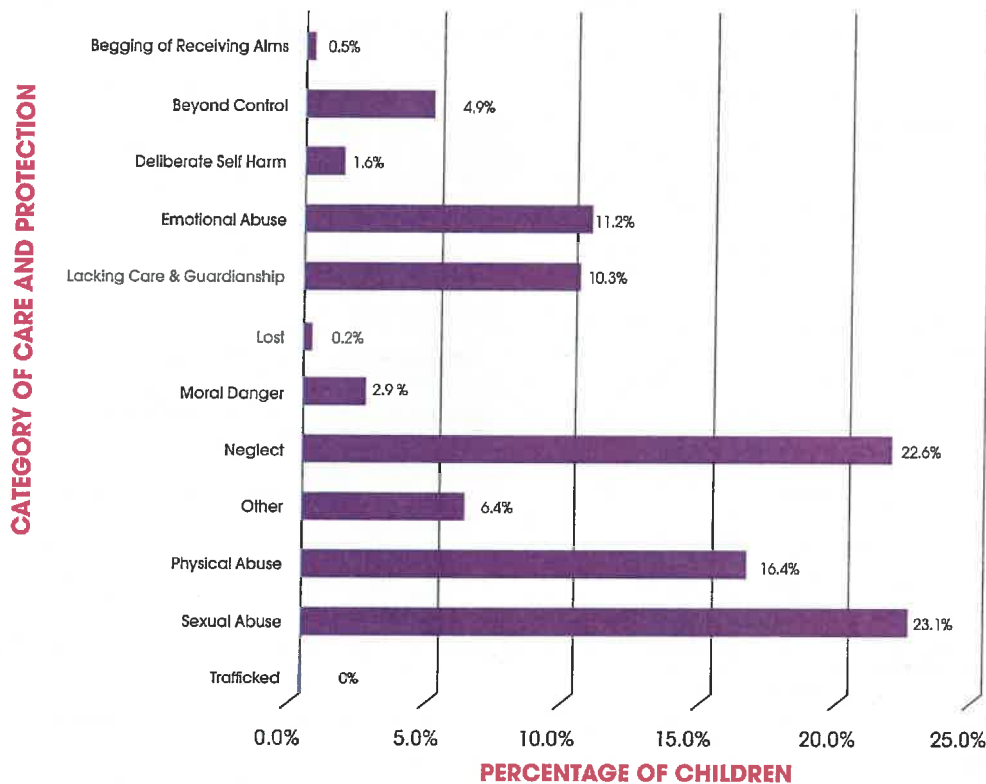
Whilst reports of children in need of care and protection were received from all parts of the country, the administrative districts of Tunapuna/Piarco (13.1%) and San Juan/Laventille (12.3%) continue to record the highest figures. Conversely, the least number of reported cases of children in need of care and protection emanated from the districts of Mayaro/Rio Claro (2.4%) and Point Fortin (2.6%).



REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT

During Fiscal 2018, the highest reported types of suspected child abuse and maltreatment were reports of sexual abuse, neglect and physical abuse of children. Collectively, 62.1% of all reports during this period fell into the aforementioned categories. Figure 5 outlines the reported cases of child abuse and maltreatment for Fiscal 2018.

FIGURE 5: REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT



Once disaggregated, 22.6% of all reports received pertained to neglect, while 23.1% of all reports were suspected cases of sexual abuse and 16.3% were reports of physical abuse. Of all reported cases, 11.2% of clients proved to be emotionally abused while 10.3% were reported as lacking care and guardianship.

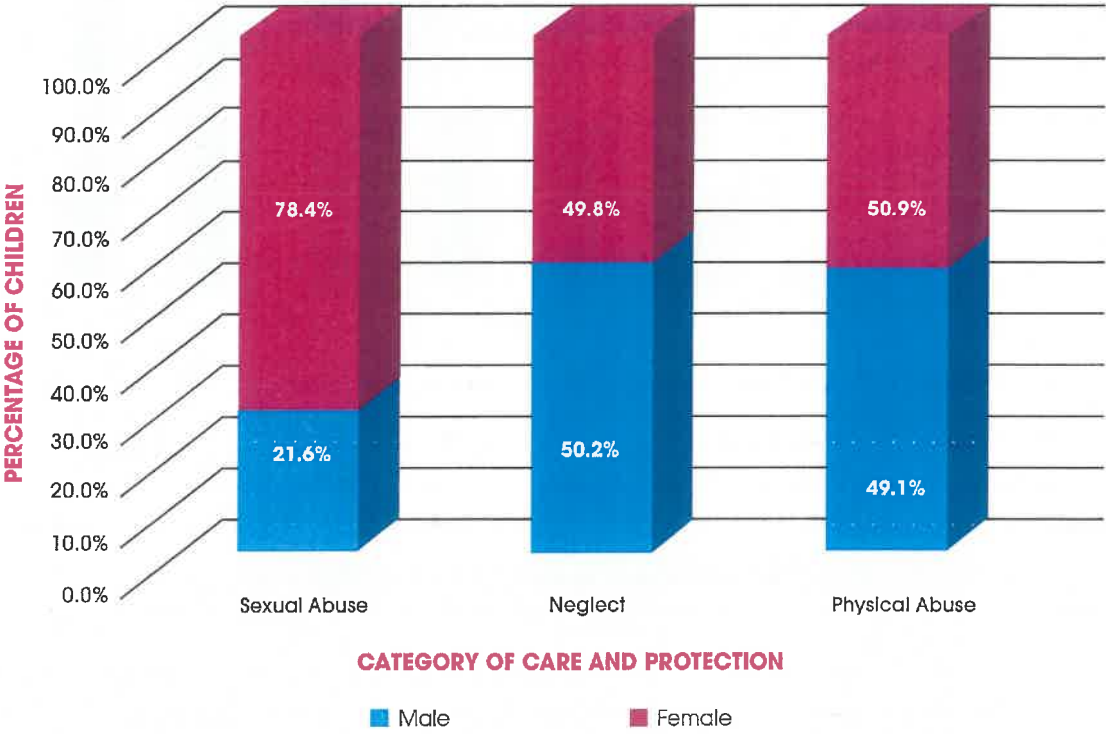




Over the years, the Authority has received several types of reports regarding child sexual abuse as well as offences of a sexual nature. There have also been various forms of physical abuse carried out by different categories of alleged perpetrators. During Fiscal 2018, there were 1,459 cases of child sexual abuse and offences of a sexual nature; on the same note, there were 1,034 cases of child physical abuse.

Sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect, which are the highest reported categories of abuse meted out to children, were further disaggregated by gender (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: GENDER OF SUSPECTED VICTIMS OF MOST REPORTED TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT



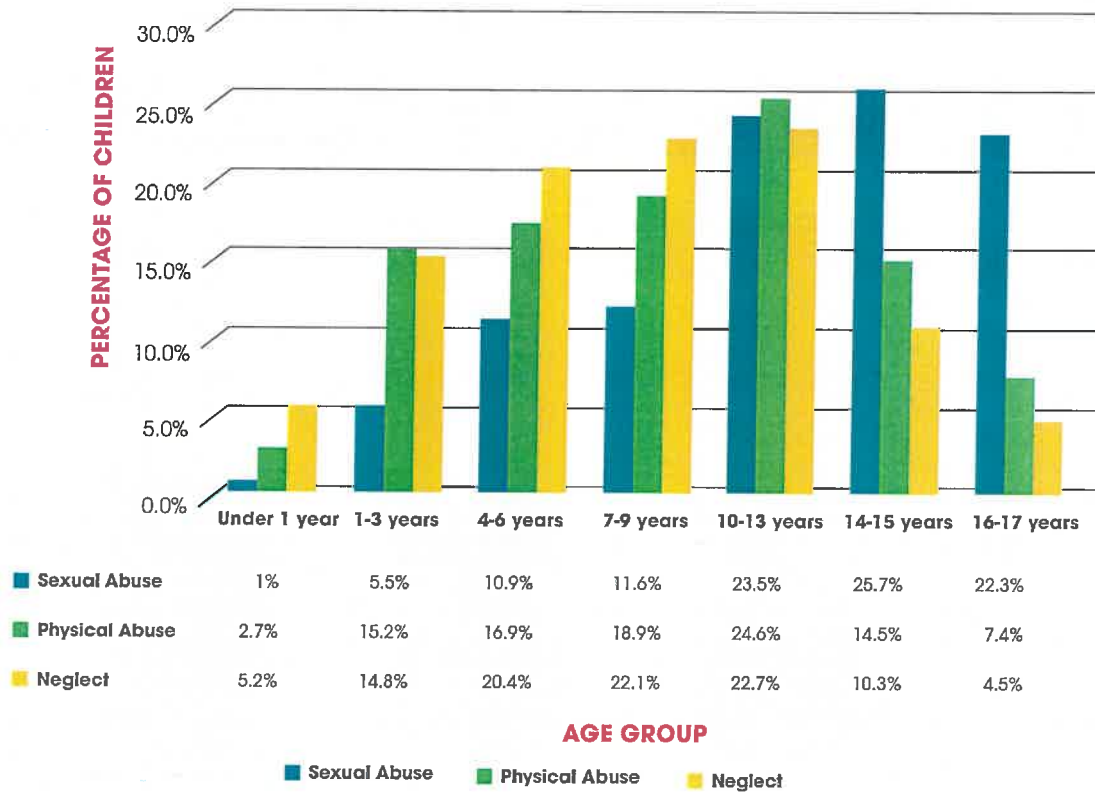
Of the reports received during the period under review, reports of sexual abuse of female children (78.4%) outnumbered the figures for male children (21.6%).

The statistics show that female and male children were almost equally at risk of physical abuse and neglect. With regards to physical abuse, males accounted for 50.2% of reports while females amounted to 49.8%. In cases of neglect, 50.9% were females while 49.1% were males. This clearly states that both male and female children are equally vulnerable to abuse.



The most reported types of abuse (sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect) were disaggregated according to age classifications. This data is presented in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7: AGES OF SUSPECTED VICTIMS OF MOST REPORTED TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT



The 10 to 13 age group proved to be the most susceptible to the three most reported instances of child abuse and maltreatment. 23.5% of children in this age group have been sexually abused while 24.6% have been physically abused and 22.7% were neglected.

Meanwhile, children between the ages of 14 to 15 years old report the highest instances of child sexual abuse, which account for a quarter of the cases (25.7%).

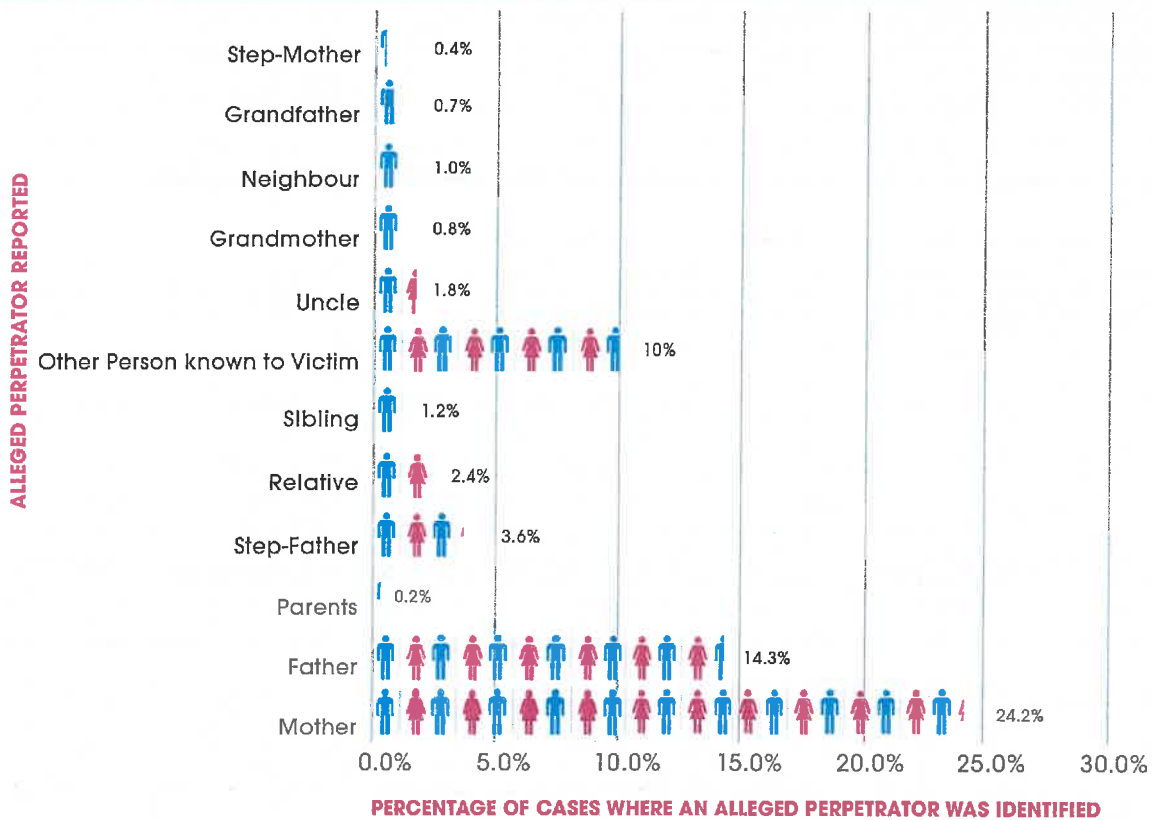




ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OF ABUSE

In an effort to mitigate instances of child abuse and maltreatment, it is important for the Authority to document the suspected perpetrator of the reported abuse. This data is supplied by persons making reports to the Authority.

FIGURE 8: REPORTED PERPETRATOR OF ABUSE



Since proclamation, biological mothers have consistently been identified by persons reporting cases to the Authority, as the person most responsible for the abuse or maltreatment of children, especially physical abuse and neglect. Data presented in this Fiscal Year is no different, as mothers accounted for 24.2% of the alleged perpetrators for reported cases, while biological fathers are responsible for 14.3% of cases where an alleged perpetrator was identified.

Amongst the reported cases there have been several cases where children were identified as the alleged perpetrators of abuse. There were 173 cases where children were identified as the alleged perpetrators of child abuse and maltreatment.

While the graph above specifically highlights the alleged perpetrator of abuse, in several instances, the person making the report is unable to identify who has abused the child, but is aware that the child is in need of care and protection. The amount of reported cases to the Authority in which the alleged perpetrator has not been identified is 39.5% of all reports.



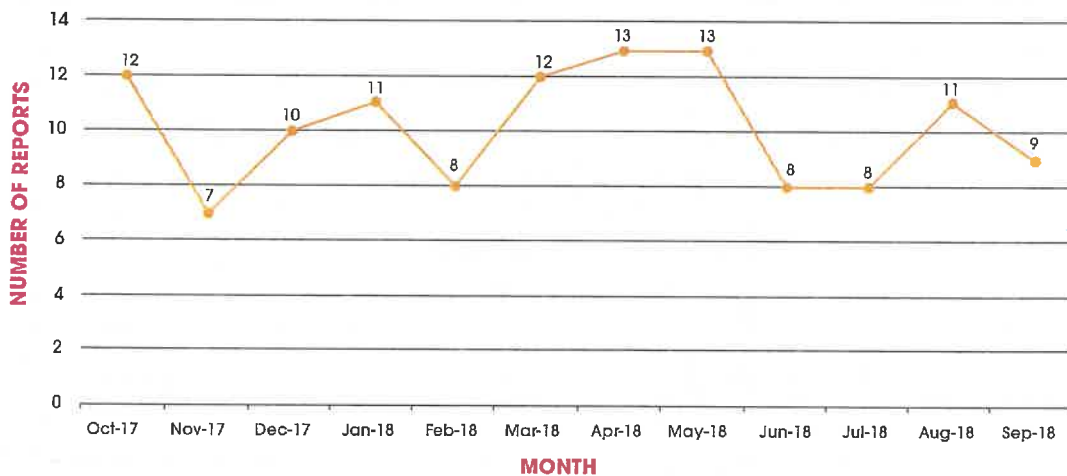


TOBAGO

Fiscal 2017 paved the way for the introduction of the presence of the Authority in Tobago. As of 2018, the Authority provided a greater level of intervention in the lives of children and their families in the sister-isle.

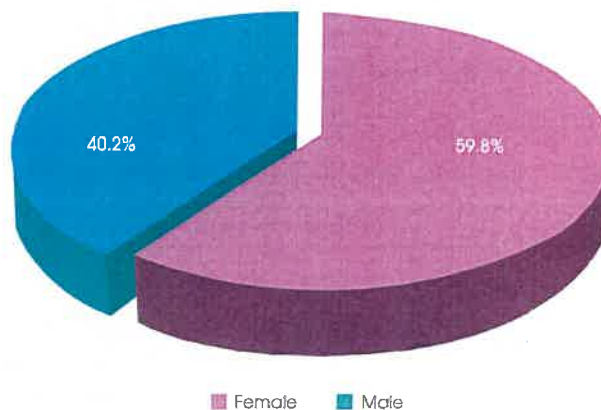
During Fiscal 2018, 2.7% of all cases of child abuse and maltreatment reported to the Authority were of children living in Tobago. A total of 122 cases were recorded. Figure 9 illustrates the cases brought to the Authority's attention during this period.

FIGURE 9: NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED TO THE AUTHORITY DURING FISCAL 2018 - TOBAGO



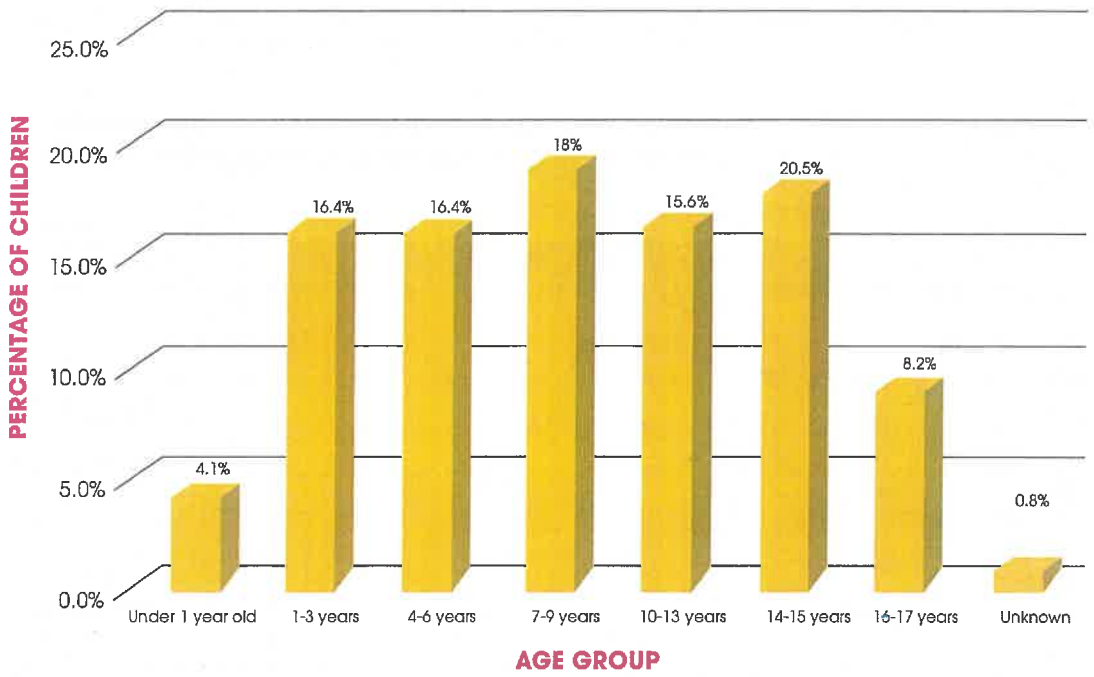
During Fiscal 2018, more than half of the clients reported to the Authority living in Tobago were female amounting to 59.8% of all Tobago clients while 40.2% were male.

FIGURE 10: GENDER OF CLIENTS-TOBAGO



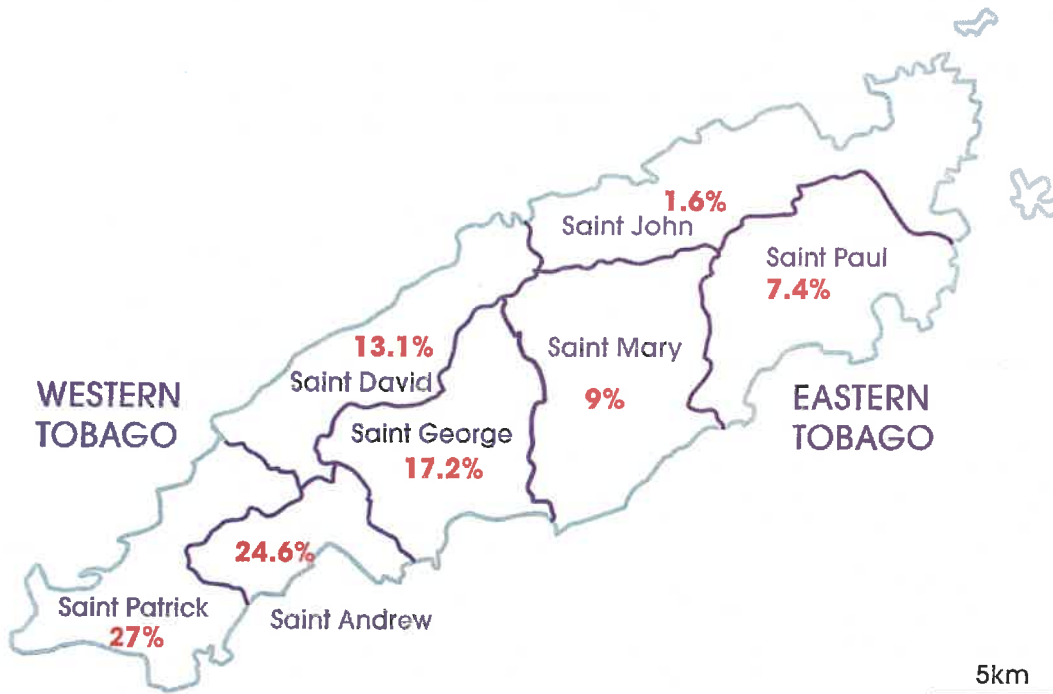
The children living in Tobago who were brought to the attention of the Authority during Fiscal 2018 belonged to varying age groups, this is observed in Figure 11.

FIGURE 11: AGE OF CLIENTS - TOBAGO



The majority of clients from Tobago belonged to the 14-15-year-old age group, which accounted for 20.5% of reported cases. While 18% of children reported belonged to the 7 to 9-year age range. The age groups of 1-3 years old and 4-6 years old, each accounted for 16.4% of the population of children brought to the attention of the Authority.

FIGURE 12: GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF REPORTS - TOBAGO



While Tobago accounted for 2.7% of all cases reported, when one delves further into the data, the highest number of reports (27.1%) were received from the districts of St. Patrick (which encompasses Black Rock, Grange, Buccoo, Lambeau and Canaan) and 24.6% amounting to St. Andrew (Carnbee, Bethel, Orange Hill, Scarborough and Bacolet). St. George (Mt. St. George, Mason Hall and Providence) accounts for 17.2% of reports while St. David (Plymouth, Moriah and Arnos Vale) amounted to 13.1% of reports received. St. Mary (Hillsborough, Glamorgan, Pembroke and Goodwood) totals 9% of reported cases.

Conversely, the areas of St. Paul (Roxborough and Delaford) and St. John (Speyside, Charlotteville, L'Anse Fourmi, Bloody Bay and Parlatuvier), logged the least number of reports of child abuse and maltreatment in Tobago, recording 7.4% and 1.6% respectively.



During Fiscal 2018 the highest reported cases of suspected child abuse and maltreatment in Tobago were reports of sexual abuse (31.9%), neglect (26.4%) and physical abuse (13.2%). Figure 13 highlights this by illustrating that 71.5% of reported cases belonged to the aforementioned categories.

FIGURE 13: REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT IN TOBAGO

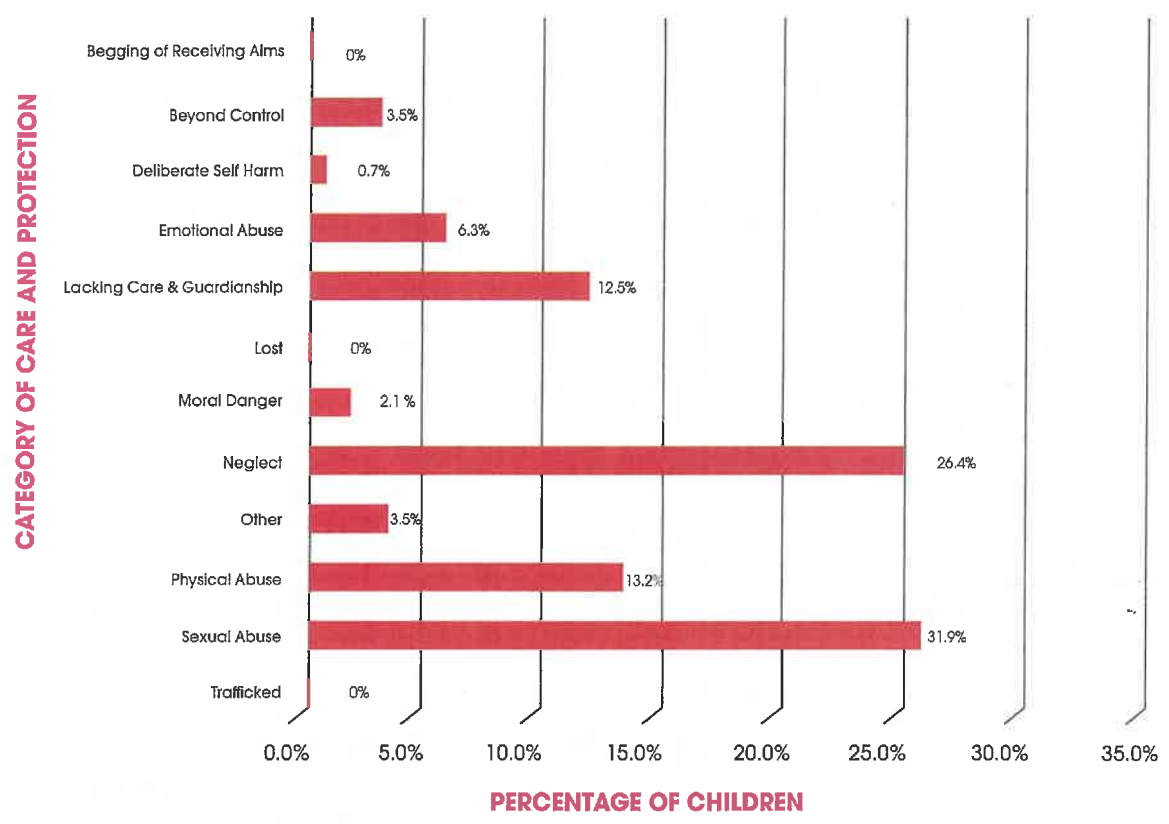
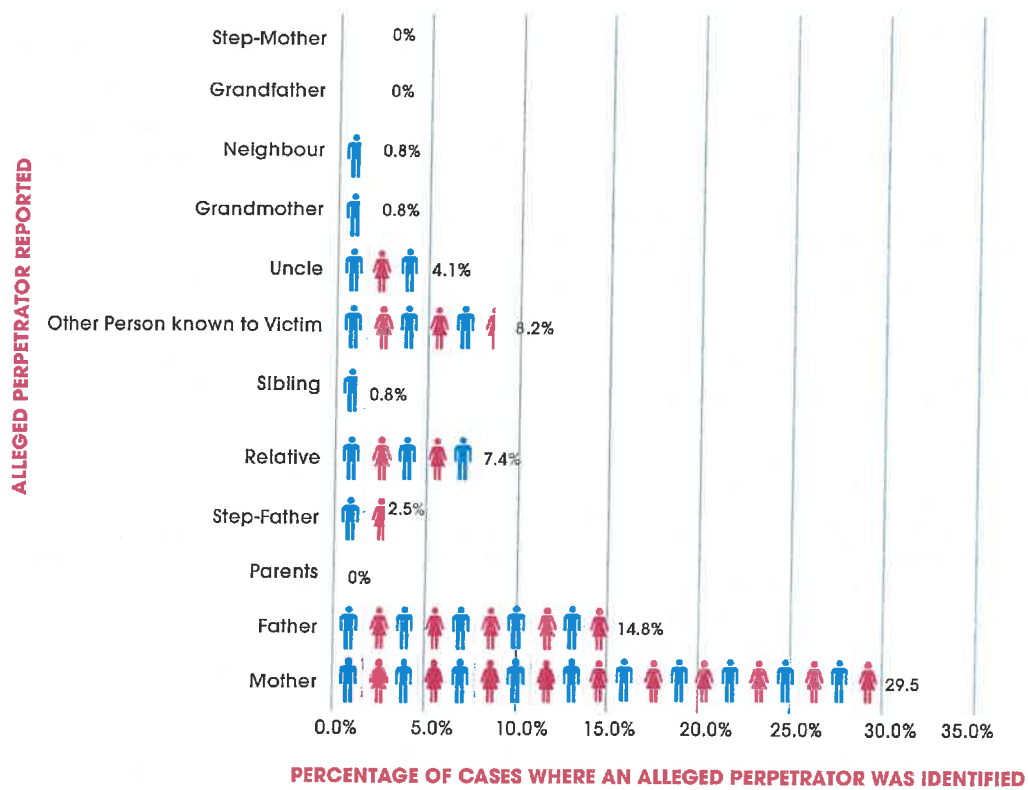




Figure 14 illustrates the alleged perpetrators of abuse and maltreatment of children in Tobago during Fiscal 2018.

According to the data reported, biological mothers were identified as the alleged perpetrators in 29.5% of all reported cases, followed by fathers (14.8%) and other persons known to the victim (8.2%).

FIGURE 14: REPORTED PERPETRATOR OF ABUSE - TOBAGO





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

CARE, LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

The core work of the Authority depends heavily on the services provided by the teams operating in the Care, Legal and Regulatory Units.

These Units ensure the Authority delivers on its mandate to provide care and protection to children who have been abused, or who are at risk of abuse and maltreatment.

This section of the Report focuses on the individual achievements of each Unit, their challenges and in some instances, they share an anecdote, which showcases the impact their work has on the lives of the children and families with whom they interact on a daily basis.





REGISTRY

The data collection element of the Registry Unit is critical to the core function of the Authority. With the aid of the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS), the Registry Unit is able to receive, log and triage reports of child abuse.

The level of risk attached to a report is received and assigned to the most appropriate team, for action. If it is determined that a child may be in imminent danger, the report will be sent to the Emergency Response Team for immediate investigation.

Often the first point of contact for members of the general public, the Registry Unit receives calls on a 24-hour basis and the data collected allows the organisation to observe trends, identify high-risk communities and make recommendations for policy formation, as it relates to parenting and child protection in Trinidad and Tobago. The Registry Unit, during this fiscal, continued to work closely with the Authority's Research and Planning Unit to produce the statistics used by the Authority to provide to the public and other agencies and bodies.

During the reporting period, the Registry Unit fielded 19,740 calls from a 24-hour hotline with a 99.9% uptime, which resulted in 4,451 legitimate reports of child abuse requiring the Authority's attention. The CPIMS continues to operate under tremendous strain as the caseload outstrips the design load, which necessitates the expansion of the system which is carded to occur in Fiscal 2019.

TABLE 1: REGISTRY - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Total Calls	19,740
Invalid Calls	6,468
Calls for Information/Updates	10,297
Reporting Calls	3,102
Reports via Walk-ins/Fax/Emails	642
Overlap	129
Cases Entered on CPIMS	4,400



ANECDOTE

Over the course of the Fiscal Year, there have been occasions when extenuating circumstances have warranted the closure of the Authority's Head Office, such as during extended power outages, unexpected and prolonged water shortages, and even the earthquake that rocked the country. On each occasion, the Registry Unit surmounted these challenges to ensure sustained coverage of the 24-hour hotline and avoid disruption of service. At all times, in the minds of team members, the continued opportunity for the Authority to be reached on behalf of a child who needed us, was paramount.





EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) was borne out of a need to respond to cases deemed as extremely high-risk, in which a child may be at risk of being in imminent danger and could possibly need to be removed from his or her environment to avoid recurring harm or possible death.

In order to fulfil its mandate, the ERT adopts a collaborative approach by working with external agencies, such as the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, as well as, other essential service providers, whenever necessary. Additionally, the ERT will often seek the assistance of the Police when conducting enquiries in areas deemed to be high-risk. This is to ensure that potentially volatile situations are not escalated and the safety of the Authority's staff is not compromised.

As it relates to investigations into reports of child abuse, once a report is substantiated by the Investigations Unit and the child is deemed to be in imminent danger, the Emergency Removal Protocols are activated, thereby triggering an immediate response from the ERT. In such cases, the parents or guardians of the child/children would be informed of the situation and the child/children would be received into care to avoid further harm, as well as to ensure rehabilitation from the trauma they would have experienced.

For the period under review, ERT received and responded to 517 reports of abuse being perpetrated against children. These responses were initiated within a 24-hour period following receipt of the report.

The Unit also received 57 children into care, which led to 57 applications to Court for Wardship being completed on behalf of the children.

Integral to the ERT's work is the availability of placement options for children of varying ages with varying needs. At present, there is saturation of placement of children which has caused serious challenges for the ERT, especially in circumstances where a child needs to be immediately removed, and there is no relative or Fit Person with whom to place the child. The situation is exacerbated when placement is required for a child with mental illness or severe or complex physical or behavioural challenges.

TABLE 2: EMERGENCY RESPONSE - WORK AT A GLANCE

CATEGORIES OF CASES	TOTAL NUMBER
Sexual Abuse	174
Physical Abuse	124
Neglect	114
Other	60
Beyond Control	22
Lacking Care & Guardianship	17
Emotional Abuse	4
Deliberate Self Harm	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES	517



ANECDOTE

A sibling group was reported to have been rejected from their home by their biological father. The children were placed at a family member's residence by the Child Protection Unit. The ERT responded and the children were interviewed and the investigation conducted. Due to the intervention and amiable approach by the ERT, supervised visits between the father and children were facilitated to allow for possible reconciliation, while the children continue to thrive in the care of the relative.





INVESTIGATION

The work of the Investigation Unit is triggered by reports of abuse received, triaged and forwarded by the Registry Unit. Once the report has been received by the Investigation Unit, the team employs various techniques and conducts different types of enquiries to determine whether the report can be substantiated or not. This involves conducting field visits in order to meet with all persons associated with a case including parents, family members, members of the community, as well as other child protection practitioners. The team also provides the assessment of familial placement options for the child, if removal is required. The Investigation Unit also conducts investigations at the request of the Court based on a concern it may have while addressing a matter involving a child.

Additionally, the Unit has been engaged in collaborative arrangements with their counterparts in the Medical Social Work Departments of the Regional Health Authorities, the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education and the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development, Tobago House of Assembly. These efforts have been focused on enhancing service delivery to shared clients including periodic case conferences and information sharing which have made a significant impact on the outcomes for clients.

During the period under review, 1,946 cases were assigned to the Investigations Unit, of which 1,217 were high-risk.

The Authority also engaged the services of Independent Service Providers (ISPs) to assist in the Authority's mandate by investigating medium and low risk cases throughout Trinidad as well as Tobago.

During the reporting period, the Authority's Investigation Unit has seen a significant increase in the number and types of requests coming to the Unit based on referrals from the newly opened Children Court, in addition to the usual requests from the Magistrate's Court. The responsibilities of the Investigations Unit may take members into situations in which the geographic areas are described by Police as "Hot Spots". As a result, the continued support of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is vital. As such, the signing of the MOU with this key stakeholder is a major priority.

TABLE 3: INVESTIGATION - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Cases Assigned	1,946
Cases Closed	1,619
Children Received Into Care	30
Preparation of Varying Investigation and Related Reports	1,878
Preparation of Affidavits in support of Court Applications	40
Court-Requested Reports	89
Suitability for Placement Assessment Reports	76
Follow-Up Investigations	187





ANECDOTE

In one particular case, four children were being physically abused by their mother's partner. They also disclosed sexual abuse at the hands of a previous partner of the mother. The Investigation Unit was able to dispatch both the north and south teams which were able to locate several family members who were willing to care for the children.

The placement was facilitated and the children, who were never before admitted to school, were enrolled and are now attending school. The children, including a three-year-old, are doing quite well and the relatives have expressed their gratitude to the Authority for rescuing the children.

These placements allow for the Police to continue the criminal investigation, which is intended to conclude with the bringing of criminal charges against the perpetrators.





ASSESSMENT

The Assessment Unit continues to successfully and efficiently conduct comprehensive assessments of children in need of care and protection, who are brought to the attention of the Authority. The work of the various teams at the Authority's Assessment Centres is activated once a child has been referred by the Investigative Unit. Children are referred to the Assessment Centres as a result of abuse they would have experienced.

Assessments of children are carried out by a multidisciplinary team, which includes a medical doctor, a psychologist and a social worker. Children are sometimes referred for psychiatric assessments depending on the particulars of the case. In other instances, the nature and level of complexity of the case, may warrant additional types of specialised professionals to be asked to provide supplementary assessments.

On completion of these diagnostic assessments a Treatment Plan is prepared for each child, which details the recommended interventions necessary for the rehabilitation of the child, with the intention that the child can return to his or her normal life function. Another key role of the Assessment Centre is its collaboration with the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. This collaboration takes place through forensic interviews and aids in the collection of Police statements and medical evidence to support the criminal investigations by the CPU into cases of child abuse and maltreatment. The evidence collected increases the chances of the Police apprehending alleged perpetrators and bringing justice to child victims and their families.

During the period under review, the Unit completed 259 forensic medical examinations and 28 forensic interviews. The Unit also completed 121 full multidisciplinary assessments, which facilitated 121 children in need of care and protection to benefit from the provision of psycho-social, medical and psychological evaluations. These provided holistic assessments of the children and their families' needs.

As part of the UNICEF Child Protection Regional Focal Points Conference held in August 2018 in Trinidad, the Assessment Unit facilitated regional delegates and officials of UNICEF and the Office of the Prime Minister, during a study tour of the Mt. Hope Assessment Centre. A similar exercise was also done in September 2018 for visiting officials from the Rights of the Child Commission, Guyana. Both tours enabled the Authority to share best practices on the progressive one-stop shop model for assessments, forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations, for learning and application in other regional jurisdictions.

One significant challenge facing the Authority is the long waiting times for children who require assessments. As such, the Assessment Unit was pleased with the addition of the Sangre Grande Assessment Centre during this Fiscal Year. It is anticipated that the South Assessment Team will find its home soon in the new South Regional Office and Assessment Centre in Ste. Madeleine. Within the second and third quarters of the next fiscal, it is anticipated that the Chaguanas and Tobago Assessment Centres will be opened.



TABLE 3: INVESTIGATION - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Forensic Interviews	28
Forensic Medical Examinations	259
Full Multidisciplinary Assessments	121
Medical Checks for Children in Care	93
Medical Screening Examinations for Children Being Admitted Into Care	48
Treatment Plans	94

ANECDOTE

Arising from the assessment of a young child, the Court ordered that he be received into care. Upon being notified of the Court Order, the mother was distraught about the separation and was also fearful of returning home with the child's father, who was opposed to the placement and began making violent threats outside of the Centre.

The mother was counselled extensively and the Police was called to intervene in the matter. The Assessment staff, security and police officers spent several hours into the night counselling the mother, whilst facilitating the emergency placement of the child and collaborating with the Police to calm the father.

The mother was successfully referred for appropriate intervention and the child placed in foster care. Several months later, a tragic event occurred involving the parents. The staff were significantly impacted and themselves had to receive counselling. However, notwithstanding their own trauma, staff remained focused on ensuring the child's well-being. Amidst this crisis, teamwork, client care and service-orientation were evident and the child, who is now in the care of a family member, is faring well.





CHILD SUPPORT CENTRE

The Child Support Centre (CSC) is responsible for facilitating short-term emergency placement for children removed from abusive situations and who require housing at a location that is secure, child-friendly and professionally staffed. In addition, the Centre also aims to address children's need for trauma reduction and psycho-social support. The overall goal of the CSC is to rehabilitate the children, based on the level of trauma they experienced, while seeking family reintegration.

All functions at the CSC were reviewed and streamlined with improved processes, policies and protocols formulated and instituted, to ensure operations were more efficient. Additionally, staff at the Centre were exposed to several training workshops.

During the period under review, the Unit facilitated 36 admissions and 22 discharges, leaving 14 children resident at the CSC by the end of the Fiscal Year. In addition, 20 medical screenings for placement and 90 medical checks for children experiencing a medical condition were conducted as well as 76 debriefing sessions and 233 individual counselling sessions.

Due to an anticipated expansion in the number of Centres in Trinidad and Tobago, the Authority is in the process of re-engineering the structure of this Unit to ensure optimal service delivery. While the CSC is designed for emergency short-term placement, due to constraints in finding permanent family environments, children remain longer than anticipated. Therefore, continuous efforts are made to seek alternative permanent placement options for the children who reside at the CSC, especially those who are deemed in Need of Supervision (CHINS).

Emergency accommodation was provided for 36 children who were received into care. The children were able to benefit from safe accommodation, in contrast to their prior living arrangements.





TABLE 5: CHILD SUPPORT CENTRE - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Children Admitted	36
Children Discharged	22
Medical Screenings for Placement	20
Medical Checks Conducted for Children at Centre	90
Debriefing Sessions	76
Counselling Sessions	233
Children in Centre at end of Fiscal 2018	14

ANECDOTE

During the Fiscal Year, a 17-year-old girl was placed at the Child Support Centre following several placement breakdowns with relatives and Fit Persons. She was placed at the Centre approximately two months prior to her having to submit several completed School Based Assessments (SBAs) and five months prior to her having to sit CSEC examinations.

Due to her poor school performance, several placement breakdowns and given her history of mental health issues, the child felt that she would not have been able to sit her CSEC examinations, as she had not yet commenced the SBAs, the completion of which was a prerequisite for her to sit the CSEC examinations.

Despite these odds, staff of the CSC, with the support of other Care Units and the administrators at the child's school, facilitated her attendance at school to complete outstanding SBAs and write her examinations while in the Authority's care. These efforts yielded great results, as the resident attained seven CSEC passes.





CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

The philosophy of the Authority is that children thrive best in a family environment and the Child and Family Services Unit (CFSU) seeks to make this a reality.

The Unit provides a range of services to children and their families, which aid in their rehabilitation and reunification. These services include support with family reintegration, transitional living, services for children who exhibit challenging behaviours, crisis intervention, referrals to external service providers, support of children in group care, monitoring of children who have been placed under a Supervision Order by the Court and monitoring of children placed in families requiring intensive support. The Unit also provides a variety of psycho-social interventions for children in need of care and protection and their families.

For the period under review, one of the key achievements for the Unit, was the formation of its Tele-Social Worker initiative. Due to the large number of cases assigned to this Unit, cases had to be further triaged for assignment resulting in mostly high-risk cases being assigned for action. As such, the Tele-Social Worker exercise was implemented in which low risk cases received attention through phone communication. The tele-social worker would obtain a holistic understanding of the case, while increasing the number of cases actioned.

The CFSU continued to provide direct and indirect intervention and support to families and children in need of care and protection during Fiscal 2018. This was achieved through the provision of services such as psycho-social interventions, financial interventions, case facilitation and monitoring, child and family counselling, crisis intervention, supervised access, parenting training, child and family advocacy, resource brokering and referrals. For the period under review, the Unit provided 3,809 interventions to children and their families.

The CFSU utilises a small pool of governmental organisations, private service providers and NGOs for the referral of clients for intervention. Within the public sector, organisations sometimes have lengthy waiting periods thus impacting on the ability of clients to receive immediate intervention.

Additionally, many specialised therapeutic interventions such as speech therapy and occupational therapy are not readily available within the public sector. As a result, these services are inaccessible to clients who are unable to access these services privately. In the absence of a robust referral network, many clients are unable to receive the necessary interventions and this creates a challenge with the progression of cases within CFSU.

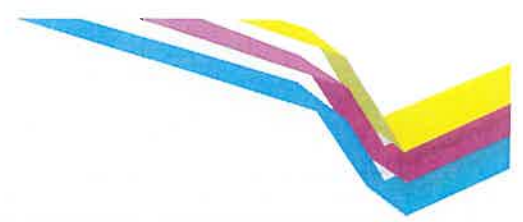


TABLE 6: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Counselling Services	1,456
Meetings with Community Residences	238
School Visits	275
Home Visits	464
Supervised Access Visits	327
Siblings Visits	84
Meetings with External Parties	302
Hospital Visits / Duty	86
Interviews with Clients	193
Referrals to External Service Providers	384

ANECDOTE

A child who transitioned from the care of a community residence was reintegrated with her relatives during Fiscal 2018. This child was deemed to be in need of care and protection after an investigation was conducted in 2015. She was placed at the Authority's Child Support Centre and subsequently was placed in residential care at community residences.

During this time, she received close support and monitoring by the Unit, as her transition to the community residence was challenging at first. However, with the provision of individual counselling and close support and guidance from members of the CFSU, the child eventually settled and began to thrive. She was re-enrolled into secondary school after a lengthy gap, due to instabilities in her life. Family therapy was also conducted to repair the relationship between the child and her immediate family. At age 18, the child was reintegrated with her relatives. A few months later she sat the CSEC examinations and achieved high grades. She is currently pursuing tertiary education.





FOSTER CARE

One of the Authority's goals has been to increase its pool of foster carers. This approach has been pursued due to its dual benefits to allow children the opportunity to flourish in a family environment, while increasing the number of placement options for children.

For the period under review, the Foster Care Unit intensified its recruitment drive for new providers. Additionally, the proclamation by the Line-Minister, the Honourable Ayanna Webster-Roy of September 2018 as Foster Care and Adoption Awareness month, saw the Unit collaborating with the "Family Matters Project" and the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) to increase awareness among the public.

For the next fiscal period, the Unit intends to increase assessments and approvals of foster care providers, increase outreach to targeted groups such as faith-based organisations, nurses, teachers, and retirees as well as increase training for the approved group of foster care providers.

While attempts were made to increase placement options via the public, during the period under review, the Unit was able to facilitate the placement of 30 children into foster care, including 18 emergency placements. The Unit facilitated 22 sensitisation sessions, which included media interviews. It also assisted in the creation of two videos aimed at creating awareness of Foster Care. During the period, the Unit received 106 Expressions of Interest, which included walk-ins, telephone calls and emails. This led to the receipt of 24 completed application forms, the conduct of 30 in-depth interviews as well as 27 home assessments and 22 psychological assessments.

The team also completed 25 reference checks, 17 background checks and provided 6 training sessions. In the end, only five new foster parents were approved with several expected to be approved early in the new fiscal period. Despite a growing caseload, at the end of the reporting period, there were 40 children in Foster Care with 22 approved foster providers.

The Foster Care Unit continued to conduct regular case management and monitoring of the children in foster care. This included the conduct of 70 home visits, 38 school visits and 243 supervised access visits. The team successfully conducted the reintegration of four children with their birth families.

While recruitment efforts have resulted in an increased interest in Foster Care, there has been little to no interest in areas where major gaps exist, such as placement options for older teenagers, children with disabilities and other special needs, children who are at risk of offending and larger sibling groups.

Foster Care is intended to be a temporary placement option, while more permanent options are sought. However, reintegration with birth families is not always appropriate, possible or in the best interest of the child. Since most people prefer to adopt babies, it limits permanency options for older children, who often have to be placed in Community Residences. Transition Homes are required for such circumstances, especially for children with special needs who age-out of the system.



TABLE 7: FOSTER CARE - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Sensitisation and Training Sessions	28
Expressions of Interest	106
Completed Application Forms	24
In-depth Interviews	30
Home Assessments	27
Psychological Assessments	22
Reference and Background Checks	42
Approved Foster Parents	5
Children in Foster Care	40
Home and School Visits of Foster Care Children	118
Supervised Access Visits for Foster Care Children	243
Reintegration with Birth Families	4

ANECDOTE

As part of the Foster Care and Adoption information awareness campaign, existing foster parents were interviewed to share their experiences and encourage others to become foster parents. The following is an excerpt from one of the foster care providers:

"I am extremely proud to be a foster parent. It is one of the most fulfilling experiences in my life. There is an opportunity to give back to society, to make a positive difference in a child's life, especially when so many children are growing up in unfortunate circumstances. My personal objective as a foster parent is to ensure that every foster child that is placed in my home leaves in a better state than they entered, whether emotionally, physically, spiritually, intellectually or otherwise. It's just my little contribution to making the world a better place".





ADOPTION

The Adoption Unit facilitates the adoption of children both locally and internationally. For Fiscal 2018, the Unit focused on addressing the backlog of applications, most of which were received in 2015 from the now defunct Adoption Board of Trinidad and Tobago.

The objective was to process open applications, where a child was already in the care of the applicant. Another objective was to review the waiting list of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs), who had been approved since 2005, by the former Adoption Board. Through this ongoing revision, the list was updated whereby PAPs either voluntarily removed themselves from the list or chose to adjust their preferences regarding the age limit of the child they wished to adopt and/or indicated their interest in sibling groups. Additionally, during this period, several interviews were facilitated on television, radio and newspapers to inform the public about the adoption process, as well as to encourage birth mothers to consider their options as opposed to abandoning their babies or contemplating abortion.

Given that the work of the Adoption Unit includes the processing of international adoptions, the Unit received several requests from international and domestic agencies to complete home study reports. As such, during this fiscal period a proposal was presented to the Board of Management suggesting that a fee be charged for this service. The proposal was approved.

Additionally, during this period, several interviews were facilitated on television, radio and newspapers to inform the public about the adoption process, as well as to encourage birth mothers to consider their options as opposed to abandoning their babies or contemplating abortion.

During the reporting period, nine Adoption Orders were granted, seven of which were open applications and two were closed applications. Furthermore, two of the open applications were for overseas adoptions.

The Unit facilitated 654 enquiries by telephone, email and walk-ins, both domestic and international. The Unit also facilitated sensitisation sessions with the aim of creating awareness about the adoption process as well as to encourage interested persons to expand their preference to include the adoption of older children, rather than only babies.

A recurring challenge is the slow submission of supporting documents by applicants. All applicants are given one month within which to submit their supporting documents, however, many have not been compliant and this delays the finalisation of their application.

Obtaining consent from birthparents is an ongoing challenge. During the period under review, the Unit encountered situations where birthmothers and birthfathers were unwilling to give consent even though the child was with a relative. In some instances, the applicant was advised to seek mediation with the birthparents, in the hope of resolving the dilemma.





TABLE 8: ADOPTION - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Applications Received	*85
Adoption Orders Granted	9
Applications in Progress	45
Telephone, Email and Walk-in Enquiries	654
International/Domestic Request for Home Study Reports	3
Freeing Orders	3
Prospective Adoptee in Care	6

** The 85 applications received represent 43 Open and 42 Closed applications.*

ANECDOTE

When the Authority became operational in May 2015, the Adoption Unit inherited a list of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) from the former Adoption Board. Some of the PAPs would have been on the waiting list since 2005. During this Fiscal Year, a PAP approved since 2012, was eventually matched with a 3-year-old child and successfully completed the interaction sessions.

Thereafter, the child was placed with the PAP for the six-month probationary period and the placement has been progressing well. Once the probationary period is completed, the adoption of the child should conclude in the next quarter.





LICENSING AND MONITORING

The Licensing and Monitoring (L&M) Unit, during the period under review continued its duties as the regulatory and monitoring arm of the Authority for community residences. The Unit focused on the issuance and revocation of residence licences to children's homes as well as the monitoring of all homes and designated rehabilitation centres.

While the Unit is regulatory in nature, it often works collaboratively with community residences to ensure a guided approach on the implementation of actions essential to meet licensing requirements. In addition to monitoring visits and calls, officers of the Unit conduct tutorials to staff of the homes on the preparation of various logs and documents. The Unit also acts as a liaison between various public agencies and the children's home, as well as create Action Plans for managers to implement.

The Unit undertook efforts to build a better relationship and communication between the Authority and the various operational children's homes, in conjunction with the Children's Homes Association of Trinidad and Tobago (CHATT).

In Tobago, the Unit established a strong liaison with the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development, Tobago House of Assembly, to conduct further regulatory work on the sister-isle. During the period under review, Tobago saw the licensure of its first children's home and the Unit commenced the sensitisation of Tobago nurseries on the impending legislation and monitoring.

L&M successfully coordinated two stakeholder engagement meetings with the managers of community residences in conjunction with the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) and CHATT. The Unit also was instrumental in the transition of the 12 residents from the St. Michael's School for Boys to appropriate alternative placement facilities.

A significant achievement for the Unit was its participation in 20 strategy and review sessions with the Office of the Attorney General to drive legislative reform to support our regulatory work, with particular focus on systems to ensure restorative justice for children in conflict with the law. The outcome was the completion of four critical documents: The Child Rehabilitation Centre Regulations 2017, the Children's Community Residences (Children's Home) Regulations 2018, the Children's Community Residences (Rehabilitation Centre) Regulations 2018 and the Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2018.

This fiscal period also saw the designation of two rehabilitation centres by the Ministry of National Security. With respect to the licensing role of the Authority, the Unit granted 12 community residences with a residence licence, with the expectation that 11 more homes will receive their official licence by the end of the second quarter of Fiscal 2019. The Unit also refused a license to operate to one residence, due to its failure to comply with licensing requirements.

During this period, 72 children were placed into residential care by the Authority. Additionally, very few spaces are available for a particular cadre of children, including adolescents, children with disabilities especially those with physical and mental challenges, as well as children with behavioural challenges and beyond the control of their parents (now identified by the Court as Children in Need of Supervision).



The Authority has noted that several community residences are under financial constraints, which have forced some of them to make decisions that do not allow for the maximum use of their facilities. Some have not been able to recruit additional staff to meet the supervision needs of the children in care, at their maximum physical capacity. There is also a dearth of trained staff to treat with specific children's needs, particularly children with developmental, physical and behavioural challenges. The high cost to properly outfit infrastructure to meet the needs of these children, exacerbate the limitations on placement options for these groups.

TABLE 9: LICENSING AND MONITORING - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Monitoring Visits	355
Complaints Investigated at Community Residences	32
Placement found for Children at Children's Homes	72
Inspections	4
Rehabilitation Centres Designated	2
Licences Granted	3
Licence Refused	1
Children's Homes Ceasing Operations	1

ANECDOTE

The L&M Unit continues to build a relationship with the children's homes as we work together for the children in need of accommodation. The collaboration of the Managers of the homes has been key in satisfying the requirements for the welfare and best interests of the children in residential care.

The Homes have often assisted with emergency placements. In one case, a 6-year-old boy was with his mother when she was arrested for creating a disturbance and carrying a weapon. The child spent several hours in the Police Station before the Authority was contacted late that night. After calls to several Homes, one agreed to accept the child immediately. He was given a bath, provided with clothes, given a meal and spent the night in a bed for the first time in a long time. He opened up to the caregivers and was fascinated at simple things like what was Milo and how to prepare it. The home enrolled him in a school and he would come home chipper, excitedly talking about the friends he had made. He was also excited that they were planning a birthday party for him. The L&M Unit is thankful for the commitment of children's homes to work diligently to provide the necessary care and protection to the children who reside at their Homes.



LEGAL

The Legal Services Unit provides support to the Authority in the discharge of all of its statutory duties and functions, not the least of which is the initiation of Court proceedings, as may be necessary for the Authority to achieve the care and protection of a child, in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Authority Act, Chap. 46:10.

With the launch of the Children Court in February 2018 the operations of the Legal Unit have now expanded into three main Courts throughout Trinidad. The Unit will soon be expanding its operations to Tobago with the roll-out of the Children Court, Tobago. This is in addition to the appearance in matters involving the Authority at the Magistrate's Courts.

In this regard, apart from the initiation and conduct of the Authority's care proceedings, the Legal Unit also provides critical support to the Judges and Masters of the Children Court in relation to children who are in conflict with the law and/or those who are deemed to be in need of supervision.

TABLE 10: LEGAL - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Number of Ongoing Matters Before the Courts	350
Wardship Order	44
Care Order	39
Fit Person Order	7
Assessment Order	21
Emergency Protection Order	1
Freeing Order	3
Adoption Order	5
Recovery Order	2
Foster Care Order	1





ANECDOTE

Upon the determination of Care proceedings relating to a sibling group, final Orders were granted by the Courts to vest care and control of the children in the Authority. Legal, having regard for the circumstances of the matter including the unlikely possibility of the children's reintegration with their parents and/or placement with either their maternal or paternal relatives, referred the matter to the Adoption Unit to explore the children's suitability for freeing.

The Adoption Unit after reviewing the file, presented the facts of the matter to the Adoption Committee, which granted permission for the Adoption and Legal Units to seek Freeing Orders in relation to the children, which would allow the Authority to match the children with prospective adoptive parents.

Prior to the referral of the matter to the Adoption Unit, exhaustive efforts had been made by the Child and Family Services Unit, Assessment Unit and Legal Unit, to facilitate the children's reintegration with their father. However, both parents had consistently failed to show any interest in having the children returned to their care and eventually both parents stopped attending court hearings. The Legal Unit is pleased that through the combined efforts of the various Units at the Authority, a sibling group has the opportunity to grow in a loving and stable family.





CHILD JUSTICE

The Child Justice Unit has the sole responsibility for a unique subset of children known as Children in Conflict with the Law and Children in Need of Supervision (CHINS).

February 2018 saw the establishment of the country's first Children Court attached to the Family and Children Division of the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago. Strategically located in the Northern and Southern parts of Trinidad, the operationalisation of these Courts means that all matters involving children, including those in need of care and protection will be addressed at the level of a High Court; and will be specifically tailored to meet the needs of the children coming to its attention. The aim is to provide recommendations for interventions that are essential for the child's rehabilitation.

In preparation for the commencement of Children Court operations, the Child Justice Unit participated in stakeholder consultations and training exercises to ensure that key stakeholders had an appreciation for the Authority's process, role and function as a collaborator toward the overall improvement of the Juvenile Justice System in Trinidad and Tobago. During the reporting period, the Unit participated in training exercises at the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution and participated in the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) Standing Review Committee.

During the period under review, the Unit also monitored 20 reported cases of children in conflict with the law, which included tracking children through the judicial system (bail, remand, released into parents' care). The Unit also received approximately 1,500 notifications/request for initial assessments (YLSCMI (SRV) and JIFF), investigations, suitability assessments and monitoring request, conducted 164 JIFF assessments for CHINS and 180 YLSCMI assessment for Children in Conflict with the Law.

As a new entity, there were challenges in operationalising the Court and the role of the Authority in support of the Court's work. As such, the Authority is in constant discussion with the Court for the refinement of the processes.





TABLE 11: CHILD JUSTICE - WORK AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
Cases Monitored of Children in Conflict with the Law	20
Requests for Services/Notifications	1,500
JIFF Assessments Conducted for CHINS	164
YLSCMI Assessments Conducted for Children in Conflict with the Law	180

ANECDOTE

As a new team, the Child Justice Unit interacts with many children and their families. While our primary mandate is to conduct assessments, the Unit follows the children's progress while their matters are before the Court. During the year under review, the Unit worked with a child and family whose relationship seemed "broken", as both parents appeared before the Court and stated that they were uninterested in caring for the child and were seeking placement. The Court ordered the Authority to find placement for the child and to conduct an assessment.

Following the assessment of the child and family, the Unit recommended parenting classes and counselling to improve the parent-child relationship. The members of the Unit also attended every Court hearing related to the child, while working closely with the Court's Social Services Unit to ensure that the requisite interventions were carried out. Following the interventions, the child and family were reunited and are receiving continued support from representatives of the Child Justice Unit.





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

CORPORATE SERVICES

The Corporate Services Units at the Authority are the backbone of the organisation. They provide support services for all areas of the organisation's operations to enhance service delivery and the welfare of employees.

While the staff who work in the Corporate Services Units may not work directly with the clients who receive services from the Authority, the Units play an integral role in the operations of the Care, Legal and Regulatory Units.

Corporate Services is made up of the following Units: Human Resources; Public Education and Communications; Information Technology; Research and Planning; Finance and Facilities, Administration and Health, Safety, Security and Environment.



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

One of the core functions of the Children's Authority is that of advocacy, in which the organisation seeks to educate and inform the public about issues regarding child protection. This function is also in line with the organisation's six new strategic goals, which are Advocacy, Prevention, Intervention, Child Justice, Governance and Collaboration.

Through the Public Education and Communications Unit, the Authority conducts and facilitates sensitisation sessions throughout Trinidad and Tobago. The sessions are intended to foster a culture that promotes children's rights and positively influences societal values regarding the care and protection of children.

During Fiscal 2018, the Unit's advocacy campaign continued to target key stakeholders as well as the general public which includes, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, health care providers, educators, children and the wider public. However, greater emphasis was placed on the education sector, particularly school children to afford them the opportunity to know about their rights, how they can protect themselves from abuse and what steps they should take if they experience abuse.

Additionally, the Authority's data, compiled and analysed by the Registry and Research Units, provided the material used to educate the public about the status of child abuse in the country based on reports received.

The Public Education and Communications Unit also worked closely with the Stakeholder Engagement Committee of the Board of Management to ensure that all of the Authority's partners were re-engaged with a view to developing Memoranda of Understanding with them.

During the period under review, the Unit received over 50 media requests for information and conducted over 40 media interviews (television, radio and newspaper).

In order to meet the need for information and education in the digital sphere, in November of 2017, the Authority created and activated its social media platforms. On these platforms, mainly Instagram and Facebook, the Unit has been able to disseminate information on a daily basis with its following, while engaging in discussions aimed at changing the mind-set of society, as it relates to the way children are treated and viewed. Over the period, the Authority developed a social media following of more than 5,000, with posts reaching approximately 20,000 persons monthly.





Over 60 sensitisation sessions were conducted to various stakeholders, which totalled over 6,000 persons. The map highlights the locations of the sensitisations that were conducted throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

- Manzanilla
- St James
- Couva
- Chaguanas
- Barataria
- Sangre Grande
- Arouca
- Port-of-Spain
- La Romain
- Macoya
- St Augustine
- Arima
- San Fernando
- Maracas, St Joseph
- Preysal
- Tunapuna
- Santa Cruz
- Gasparillo
- Rio Claro
- Mayaro
- Roxborough
- Turtle Beach
- Scarborough
- Plymouth



The Authority continues to receive numerous requests for sensitisations. However, there is a need to increase our capacity to conduct more outreach sessions based on the volume and frequency of requests, especially in communities. Plans are underway to develop a specialised team, whose task will be to conduct public education across the country and facilitate all requests received for sensitisations.

The Authority will also be partnering with its Line-Ministry to utilise other forms of public outreach such as billboards, both electronic and static, as well as wrapped buses with information about preventing child abuse.



RESEARCH AND PLANNING

The Research and Planning Unit provides essential support to both the Authority's Corporate Services and Care, Legal and Regulatory Units. It is responsible for implementing the research, planning, monitoring and evaluation plan of the Authority and it reviews the effectiveness of the programmes and interventions administered by the Authority.

The work undertaken by the Unit supports the functions of the Authority through strategic planning, the development of key performance indicators that are in alignment with organisational goals and objectives; the monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of key performance indicators, strategic goals and objectives; policy development; data analysis; and research to assist in evidence-based decision making. Over the course of Fiscal 2018, the Research and Planning Unit was responsible for the creation of various policies emerging from the strategic planning exercise. The policies seek to streamline internal processes to ensure staff compliance with the regulations and laws of the Authority.

During the period, the Authority commissioned the execution of a National Baseline Study on Public Perceptions on Child Protection Issues in Trinidad and Tobago. The study focused on establishing baseline indicators for attitudes towards and perceptions of children, children's rights, children's values, child abuse and child protection, as a platform for impact evaluation in future policy development. The study is scheduled to be published in the second quarter of Fiscal 2019.

The Unit continues to be faced with challenges regarding data retrieval from CPIMS. The data logged on CPIMS is critical for data analysis, strategic planning and evidence-based decision making. While the Authority is able to retrieve valuable data from the system in its current form, it is expected that a revamped system will afford the Authority the opportunity to provide more information to the public on the situation regarding child abuse and maltreatment in Trinidad and Tobago. It will also provide additional data for the conduct of targeted sensitisations throughout the country.



HUMAN RESOURCES

The proclamation of the Family and Children Division Act, 2016 along with the consequential amendments had significant implications for the work of the Authority. The Act also increased responsibilities that expand the Authority's initial mandate to care and protect children.

In response to these increasing responsibilities and reports, the Authority had to revise its organisation structure in order to ensure that it is adequately poised to meet the demands of its stakeholders.

During Fiscal 2018, the Authority intensified recruitment efforts in anticipation of additional locations coming on stream including the North and South Children Court, South Regional Office and Assessment Centre, Sangre Grande Assessment Centre and Tobago Child Support Centre and Regional Office and Assessment Centre.

During the period under review, the Authority employed 76 new persons although staff turnover crept back up to 16% from 6% in the comparative period for 2017.

Employee burnout continues to be a significant challenge for the Authority and there are several initiatives intended to combat this, which are planned for Fiscal 2019.





FACILITIES, ADMINISTRATION AND HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY & ENVIRONMENT

The Facilities, Administration and Health, Safety, Security & Environment Unit (FAHSSE) has been the driving force behind the Authority's commitment to developing a culture that mitigates risks to staff, community and the environment. The Unit's emphasis on risk mitigation goes beyond protecting human health, avoiding and preventing accidents and injuries, and minimising environmental impacts. In fact, it places a greater focus on quality assurance and integrity. As a result, the Authority has implemented Health, Safety, Security and Environment best practices through policies that are aligned with global industry standards and statutory obligations, which are then strictly and fairly enforced.

For the Fiscal Year under review, the organisation established two additional Assessment Centres in Trinidad and a Child Support Centre in Tobago. The FAHSSE Unit was instrumental in ensuring that each facility was outfitted with the necessary aesthetics to facilitate a high level of service to the Authority's clients who would utilise the spaces.

In addition to ensuring that each space meets the requirements to be operational, the Unit in pursuit of excellence in both HSSE and Facilities Management, continues to maintain that the safety, security and well-being of personnel and the conservation of resources at each facility are adhered to by all.

The main accomplishments of the Facilities, Administration and HSSE Department (FAHSSE) during Fiscal 2018 are as follows:

- The development of Emergency Response Plans and Evacuation Maps for new facilities
- The operationalisation of the Sangre Grande Assessment Centre
- The opening of North Court Child Justice Office
- The opening of South Court (Fyzabad) Child Justice Office
- The operationalisation of a Child Support Centre
- The execution of HSSE critical training for corporate staff
- The execution of an office-based Risk Assessment
- The completion of a Job-Hazard-Assessment for all staff
- The management of an internal HSE and Security Audit
- The development and implementation of emergency wardens, fire training, first-aid and mental health first-aid for key personnel across all Regional Offices and Units
- The implementation of sustainability, recycling and environmental conservation measures throughout all facilities
- The establishment of a robust Fleet Management System; and
- The establishment of a Preventive Maintenance System for all equipment and emplacements throughout all facilities

In the face of soaring concerns about the environmental impact of existing infrastructure, FAHSSE was tasked with finding better ways to manage waste, reduce energy output and improve overall sustainability.





INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

For Fiscal 2018, the Information Technology Unit maintained its focus on creating a solid, reliable and converged network infrastructure platform upon which services can be delivered to the entire organisation, including all Regional Offices.

Given the expansion of the organisation to Regional Offices and the increase in staff, the Unit had to ensure that the network security was not vulnerable to unauthorised access, misuse and or malfunction. This included, re-evaluating the network IP Addressing Scheme and dividing the organisation's network into smaller manageable networks to allow for inter-connectivity to form the Authority's Wide Area Network (WAN). This was achieved through the acquisition of new networking equipment and a design topology that facilitated growth and expansion and secured inter-connectivity through the utilisation of different technologies.

Some significant accomplishments for the Unit for Fiscal 2018 are as follows:

- The implementation of a new Internet Protocol (IP) Addressing Scheme
- The implementation of network routers and switches at the Authority's seven sites
- The implementation of IPSEC technology to encrypt data across our WAN
- The implementation of DMVPN technology to enable more efficient site to site communication
- The implementation of URL content filtering
- The completion of hardware and software upgrade of our telephone PBX
- The implementation of a Session Initiated Protocol (SIP) circuit for our telephone system
- The implementation of a GSM Gateway for our telephone system
- The successful implementation of a converged network, delivering both voice and data services via a single ethernet cable to the end user
- The coordination of the review of CPIMS by an independent consultant

The Unit and by extension the organisation still face challenges with the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) in terms of its overall functionality. The application is maintained internally to ensure that data can still be recorded. However, efforts to attain a suitable replacement solution are ongoing.



FINANCE

Budget Allocations - Fiscal 2018

The Authority's funding is provided by the State through the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) (OPM (GCA)) the Authority's Line-Ministry. Operating expenses are funded through the Recurrent Programme under three distinct votes – Expenses of the Children's Authority, Foster Care Expenses and Adoption Board Expenses. Capital/Development projects are funded through the Development Programme (DP) for which funds are allocated separately.

For Fiscal 2018, the Authority was allocated Recurrent funding by the State of \$56.2 Million which represented a \$19.1 Million increase over the 2017 approved budget. This allocation was in response to an initial budget submission of \$108.6 Million which was predicated upon a staff complement of 245 and an operation expanded to include new Chaguanas, Ste. Madeleine, Tobago and Sangre Grande Assessment Centres and a new Child Support Centre in Tobago.

DP funding of \$4.85 Million was allocated to the Authority in Fiscal 2018, which was a decrease of \$1.85 Million compared to Fiscal 2017. Following the non-receipt of DP funding requested in Fiscal 2017, the Authority was advised by its Line-Ministry, that expenditure incurred with respect to completing the 2017 projects should be applied against the approved 2018 budget allocation of \$4.85 Million. Accordingly, the Authority progressed the Fiscal 2017 projects in Fiscal 2018 and submitted funding requests to OPM (GCA) for the full approved budget of \$4.85 Million, based on expenditure and commitments, of which \$4.17 Million was received as at 30th September, 2018.

Income and expenditure - Fiscal 2018

For Fiscal 2018, the Authority received its full approved Recurrent allocation of \$56.2 Million. The Authority's operating expenditure for the same period amounted to \$55.3 Million of which personnel costs comprised 57%, accommodation 12% and security 5%. It should be noted that these categories of expenses were significant on account of the people-intensive nature of the operations, the need to operate multiple facilities in order to provide services close to where they were needed and the high-risk nature of the operations, which required that security and safety be accorded a high priority in the interest of the safety of children and staff.

Foster Care expenses for Fiscal 2018 amounted to \$1.5 Million and Adoption expenses \$89,000.

Budget Request - Fiscal 2019

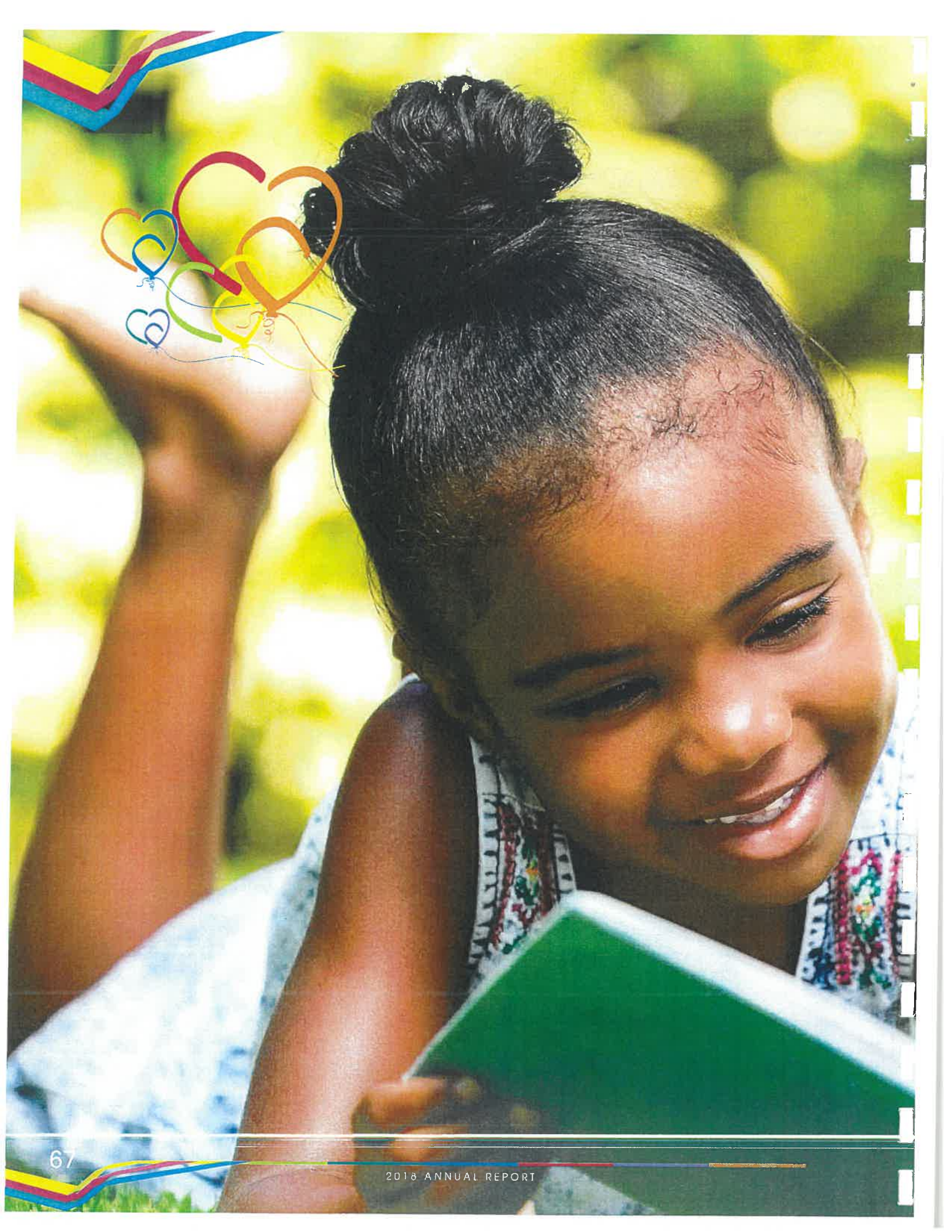
The 2019 Draft Budget Estimates of Recurrent and DP Expenditure were compiled and submitted to the OPM (GCA) in April 2018 for \$109 Million and \$19.5 Million respectively. The Authority was requested to reduce its draft estimates due to restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Finance. Consequently, the 2019 Draft Budget Estimates of Recurrent and DP Expenditure were revised and re-submitted to the Line-Ministry in May 2018 for \$57.7 Million and \$9.5 Million respectively. The OPM (GCA) committed to make a request at Mid Term Review for additional resources for the Authority to meet any shortfall in funding due to increased service delivery by the Authority.



Financial Audit for 2016 and 2017

The contract for the audit of the Authority's financial statements for the financial year ended 30th September, 2016 was awarded by the Auditor General to Maharaj Mohammed and Company in March 2017. This audit was completed and the audited financials submitted to the Auditor General in June 2018. The audit for the financial year ended 30th September, 2017 was conducted by the Auditor General and the audited financials submitted to the Authority in August 2018.

The Authority's unaudited financial statements for the financial year ended 30th September, 2018 were submitted to the Auditor General for audit and are appended to this report.





LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

**SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS
IN LEGISLATION**



SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEGISLATION

Subsequent to the proclamation of the Family and Children Division Act in the previous reporting period, engagement with key stakeholders gave rise to a push for further legislative reform, particularly to address the treatment, care and accommodation of children in conflict with the law.

Twenty sessions with the Offices of the Attorney General and of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel finalised presentations to the Legislation Review Committee. In particular, the following documents that make up the regulatory framework were effected: the Child Rehabilitation Centre Regulations 2017, the Children's Community Residences (Children's Home) Regulations 2018 and the Children's Community Residences (Rehabilitation Centre) Regulations 2018.

The Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2018 has also been passed in both Houses of Parliament and is pending proclamation. Building on the changes instituted by the Family and Children Division Act, this Bill will again amend several existing pieces of legislation, including the 2015 children's package of legislation, which sets out the Authority's mandate, as well as the Child Rehabilitation Centre Act 2017.

Further amendments to the Child Rehabilitation Centre Regulations 2017 were also discussed and proclamation will ensue in the next reporting period.



CONCLUSION



LOOKING
AHEAD



CONCLUSION - LOOKING AHEAD

Over the last three years of operations, the Authority has grown in an effort to meet the demands of its clients. As a result, there was a need for additional Places of Safety, Regional Offices, Assessment Centres and for the Authority to have an established presence in Tobago.

By the first quarter of Fiscal 2019, the Authority would have opened its South Regional Office and Assessment Centre in Ste. Madeleine and a Child Support Centre in Tobago. Within the second quarter of Fiscal 2019, an Assessment Centre and Regional Office will be established in Tobago as well as an Assessment Centre in Chaguanas.

Although these projects have been in the pipeline for some time, their coming into fruition was made possible through the tremendous support received from the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs.

The Authority is pleased to have developed the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to clearly guide its way forward. The strategic framework represents the inter-connectedness between the various functions of the organisation and the need to combine programmes, in order to achieve sustainable results. Therefore, each goal is critical to develop a holistic and coordinated approach to child protection in Trinidad and Tobago. The goals are Advocacy, Prevention, Intervention, Child Justice, Governance and Collaboration.

While the Authority was confidently hopeful it would have established the National Child Protection Protocol during the Fiscal Year, the strides made in the establishment of Memoranda of Understanding with several agencies was a huge success. Therefore, we will continue efforts to sign MOUs with other partners in the sector like the Regional Health Authorities, the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Ministry of Education and the Divisions within the Tobago House of Assembly. We believe that partnerships built on mutual respect will increase the likelihood that the national child protection system will work in the best interest of all children. Our children demand that we work together for their benefit.

It must be noted that the work of the Authority and other agencies in the child protection sector, would be futile without a holistic and collaborative approach to the issues affecting the nation's children. As a society we have to examine the causal effect of child abuse.

Our data has consistently highlighted mothers as the main perpetrators of abuse. While the cause of this phenomenon has been articulated by international agencies that have done research on families within their jurisdiction, the Authority is of the view that a survey should be conducted to identify the issues pertinent to our culture, which have led to mothers as nurturers, perpetrating some of the most heinous crimes upon their children. The result of the survey will greatly help in developing policies and the provision of services to mothers, as well as fathers and guardians, who care for children.





A major bugbear for the Authority is the lack of suitable placement options for children in need of safe and stable family environments. Children's homes and foster carers play a crucial role in providing both short and long-term placement for children in need of care and protection.

Although the pool of foster carers has grown, it is marginal compared to the number of children who regularly require placement. While we know there are people willing to provide support to children and their families, there appears to be a reluctance to enter a formal Foster Care arrangement. Therefore, we will redouble our efforts to sensitise and encourage the national community to consider providing a loving home to a child in need.

Although efforts are ongoing to get all children's homes licensed, the Authority recognises that many do not have the finances to implement some of the recommendations that are required for them to obtain their licenses. Therefore, we will advocate for assistance from external stakeholders to aid the residences to meet the licensing requirements.

We continue to state that a society is judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable – and children are one of the most vulnerable. As a society we are failing our children and the injustices that many of them face on a daily basis is horrendous.

We need to adopt a more positive outlook and attitude in treating with children, as well as become advocates in the promotion of children's rights and protection. Therefore in 2019, the Authority will embark upon a community-based prevention campaign geared towards public sensitisation and public engagement, with the intention of reducing the high levels of unreported child abuse cases.

The Authority continues to appeal for a collaborative approach to child protection, as no one agency has the capacity to address the problems faced by children. In the three years of operations, some of the children who have come to the Authority's attention are now adults. Many of them are still hurting and will need long-term support in order to become contributing members of the society.

It is our hope that our collaborative efforts with all stakeholders will strengthen the social service systems provided for our children so that they are valued, cared for, protected and their rights respected.





YEAR IN PHOTOS

2017 - 2018



Children's Authority celebrates 3 years



Office of the Prime Minister's Child Justice League Fair at SAPA





Trincity Mall Display



Tobago sensitisation





UCD presentation to ECCE students at the National Library



Tour of Assessment Centre - Regional Child Protection Conference



Visit by Guyana Rights of the Child Commission



Courtesy visit to THA Chief Secretary & officials



UNICEF Regional Planning Conference



Opening of Sangre Grande Assessment Centre



Eye on Dependency - Ready Set Grow



Adoption - Foster Care interview on SKY 99.5FM



Handover of Keys, Ste Madeleine



MOU signing with THA, Division Of Health



Official opening of a CR Commissioned by THA



Director speaking at UNICEF Regional Conference on Child Protection





FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS For the Financial Year Ended 30th September, 2018.

CONTENTS	PGS
Statement of Financial Position	81
Statement of Comprehensive Income	82
Statement of Changes in Equity	83
Statement of Cash Flows	84
Notes to the Financial Statements	85 - 94



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Assets			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	7	10,005,827	11,117,789
Intangible assets	8	436,684	518,099
		<u>10,442,511</u>	<u>11,635,888</u>
Current assets			
Accounts receivable and prepayments	4	511,821	327,870
Short-term investments	3	274,426	274,426
Cash and bank balances	3	<u>9,550,840</u>	<u>6,709,990</u>
		<u>10,337,087</u>	<u>7,312,286</u>
Total Assets		<u>20,779,598</u>	<u>18,948,174</u>
Shareholders' Equity			
Accumulated fund		<u>6,310,631</u>	<u>2,975,675</u>
		<u>6,310,631</u>	<u>2,975,675</u>
Liabilities			
Non-current liabilities			
Deferred government grants	9	<u>8,180,791</u>	<u>9,702,433</u>
		<u>8,180,791</u>	<u>9,702,433</u>
Current liabilities			
Accounts payable and accruals	5	4,026,456	4,336,611
Deferred government grants	9	<u>2,261,720</u>	<u>1,933,455</u>
		<u>6,288,176</u>	<u>6,270,066</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>14,468,967</u>	<u>15,972,499</u>
Total Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity		<u>20,779,598</u>	<u>18,948,174</u>

The accompanying notes on pages 81 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.





STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

	Note	2018	2017
		\$	\$
Income			
Government subventions		61,592,608	35,827,651
Project expenses		<u>(718,078)</u>	<u>(369,843)</u>
		60,874,530	35,457,808
Other income		<u>3,880</u>	<u>5,859</u>
Total income		60,878,410	35,463,667
Expenditure			
Operating and administrative	10	55,331,470	44,750,357
Depreciation and amortization		2,261,719	1,933,455
Bank charges and interest	10	<u>8,391</u>	<u>7,176</u>
		<u>57,601,580</u>	<u>46,690,988</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year		<u>3,276,830</u>	<u>(11,227,321)</u>

The accompanying notes on pages 81 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.





STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

	Accumulated Fund \$	Total \$
Balance at 1st October 2016	14,202,996	14,202,996
Deficit for the year	(11,227,321)	(11,227,321)
Balance at 30th September 2017	<u>2,975,675</u>	<u>2,975,675</u>
Balance at 1st October 2017	2,975,675	2,975,675
Surplus/Deficit for the year	3,276,830	3,276,830
Equity adjustment	58,125	58,125
Balance at 30th September:	<u>6,310,631</u>	<u>6,310,631</u>

The accompanying notes on pages 81 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.





STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
Operating Activities			
Net surplus/deficit for the year		3,276,830	(11,227,321)
Equity adjustment		58,125	-
Adjustment for:			
Depreciation		2,180,306	1,834,614
Amortisation		81,413	98,841
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	-
		<u>5,596,674</u>	<u>(9,293,866)</u>
Movements in working capital			
Decrease/(increase) in accounts receivable and prepayments		(183,950)	(6,106,938)
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable and accruals		<u>(310,154)</u>	<u>3,116,586</u>
Net cash utilized in operating activities		5,102,570	(70,342)
Investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(1,068,343)	(2,369,129)
Cash used in investing activities		<u>(1,068,343)</u>	<u>(2,369,129)</u>
Financing activities			
Movement in deferred grants		<u>(1,193,377)</u>	435,675
Cash (used in)/provided by financing activities		<u>(1,193,377)</u>	435,675
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		<u>2,840,850</u>	<u>(2,003,796)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents			
- at the beginning of the year		6,984,416	(8,988,212)
- at the end of the year	3	<u>9,825,266</u>	<u>6,984,416</u>
		<u>2,840,850</u>	<u>(2,003,796)</u>

The accompanying notes on pages 6 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.





NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

1. Incorporation and principal activities

The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) was established in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago under the guidelines stated in the Children's Authority Act 64 of 2000 and its subsequent amendments. CATT was set up to fulfil the objectives of the Act:

- Promote the well-being of all children in Trinidad and Tobago
- Provide care and protection for vulnerable children
- Comply with certain obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

CATT is managed by a Board of Management, which is appointed by the President. In accordance with the Act, the Board shall include members who possess professional qualifications and skills in child psychology, child psychiatry, social work, paediatrics and education, accounting and family law.

2. Significant accounting policies

(a) Basis of preparation

These financial statements are expressed in Trinidad and Tobago dollars and have been prepared under the historical cost convention, in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

(b) Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements, in conformity with International Financial Reporting Standards, require management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are carried in the Statement of Financial Position at cost and comprise cash in hand and bank balances disclosed in Trinidad and Tobago dollars, and other short-term highly liquid investments.

(d) Foreign currency

Foreign currency transactions during the year are translated into Trinidad and Tobago dollars at the exchange rates ruling at the dates of the transactions. Current assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the exchange rates prevailing at the Statement of Financial Position date. Gains or losses thus arising are included in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(e) Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment are stated at cost and are being depreciated on the reducing balance basis (with the exception of leasehold improvements which is depreciated on the straight-line basis), at varying rates, which are sufficient to write off the cost of the assets over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Furniture and fittings	10%
Medical equipment	20%
Motor vehicles and equipment	20%
Office equipment	20%
Computer equipment	33.3%
Leasehold improvements (straight-line method)	over 12 years

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognized as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the company and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income during the financial period in which they are incurred.

As asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount and are recognized in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.





NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(f) Intangible Assets

The accounting requirements for intangible assets, relates to assets that are either without physical substance and identifiable (either being separable or arising from contractual or other legal rights). Intangible assets meeting the relevant recognition criteria are initially measured at cost. Subsequent measurement can be either at cost or using the revaluation model and amortized on a systematic basis over their useful lives, unless these assets have an indefinite useful life, in which case they are not amortized. The revaluation model, however can only be determined by reference to an active market.

The intangible assets currently recognised in the Statement of Financial Position relates to software development costs.

Software development costs are capitalised only after technical and commercial feasibility of the asset. This means that the entity must intend and be able to complete the intangible asset and either use it or sell it and then be able to demonstrate how the asset will generate future economic benefits. The amortization rate is presented below:

Software Development Costs

(g) Revenue

(i) Government subventions

Government subventions are recognised at fair value on an accrual basis

(ii) Interest income

Interest income earned on deposits and short-term investments are recognised on the accrual basis.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(f) Intangible Assets

The accounting requirements for intangible assets, relates to assets that are either without physical substance and identifiable (either being separable or arising from contractual or other legal rights). Intangible assets meeting the relevant recognition criteria are initially measured at cost. Subsequent measurement can be either at cost or using the revaluation model and amortized on a systematic basis over their useful lives, unless these assets have an indefinite useful life, in which case they are not amortized. The revaluation model, however can only be determined by reference to an active market.

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Software Development Costs

(g) Revenue

(i) Government subventions

Government subventions are recognised at fair value on an accrual basis

(ii) Interest income

Interest income earned on deposits and short-term investments are recognised on the accrual basis.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

(h) Investments

(i) Held to maturity

These investments are stated at amortized cost, less provisions for any permanent diminution in value, with the positive intention of being held to maturity.

(ii) Available for sale

After initial recognition, the investments, which are classified as "available for sale", are measured at fair value, with unrealised gains or losses recorded to the Investment Reserve on the Statement of Financial Position. For actively traded investments, fair value is determined by reference to Stock Exchange quoted market prices at the Statement of Financial Position date, adjusted for transaction cost necessary to realize the investment. For investments where there is no quoted market price, the carrying value is deemed to approximate fair value.

(i) Accounts receivable

Accounts receivable are amounts due from customers for goods sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business. All collections from sales are expected in one year or less and are classified as current assets. Accounts receivable are initially recognized at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at cost less provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of accounts receivable is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to recover all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

(j) Accounts payable

Accounts payable are obligations on the basis of normal credit terms and do not bear interest.

(k) Taxation

No provision has been made for taxation in these financial statements.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

3. Cash and bank balances

Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash on hand and balances with banks. Cash and cash equivalents included in the Statement of Cash Flows comprise the following Statement of Financial Position balances:

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash and bank	9,550,840	6,709,990
Short-term investments	<u>274,426</u>	<u>274,426</u>
	<u>9,825,266</u>	<u>6,984,416</u>

4. Accounts receivable and prepayments

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Accounts receivable	-	13,782
Prepayments and other	<u>511,821</u>	<u>314,088</u>
	<u>511,821</u>	<u>327,870</u>

5. Accounts payable and accruals

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Accounts payable	1,126,910	668,687
Accruals	2,059,707	2,079,552
Other payables	<u>839,839</u>	<u>1,588,372</u>
	<u>4,026,456</u>	<u>4,336,611</u>

6. Employees

	2018	2017
The number of employees at year end	<u>165</u>	<u>141</u>





NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

7. Property, plant and equipment

	Leasehold Improvements	Furniture & Fixtures	Medical Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Office Equipment	Computer Equipment	Total
Cost							
Beginning of year	8,129,108	2,585,853	1,405,790	2,514,933	1,057,817	3,630,285	19,323,786
Additions	-	139,914	76,656	-	283,385	568,388	1,068,343
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
End of year	8,129,108	2,572,691	1,482,446	2,514,933	1,341,202	4,198,673	20,392,129
Accumulated Depreciation							
Beginning of year	3,515,452	933,377	533,462	912,213	392,213	1,919,310	8,205,997
Current year charge	677,426	174,067	183,650	324,963	169,799	650,401	2,180,306
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
End of year	4,192,878	1,107,444	717,112	1,237,176	561,982	2,569,711	10,386,303
Net Book Value 2018	3,936,230	1,618,323	765,334	1,277,757	779,220	1,628,962	10,005,826
Net Book Value 2017	4,613,656	1,652,476	872,328	1,602,720	665,634	1,710,975	11,117,789





NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

8. Intangible assets	2018 \$	2017 \$
<u>Cost</u>		
Beginning of year	789,381	789,381
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
End of year	<u>789,381</u>	<u>789,381</u>
<u>Accumulated amortization</u>		
Beginning of year	271,282	172,441
Current year charge	81,415	98,841
Disposals	-	-
End of year	<u>352,697</u>	<u>271,282</u>
Carrying amount	<u>436,684</u>	<u>518,099</u>





NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

9. Deferred government grants	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Opening balance	11,635,888	11,200,214
Allocation – capital expenditure additions	1,068,343	2,369,129
Disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	-
Less depreciation and amortization - SOCI	<u>(2,261,719)</u>	<u>(1,933,455)</u>
	<u>10,442,511</u>	<u>11,635,888</u>
 In the current year government subventions received were as follows:		
Government funding – PSIP	4,170,233	-
Government funding – Recurrent	55,000,000	34,469,326
Government funding – Foster Care/Adoption	<u>1,228,999</u>	<u>1,794,000</u>
	60,399,232	36,263,325
Capital expenditure per above	(1,068,343)	(2,369,129)
Disposal – net	-	-
Depreciation and amortization	<u>2,261,719</u>	<u>1,933,455</u>
Balance to SOCI – Recurrent	<u>61,592,608</u>	<u>35,827,651</u>

The government grants have been presented in the Statement of Financial Position under both Current and Non-current Liabilities.

Portion - Non-current liability	8,180,791	9,702,433
Portion - Current liability	<u>2,261,719</u>	<u>1,933,455</u>
Total Government grant	<u>10,442,511</u>	<u>11,635,888</u>

The accounting approach for the recognition of grants is the income approach under which the grant is recognized in the Statement of Comprehensive Income over one or more period.



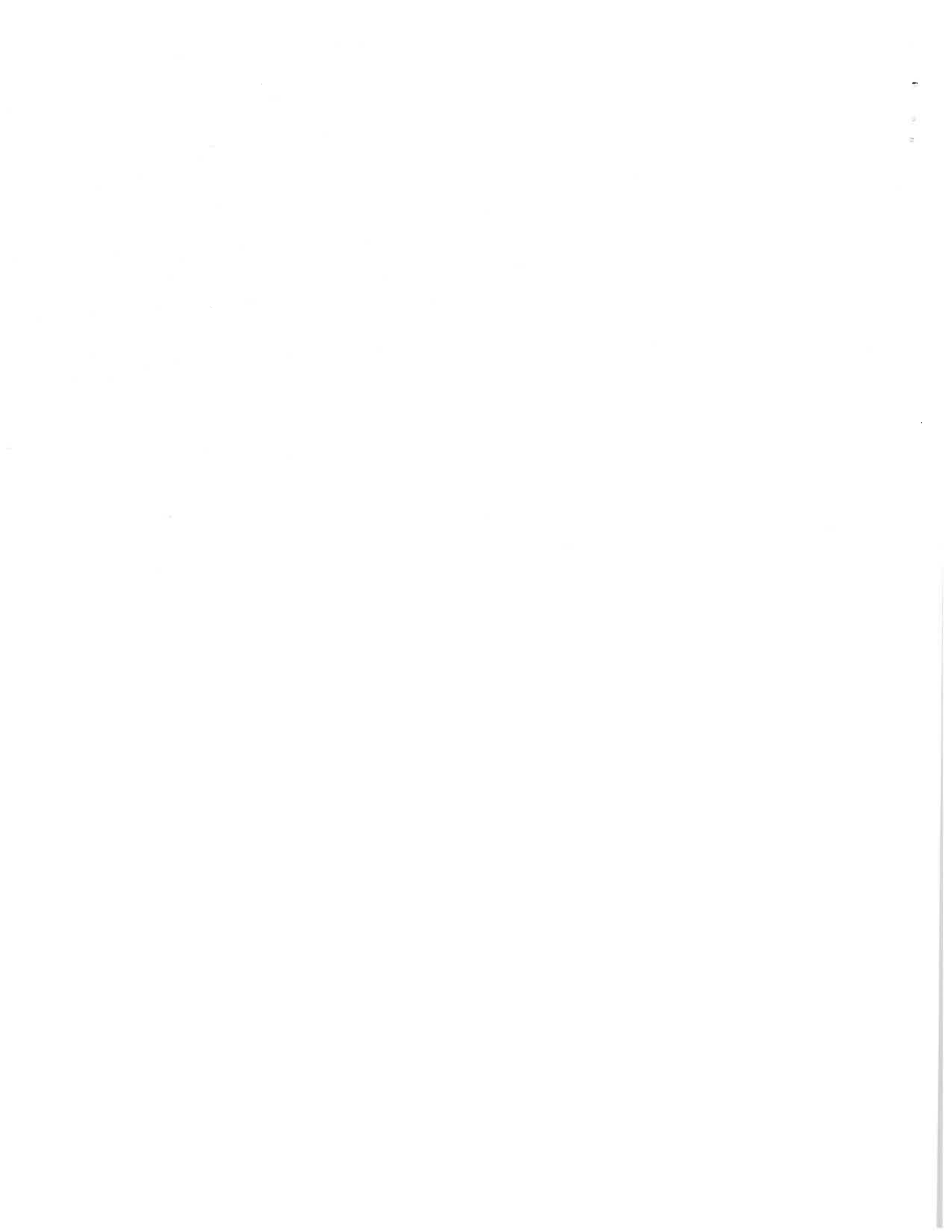


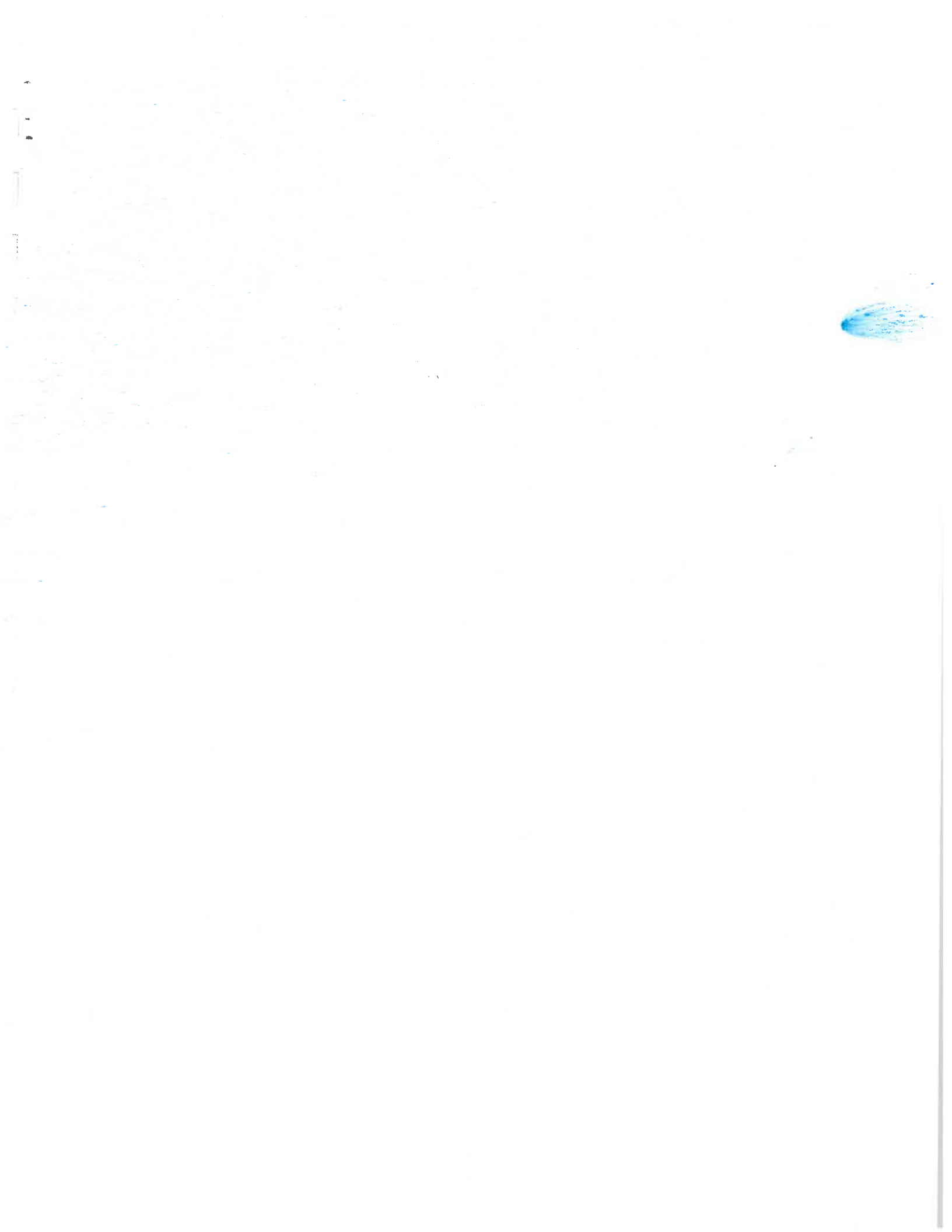
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018

10. Expenditure	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Operating and administrative		
Staff Salaries and gratuity	31,369,456	27,322,360
Operating costs	20,416,081	14,196,048
Board fees and expenses	730,120	498,372
Other staff costs	<u>2,815,813</u>	<u>2,733,577</u>
	<u>55,331,470</u>	<u>44,750,357</u>
Bank charges and interest	8,391	7,176
Depreciation & amortization	<u>2,261,719</u>	<u>1,933,455</u>
Total operating and administrative expenditure	<u>57,601,580</u>	<u>46,690,988</u>









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