



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



A N N U A L R E P O R T
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

www.ttchildren.org

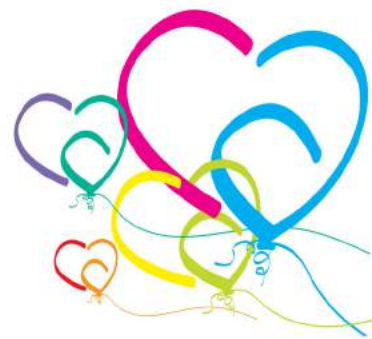


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CA	Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCRFCNA	Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act
CFSD	Child and Family Services Department
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CPU	Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
CSC	Child Support Centre
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ERT	Emergency Response Team
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
HSSE	Health, Safety, Security and the Environment
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
ISPs	Independent Service Providers
IT	Information Technology
JIFF	Juvenile Inventory For Functioning
L&M	Licensing and Monitoring
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PAP	Prospective Adoptive Parent
SSSD	Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education
TIDCO	Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago
YLSCMI	Youth Level of Service Case Management Inventory
YTC	Youth Training Centre



LIST OF KEY TERMS

WARDSHIP

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.

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.

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 who 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.

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.

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. 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.



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.

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

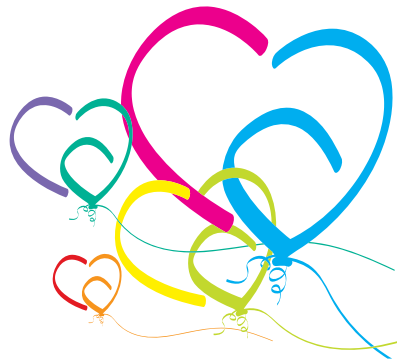
A Freeing Order is made for the purpose of declaring a child as free for adoption. This is necessary where the Authority accepts an application made by a person to place a child for adoption. Upon the grant of the order, the child shall remain in the care of the Authority and can be placed with a foster 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.

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.

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.



Mission of the Authority

The Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (also referred to as the Authority) is a specialised agency with the responsibility for the care and protection of children; especially those who are at risk or have been victims of abuse or neglect. The Authority advocates for the rights of children, encourages and supports them to enjoy their childhood. The Authority’s overarching objective is to utilise child-friendly and progressive solutions to address children’s issues in order to rehabilitate them so that their full potential is realised.



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.



Message from the Chairman

STEPHANIE DALY, C.M.T.T., S.C.

The period under review marked the first full year of operation of the Children's Authority. It was an opportunity for us to see what worked and what was needed to ensure the organisation delivered on its mandate to provide care and protection for the nation's most vulnerable. As you read the Report, you will see how the various Departments made a significant impact in the lives of children who came to the Authority's attention. However, you will also see that the data gathered shows that there is a distressing level of unmet needs.

We are encouraged by the great strides made by other agencies within the child protection sector who contribute to improving the lives of children. When we work together collaboratively we are all stronger. In fact, a societal effort is needed - government, parents, teachers, the Police and the communities in which we live. It's a job for all of us, because child protection is everyone's business.

When Trinidad and Tobago signed or ratified various international conventions and consensus documents that promoted the rights of children, it signalled to the world that the country was serious about child protection. In fact, during several meetings with international agencies, the Authority was informed that Trinidad and Tobago was seen as being in the vanguard of child protection.

Our country's child protection legislation has been described as progressive since it has introduced new offences which are focused on the real situations that arise in modern technological societies and seek to provide greater protection for children.

Some of the legislative changes that we identified as we gained experience in implementing the package of children's legislation are underway. The exciting development of a Children's Court supported by the Family and Children Division Act, 2016 will also introduce consequential amendments that will strengthen the legislation under which we function. The Legal Services Department has also been involved in reviewing draft legislation that will clarify the roles of the Authority and the Commissioner of Prisons when children are to be placed in Rehabilitation Centres.

Once again the issue comes up, of the appropriate way to treat with young people and the type of environment that may help them to develop into valued members of society. Our present laws for incarcerated children no longer meet the guidelines and standards introduced by the 2012 Children Act. The challenge is to fast forward and not only to improve their treatment, but also to take advantage of the types of diversion that certain other jurisdictions have used successfully to enable such children to reach their potential - and also to reduce recidivism.

Our first anniversary arrived in mid-May 2016. As I said in our previous report "Our vision for the Authority - beyond fulfilling its legislative mandate is to build an institution which performs with integrity and earns public confidence - a body which is focused on the protection of children but which also places a high value on customer service as well as providing an environment which is reassuring for children and adults." Hopefully, by May 2016, we would have been demonstrating our commitment to customer service and this continues.

I had also referred to the extraordinary commitment and dedication of Mrs Sharifa Ali-Abdullah, who as our Director, undertook the challenge of moving from being our only employee to setting up a functioning Authority with the capacity to address its many responsibilities. Having spent five years setting the Authority up as a robust organisation, Sharifa had fulfilled the task that she had undertaken. The achievements to date of the Authority, would not have been possible, were it not for her strategic and far-sighted approach. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Sharifa for championing the cause of the Authority and working with us as we sought to recruit a new Director and then remaining as an adviser for a short while to ensure a smooth transition.

Our new Director is Ms. Safiya Noel, who as our former Finance Manager is acutely aware of the financial needs of the Authority, is well versed in ensuring that the Authority functions within its financial constraints and has demonstrated sound potential to function in this leadership role.

Seeking to improve an inadequate system requires us to look down the road and to also focus on improving all placement options. Suitable placement options for children whether through Fit Person Orders, Foster Care or Adoption; and the establishment of additional Assessment Centres and Places of Safety, are just some of the concerns that require urgent attention.

 *A child is not truly rescued from abuse if we cannot provide secure, safe and caring accommodation.* 

The Authority recommends that T&T becomes a signatory to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention). This would place the Authority in a worldwide network with reputable agencies addressing international adoptions.

Our aim is always to work towards keeping children with their families, whenever realistically possible, appropriate and in the best interest of the child. Supporting parents who may otherwise relinquish their role, is important in protecting a child's right to his family life. Access to the social supports available to assist them in caring for their children can play a significant role in achieving this. Each improvement requires sensitisation of stakeholders and monitoring of impact if we are to derive the benefits that we seek for the nation's children.

The staff of the Authority work under difficult conditions, as they have a first-hand view of how trauma affects children. Prevention and reduction of child abuse and encouraging parents and guardians to play their part are important strategies as prevention may be possible but abuse has no easy cure and its effects are long lasting.

We are mindful of the economic constraints that Trinidad and Tobago faces. However, we are confident that the importance of supporting the work of the Authority is well-appreciated and that in conjunction with our line Ministry and those we partner with, the Children's Authority will continue to be caring, supportive and protective.

We have a wonderful opportunity to create the best possible system.



STEPHANIE DALY, C.M.T.T., S.C.
Chairman



Message from the Director

SAFIYA NOEL

At the close of the Fiscal Year 2015/2016, the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago had been in operation for just over 16 months. It was a year of great achievements and challenges.

As the hub in the child protection sector, the Authority responded to child abuse reports, removed children from circumstances that were sometimes appalling while supporting families in the process. This was both extremely demanding and daunting. However, staff of the Authority were motivated by the prospect of improving the life of a child and I am encouraged by the tremendous efforts of staff to respond to the needs of our nation's children.

The intervention of the Authority has impacted positively upon the lives of many children. We have seen these improvements, both with children directly received into our care, and those who have been placed in community residences, with foster parents or with fit persons. With improvements in their psychosocial and living conditions many of them are well on their way to a brighter future. We count our successes one child at a time, and the Authority has accomplished a lot. However, there is much more that needs to be done.

During the period under review, the Authority put its plan in action, which involved addressing the high case load while battling with the placement of children who had to be immediately taken into care, as they were in imminent danger. At the same time, the organisation was evaluating the effectiveness of its response and making further adjustments as necessary. Since resources were a key challenge, the review and development of a new organisational structure, adaptation of key processes, advocacy for the 'Pay per Child' system and additional placement options for disabled and mentally challenged children were identified as areas to be addressed going forward.

Since the Authority was in its early phase of development some major drawbacks were impacting upon the delivery of services. Some of these identified in the Annual Report focus on the inadequacy of infrastructure, finances, accommodation for children in conflict with the law, transition homes, facilities for children with special needs and manpower. These areas need to be addressed urgently, as they are paramount to the effective operations of the Authority in meeting the needs of children and transforming attitudes towards child care and protection in Trinidad and Tobago.



More efforts will be channelled into enabling families to care for their own children, where appropriate, possible and in the best interest of the child.

We are ever cognisant of the fact that children want to be with their families.



As we look ahead, the Authority will continue to champion informed decision-making to reverse the disturbing trends it has observed in relation to child care. The Authority will seek to make this possible through its prevention strategies, collaboration with key stakeholders and targeted interventions.

Of particular significance during the year was the passing of the baton of leadership by the former Director, Sharifa Ali-Abdullah, after she had established, with her team, a vibrant organisation designed to champion the rights of the nation's children. As the new Director of the Authority, I wish to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Ali-Abdullah for her five-year tenure and the amazing support she particularly provided to me, during the transitional phase of my assumption of the position. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to work side-by-side with her and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

I also want to recognise the sterling contribution and support of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and members of the Board of Management for their sound advice and unwavering passion and dedication to ensuring the protection of our nation's children.

Child protection is truly everyone's business. As we have noted since becoming operational, there is an acute problem of child abuse in Trinidad and Tobago which is evidenced by the volume of reports received and the number of children taken into care. I am confident, however, that the Authority and its partners in the child protection sector will together change attitudes towards children and their rights and improve their chances of a brighter future.

SAFIYA NOEL
Director



TRIBUTE TO SHARIFA ALI-ABDULLAH


Sharifa Ali-Abdullah's contribution as the Director of the Children's Authority for the past five years was outstanding. She was a constant presence, who was very visible in the areas of the Authority's activities, fully aware and in control of the tasks assigned to staff. She was a great mentor, with an infectious enthusiasm which ensured that the Authority became operational and that it had a solid basis of standards and procedures.

She believed that the country would and should be judged by how it cared for its most vulnerable groups and that the treatment of children had to be improved immensely. She pursued that vision passionately and worked with the support of a dedicated team of staff. With the proclamation of the package of children's legislation on May 18, 2015, there was now a platform from which to champion the cause of children and ensure that their rights were protected.

Mrs. Ali-Abdullah is a graduate from Colombia University, with a wealth of public sector experience, having worked at the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and the Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TIDCO). She was well equipped to achieve the huge task of establishing a multi-faceted organisation with responsibility for a wide array of areas affecting children and of achieving the coordination and collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders.

Steadfast, Action-oriented and Articulate, in July 2011 she accepted the challenge, to head the Authority as its third Director, with the primary focus of ensuring that the Authority became operational. Sharifa recounted, lightheartedly, on several occasions, how she was given a stack of voluminous documents and told to set up the Authority. Her commitment to the task was not unexpected since her desire to assist children had been signaled by her role as a co-founder and President of the M2 Hope Foundation, a registered charity that serves underprivileged children.

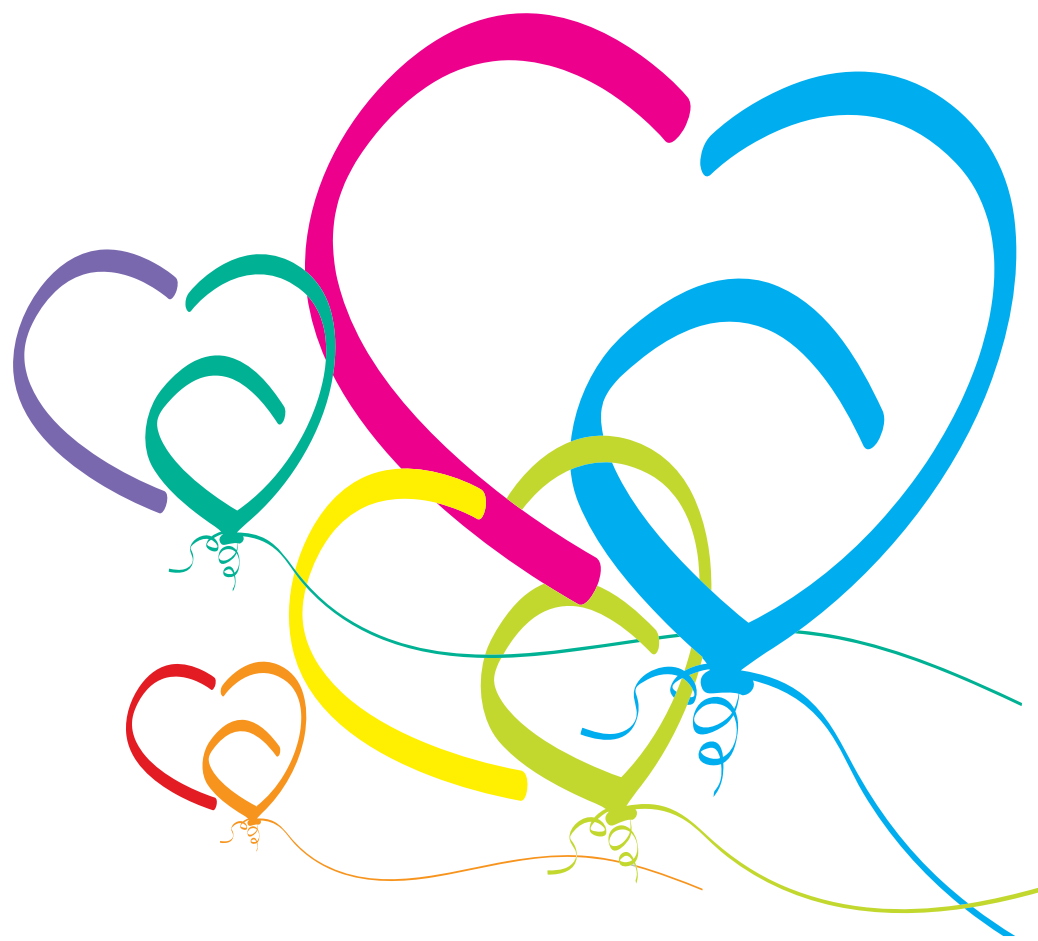
Sharifa, as she was known to all, adopted the important tenets of collaboration and consultation with stakeholders to get their buy-in, to work in the interest of children at risk. In this regard, she spear-headed efforts to sensitise stakeholders to the work of the Authority. She championed the inclusion of all significant stakeholders among whom were the community residences, children, the media, the Judiciary, the Police, the Prison Service and many non-governmental organisations (NGO's).



She instinctively knew that the voices of children had to be represented as strategies were developed to improve their lives and she made consultation with children a routine part of the Authority's processes. She also understood that the potential of the media to champion the cause of children was not to be underestimated and she ensured that the Authority remained accessible to the media. She routinely engaged the media, along with the Chairman and senior staff, in a range of issues geared towards sensitising the public and meeting their need for information on the work of the Authority and on pressing and current children's issues.

She has, undoubtedly, left in place a robust framework that sets the Authority on the path to accomplishing its goals. Her legacy is that she valued preparation and planning, quality work, the need to develop reliable data and statistics to inform the direction of the Authority and the need to make the Authority accessible to the public.

Our best wishes for the future to Sharifa from the Board of Management and staff of the Authority. She has certainly left an indelible mark on the work of the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. The Authority is on a solid footing for success in improving the lives of children across the nation.





Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago is still in the early stages of its development. As at the end of Fiscal 2016, it had been operational for 16 months. The lessons learned during this period of operations have confirmed that the establishment of the Authority met a critical, national need. Data showed that a significant number of children were at risk and in need of intervention, including immediate removal from unacceptable living arrangements and the receipt of professional support services.

The Authority started the year with financial constraints as the national budget was adversely affected by declining prices in oil and gas which ultimately affected the financial resources available to State agencies. The Authority was confronted by a further national directive for State agencies to cut expenses by 7 percent. This was particularly challenging for the Authority since its reality was increasing reports of child abuse that far exceeded expectations, at a time when the necessary recruitment of staff consumed allocated funds.

The mandate of the Authority is people intensive. It requires some services to operate 24/7, the establishment of professionally staffed assessment centres to evaluate children's needs, places of safety, a legal team that can apply to the Court for orders implementing placement recommendations, adoption as well as the team to implement the Authority's licensing and monitoring roles.

The Authority does not generate financial income. Its return on investment is measured by the children whom it assists and their development into stable, contributing members of society. The Authority depends on funding from Government to carry out all aspects of its work. Since the allocated funding was less than requested, the Authority remained confident that there would be an increased allocation of resources during the Mid-Term Review. There was also a belief that Policy decisions taken in the previous year would be implemented with respect to Government support for children's homes through a 'Pay per Child' system. This was crucial if the available placement options at community residences were to be maximised and for this to occur in the most cost-effective manner.

An analysis of the data collected in the Authority's Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) showed that the 5,522 cases reported by the end of the year had far exceeded the earlier projections of 1,200 cases per year that had been based on reports made to other stakeholders prior to the operationalisation of the Authority. This naturally created a heavy demand on the Authority's limited human and financial resources to meet the needs of children who were at risk. The reports also signalled to the Authority the need to maximise the use of all resources and to engage all stakeholders in a meaningful way to establish an efficient referral network to ensure a coordinated response to the needs of the children, while avoiding duplication of efforts and minimising case backlog.

The Authority's efforts over the period were therefore focused on:

- Engaging stakeholders;
- Improving the quality of care offered by children's homes through the standards introduced into the licensing process;
- Meeting the challenges of placement for children with particular reference to those who are difficult to place, such as teenagers, children with disabilities and mental health issues, children with challenging behaviours and children who have been victims of trafficking;
- Identifying placement options for children with fit persons, foster care providers, at places of safety or more long term children's homes and adoption;
- Facilitating parental/guardian visits for children in care, in compliance with Court order requirements.

Critical to the stakeholder engagement component was the sensitisation of all stakeholders to the issues and the scope of the Authority's work so that these agencies were aware of the level of collaboration required and the roles and responsibilities of each organisation. This was expected to result in meaningful, timely interventions for children and their families and a reduction in duplication of efforts across the sector. However, the extent to which children's lives were impacted also depended on other factors outside the control of the Authority and under the purview of the other agencies within the child protection sector which signalled the need to work collaboratively with such agencies.

There were significant developments that required additional resources for successful implementation. The Family and Child Division Act, No. 6 of 2016, will give the Authority an increasing role in the treatment of child offenders through an amendment to the Young Offenders Detention Act, Chapter 13:05 which will require the Authority to be brought in whenever the Commissioner of Prisons seeks a non-custodial sentence for a child offender. Upon proclamation of amendments to the Children Act, 2012, the Authority is to assume responsibility for the appointment of intermediaries when children who may not be able to follow proceedings are charged, which in practice is likely to involve its own trained staff, assessing children who have been charged, child offenders and newly defined monitoring of rehabilitation centres.

Valuable experiences were gained from all aspects of the operations including the Assessment and Child Support Centres; the challenges with the implementation of the licensing process; the effectiveness of work processes, systems and procedures; implementation of the Court Order processes and the implications of the liability associated with receiving children into care. Of particular significance was a landmark Court judgment (which is subject to appeal) which required the Authority to identify an appropriate rehabilitation centre for a child offender on remand or, in default, assume direct responsibility for the child.

This was one of the many unexpected events that impacted upon the Authority and which became part of the growing and learning process as the new package of legislation was navigated by itself and other stakeholders.

The Board of Management continued to play a critical role, intensified its efforts through the work of the Board Committees and provided policy direction in all areas. There are five Board Committees:

- The Adoption Committee which is established under the Children's Authority Act;
- The Finance Committee;
- The Care Committee;
- The Human Resources Committee and
- The Tenders Committee.

The Committees met regularly and where appropriate, brought recommendations to the next Board meeting. Their work is described in the section 'Governance Structure'.

The Authority is now in a good position to analyse its experiences over the past year and extract the lessons learned. It has been able to determine what systems had worked and what needed to be tweaked; to identify where there were gaps and how those gaps could be filled and most importantly what had been achieved over the period. The lessons learned enhanced the Authority's ability to contribute to discussion on the legislative agenda and informed the way forward with respect to the projects and programmes that will be given priority in Fiscal 2017.

This Report discusses how the structures implemented have allowed the Authority to function effectively, what the Authority was able to achieve and how the review of the operations and the strategic framework permitted the Authority to be responsive to the changing environment and to refocus its strategies for moving forward.



Governance Structure



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 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 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 Organization which promotes the welfare and protection of children."*

The Board comprised the following members:

1. Stephanie Daly, C.M.I.T., S.C.	Chairman	Family Law
2. Reaaz Dabiedeen	Deputy Chairman	Accounting
3. Dr. Joanne Paul	Member	Paediatrics
4. Angela Iloo	Member	Education
5. Anna Maria Mora	Member	Social Work
6. Vidya Rampersad	Member	Child Psychology/Psychiatry
7. Hazel Thompson-Ahye	Member	Family Law
8. Dr. Derrick Forrester	Member	THA Representative
9. Shannen-Marie Russell	Member	Youth Representative
10. Dhanesh Maraj	Member	NGO Representative



Board of Management at Work

Board Committees

In addition to the monthly meeting of the Board of Management, the Board managed the affairs of the Authority via five Committees which were constituted by the Board and are responsible to the Board as follows:

The Adoption Committee was created in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10, Section 7A(1), which provides that where 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. The Adoption Committee is chaired by the Chairman of the Authority.

During the period under review, 10 meetings of the Adoption Committee were held and 33 cases considered.

The Care Committee is responsible for the approval of the appropriate placement of children supported by the placement recommendations related to rehabilitation of the child; the approval of persons as foster parents; and the consideration of matters relating to the licensing and monitoring of community residences. The Committee is chaired by Dr. Joanne Paul.

During the period under review, 20 meetings of the Care Committee were held, 199 Treatment Plans¹ were considered, nine foster care provider applications were considered and three community residences were approved to be licensed in conformance with the Act.

¹ A Treatment Plan is an individualised report produced from the multidisciplinary assessment. It provides recommendations on placement and the necessary interventions required to rehabilitate the child.

The Human Resources Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Authority has an effective organisational structure; compensation policies and practices; the appropriate processes for the selection, evaluation, compensation and succession of staff; compliance with the requirements of natural justice if employment is to be terminated; and determining initiatives that will enhance staff and Board effectiveness. The Committee is chaired by Ms. Angela Iloo.

During the period under review, 12 meetings of the Human Resources Committee were held and matters addressed included staff recruitment at all levels; approval of strategies which allowed the Authority to remain flexible in responding to the enormous demands for its services; and approval of a revised organisational structure.

The Finance and Audit Committee is responsible for monitoring the financial status through the reports submitted to the Board and other financial information provided to governmental bodies or the wider public; the Authority's system of internal controls regarding finance, accounting, legal compliance and ethics that Management and the Board have established; and the Authority's auditing, accounting and financial reporting processes. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Board, Mr. Reaz Dabiedeen.

During the period under review, three meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee were held and several matters relating to budgetary constraints were addressed.

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 contract value above TT\$500,000 up to a maximum of TT\$1,000,000. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Board, Mr. Reaz Dabiedeen.

Since there were few instances of costly procurement, the committee was only required to meet on two occasions during the period under review.



Positioning the Authority



POSITIONING THE AUTHORITY

In fulfilling its mandate, the Authority has the opportunity to significantly impact national development in several core areas, including employment, truancy and crime. Particularly important is how the children we see today will themselves parent their children in the future. While the long term benefits are not recognisable in the short term, the potential to reduce unemployment, reduce the population of juvenile offenders and reduce the graduation of juvenile offenders to hard core crime is indisputable. Its impact on society can be objectively assessed in the long term. In fact, several international, empirically based studies have shown that there is a link between childhood maltreatment and subsequent juvenile delinquency, which is in turn associated with adult criminal behaviours. Children in need of care and protection, through the Authority's services, can receive timely and appropriate intervention, which has the potential to mitigate the dysfunctional behaviours that can negatively impact society.

Also of significance, on account of its potential impact on society, is the role played by the Authority's Assessment Centres. The Centres facilitates the conduct of full multidisciplinary assessments, medical screening, forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations which facilitate the development of treatment plans for the child and also the criminal investigation of abuse cases, which can increase the likelihood of successful prosecution of alleged perpetrators and can increase justice for children, which in itself, may be rehabilitative. The long-term impact of assessment, treatment of childhood trauma, improved detection and prosecution of crimes against children, redounds to the benefit of the society.

The Authority can be a key player in contributing positively to the long-term future of our nation by nurturing the holistic development of children. This in turn fosters better adjusted, productive citizens who are able to make a positive contribution towards the nation and are less likely to gravitate into crime. Providing great care for our children is also far more cost-effective than casting them adrift until they show up in the poverty, health, social services or national security statistics. If we can commit to this, it can become a win-win situation since proper care for children in any event should always be our target.

Society is judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable. The Authority's advocacy role and stakeholder engagement play a significant part in shaping the manner in which Trinidad and Tobago treats its children. By promoting a culture that respects the rights of children, this teaches them their responsibilities; supports parenting in a caring and humane manner and imparts value for children in all sectors, the Authority is able to campaign for an overall child-friendly society in which children's curiosity, creativity, childhood and life chances are nurtured. The creation of such a culture that validates the existence of children and allows them to feel that they are valued members of society has far-reaching implications, as the chances for them to grow up to be persons who aim for and attain their full potential in multiple areas are increased.

Children are our future. It is without a doubt that the Authority's work, once well-resourced to execute its plans, can improve the social fabric of the nation and help secure a better future.



Situational Analysis



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The statistics presented in this section reflect the caseload of reports received by the Authority for the period October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016. It should be noted that no comparative analysis has been done since there is no comparable twelve month period from the previous year's operations.

During the period under review, the Authority received 5,522 reports of abuse which had to be investigated. While the number of cases reported fluctuated on a monthly basis, during Fiscal 2016, the highest recorded number of cases brought to the attention of the Authority occurred in March 2016, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

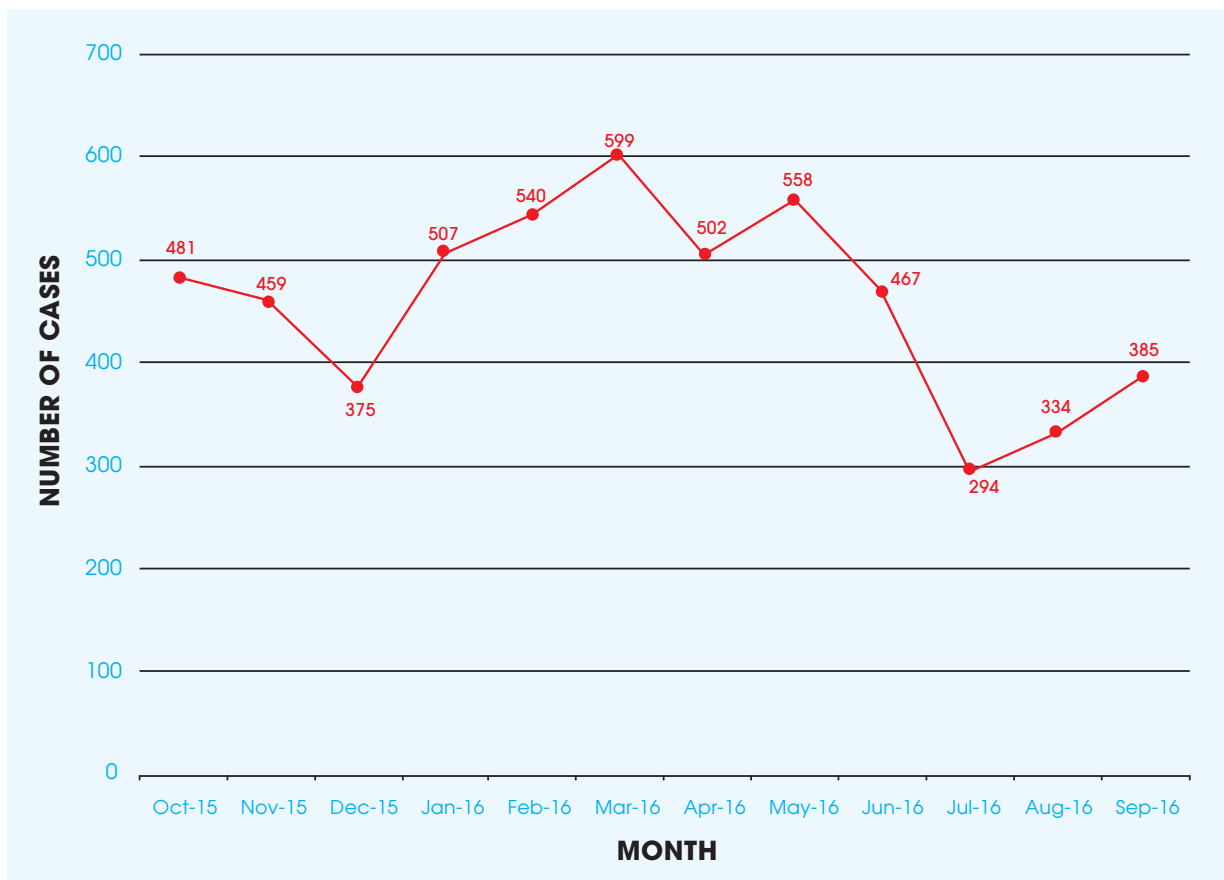


Figure 1: Number of Cases Reported to the Authority by Month

Demographic Profile of Clients

During Fiscal 2016 more than half (57.4%) of all cases brought to the attention of the Authority involved female children. 41.8 percent of all children reported to the Authority were male, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. The “unknown” category reflects that some persons making reports did not provide information on the gender of the child.

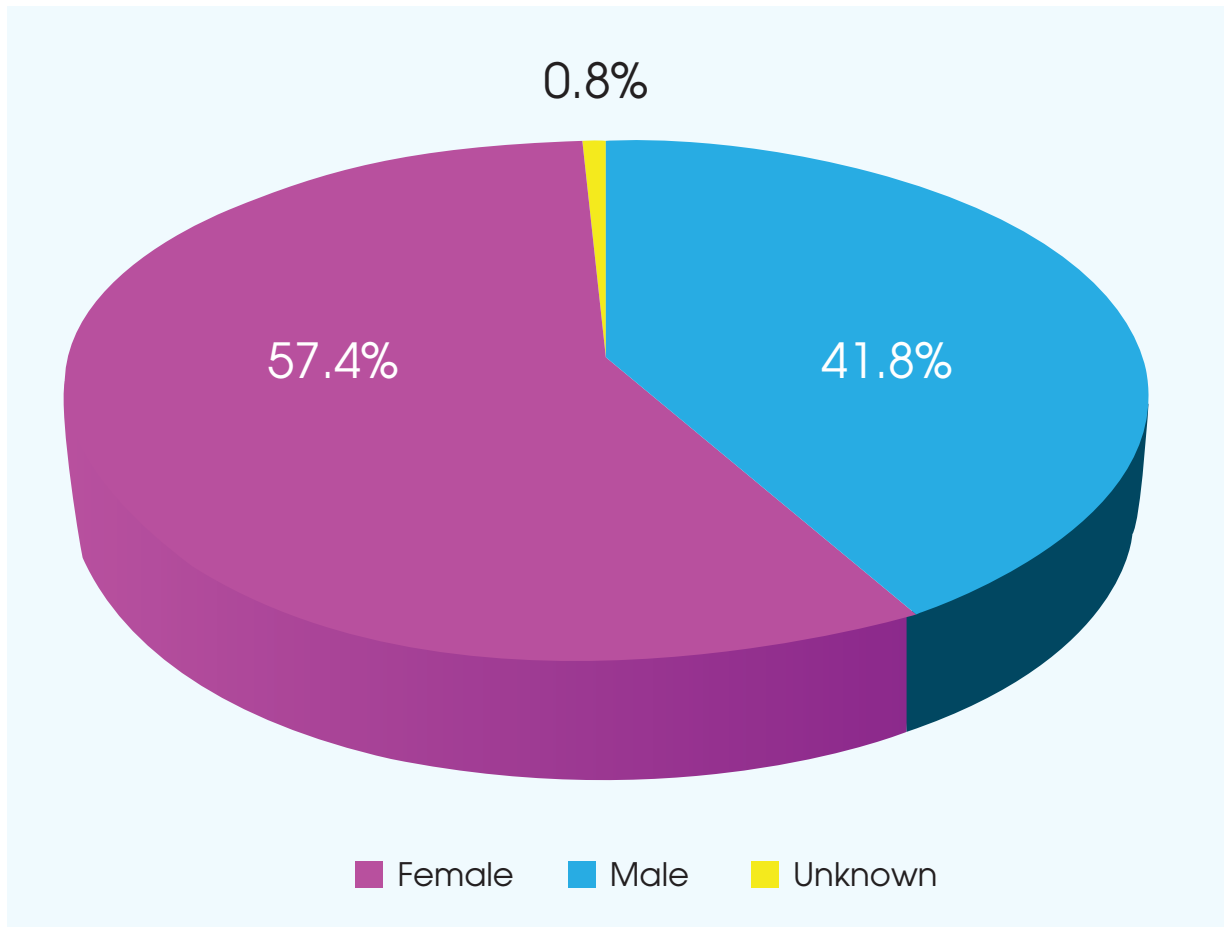


Figure 2: Sex of Clients

Children brought to the attention of the Authority during this fiscal year were of varied age groups, with almost one quarter (23.5%) of these children being between the ages of 10 and 13 years old. Children between the ages of 14 and 15 years old amounted to 17.4 percent while 7 to 9 year olds comprised 16.1 percent.

The age groups of 0 to 3 years old, 4 to 6 years old and 16 to 17 years old, each accounted for approximately 13 percent of the population of children brought to the attention of the Authority (please refer to Figure 3).



Figure 3: Age Groups of Clients

Figure 4 highlights the geographic locations of reports of children suspected of being in need of care and protection, brought to the attention of the Authority during the period under review.

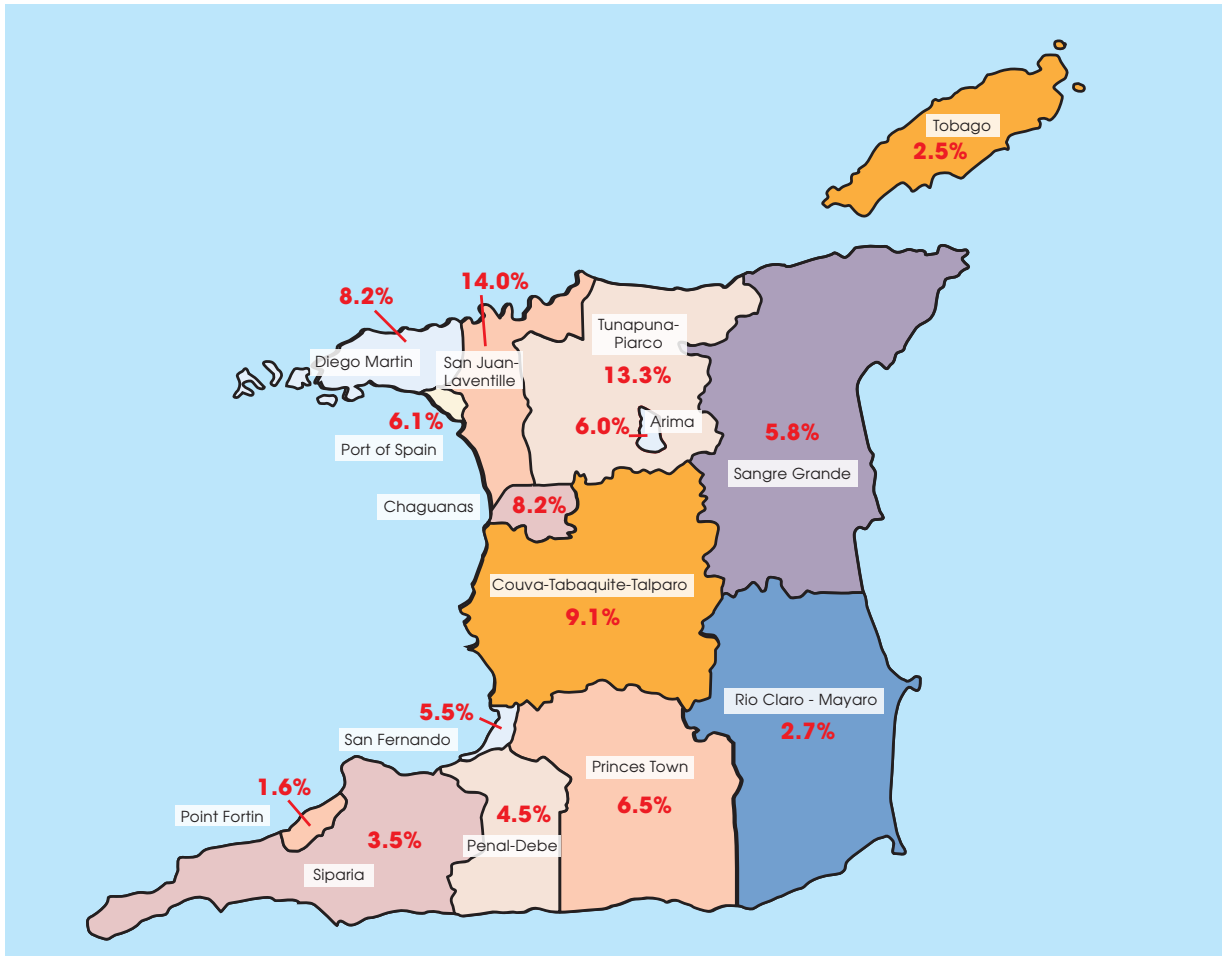


Figure 4: Geographic Location of Reports

Reports of children in need of care and protection emanate from all administrative districts across Trinidad and Tobago, however the administrative districts of San Juan/Laventille and Tunapuna/Piarco recorded the highest number of cases for any district. Conversely, the administrative districts of Point Fortin, Rio Claro/Mayaro and all collective administrative districts in Tobago logged the least number of reports of children suspected of being in need of care and protection during the period under review.

Reports of Children in Need of Care and Protection by Category

During the Fiscal Year 2016 the highest reported types of abuse were neglect, sexual abuse and physical abuse of children. Just over half of all reports received during this period concerned the neglect and sexual abuse of children, with 26.5 percent reports of neglect and 24.7 percent of the sexual abuse of children. Reports of the physical abuse of children amounted to 16.2 percent of all reports. This is highlighted in Figure 5.

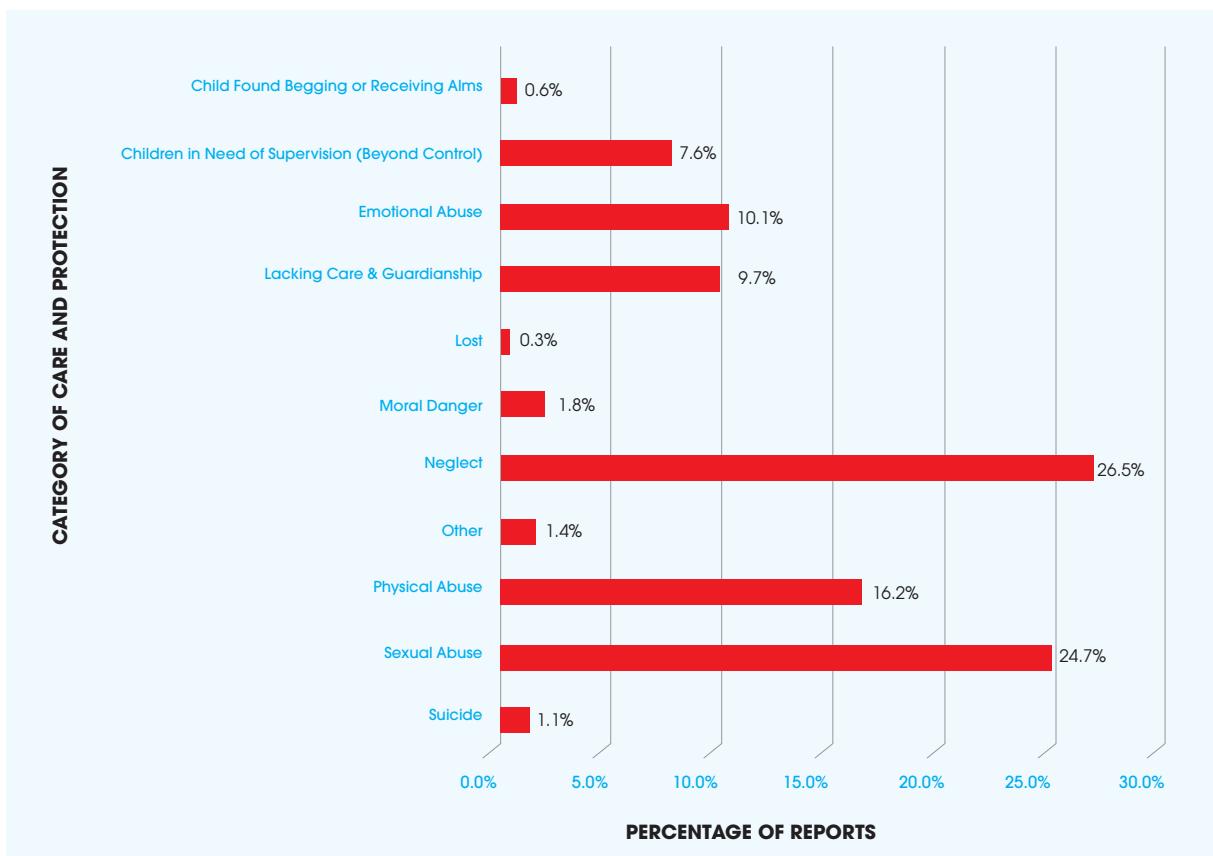


Figure 5: Reports of Children in Need of Care and Protection

Figure 6 disaggregates the gender of children reported as being in need of care and protection.

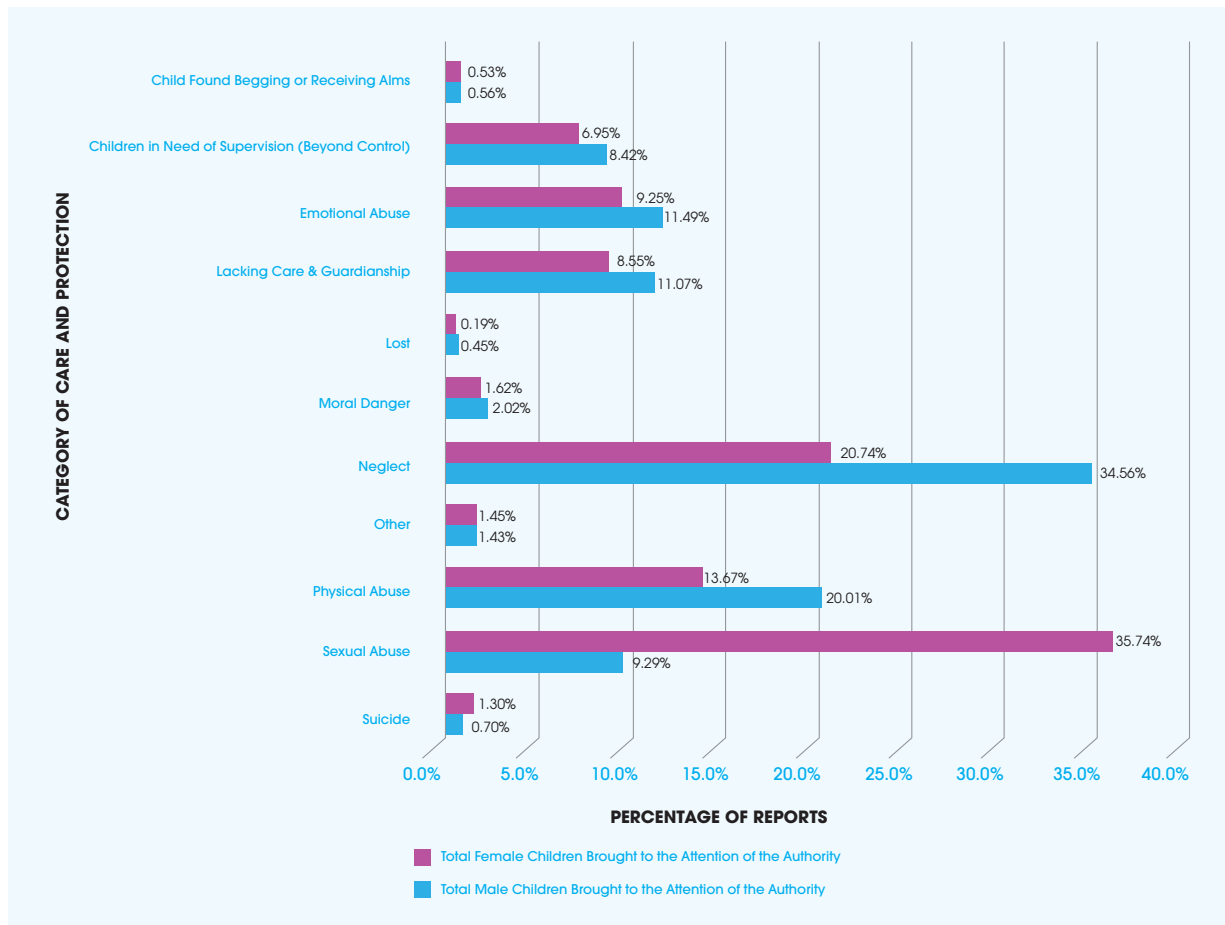


Figure 6: Types of Abuse as a Percent of All Male and Female Victims

During this fiscal year, more than one third (35.7%) of all female children brought to the attention of the Authority were reported as being victims of sexual abuse. The reports of the sexual abuse of female children greatly outnumbered those for male children, with only 9.3 percent of all male children brought to the attention of the Authority being reported as victims of sexual abuse.

Of the total reports received, higher percentages of male children were reported as victims of neglect and physical abuse. Of all the male children brought to the attention of the Authority, more than one third (34.6%) were reported as victims of neglect, while one fifth (20%) were reported as victims of physical abuse.

The percentages of male and female victims of neglect and physical abuse portrays boys as more vulnerable to neglect and physical abuse compared to one third of the population of female children brought to the attention of the Authority being classified as victims of sexual abuse.

Interestingly, when analysed as the percentage of the total sum of the reports per type of abuse, of all reported cases of neglect, 52.9 percent involved male children and 45.8 percent involved female children. Furthermore, of all reported cases of physical abuse, 50.2 percent involved male children and 49.4 percent involved female children. Female children remained significantly more vulnerable to being victims of sexual abuse than male children, with 84.6 percent of all victims of sexual abuse being female. Boys however, seemed more susceptible to becoming lost than girls, with 61.9 percent of all children reported as lost being male.

The children reported as victims of the three highest reported types of abuse (neglect, sexual abuse and physical abuse) were also distributed across classifications of age. This is illustrated in Figure 7.

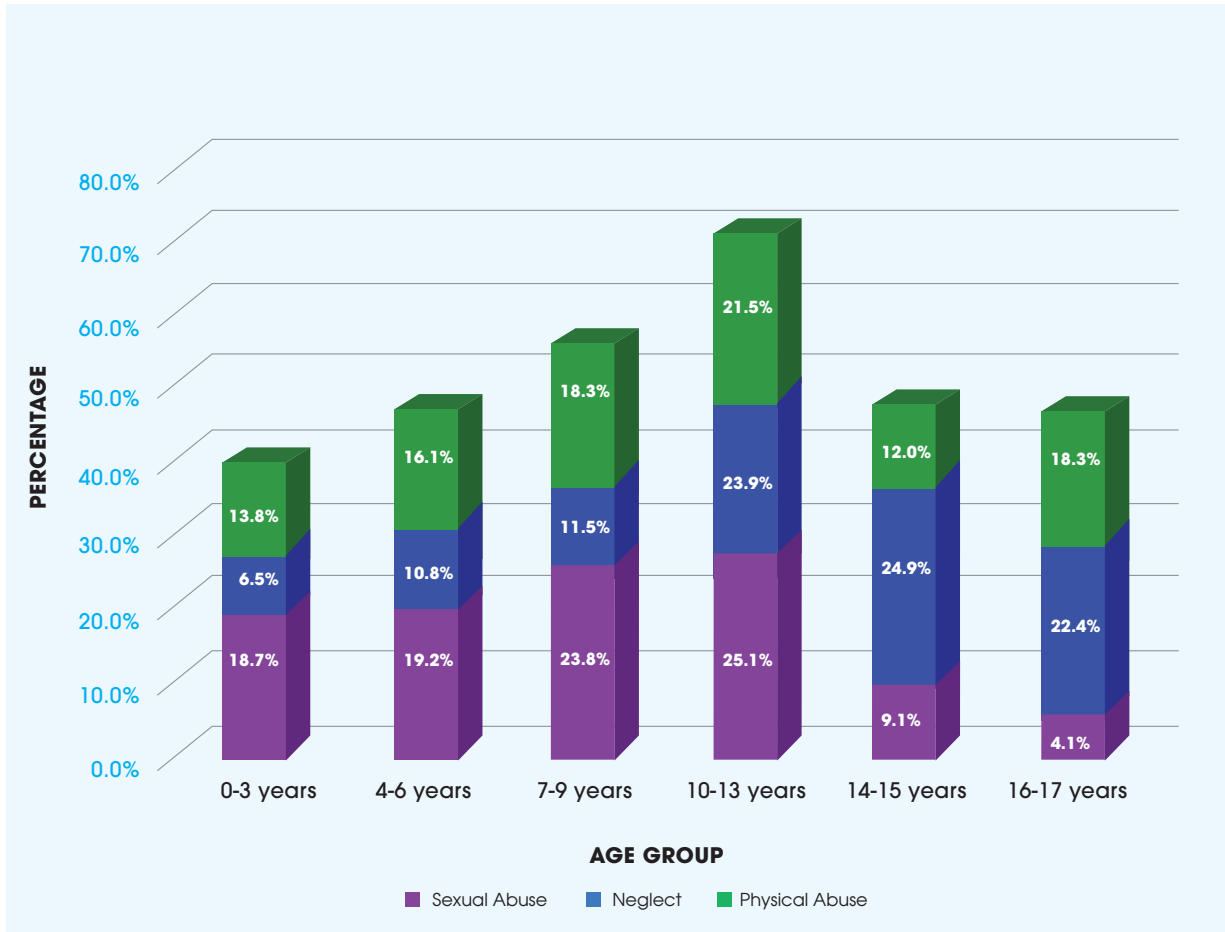
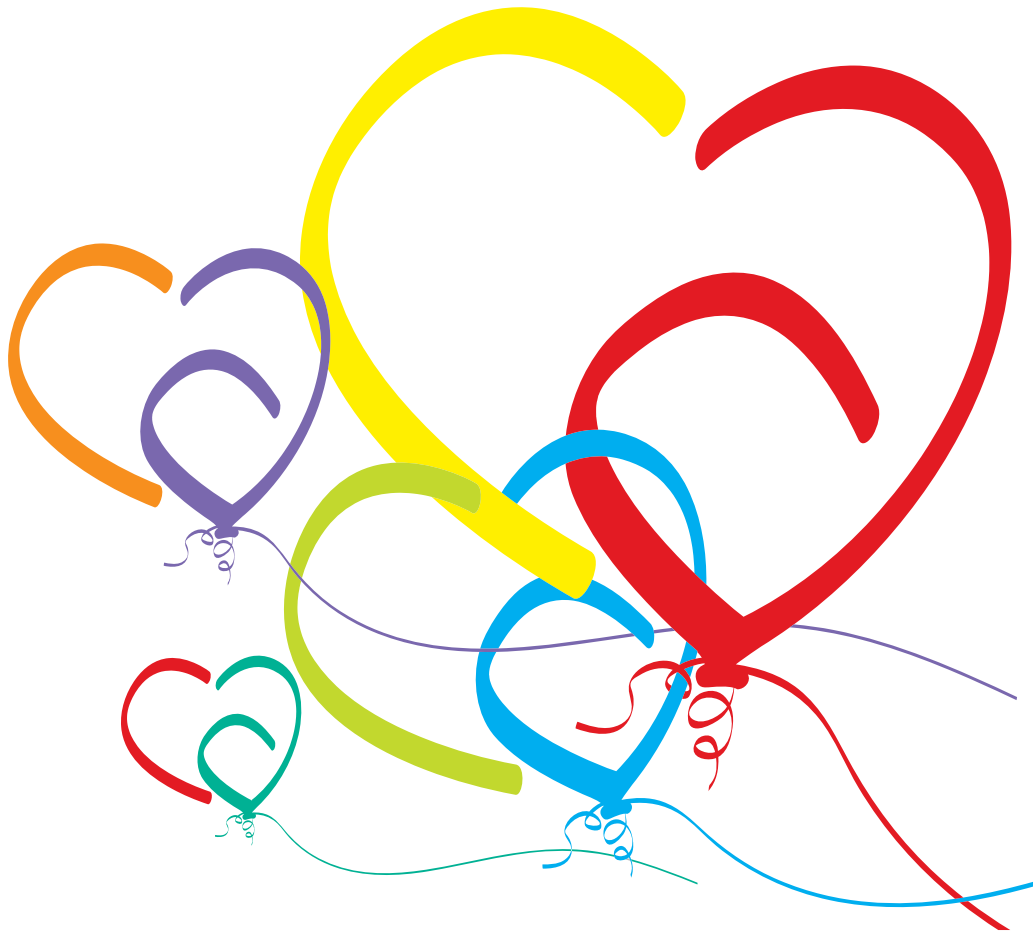


Figure 7: Age Group of Children of Highest Reported Types of Abuse

The 10 to 13 year old and 7 to 9 year old age groups appeared to be the most vulnerable to neglect, with 25.1 percent and 23.8 percent of all children reported as being neglected belonging to those age ranges respectively. Children 10 years and older were most susceptible to sexual abuse, with 23.9 percent of all children reported as sexually abused being between the ages of 10 and 13 years old, 24.9 percent being between the ages of 14 and 15 years old, and 22.4 percent being between the ages of 16 and 17 years old.

The ages of children reported as victims of physical abuse varied, with 21.5 percent of all reported victims of physical abuse belonging to the 10 to 13 year old age group, 18.3 percent each belonging to both the 7 to 9 year old and 16 to 17 year old age groups, 16.1 percent belonging to the 4 to 6 year old age group, 13.8 percent being toddlers (3 years old and under), and 12 percent being between the ages of 14 and 15 years old.





Key Achievements



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The past year, apart from being one which presented learning experiences and opportunities for development, was also one of challenges mixed with successes that provided the impetus to move forward. Despite the fact that the Authority experienced acute constraints with the size of its staff complement to address the number of reports of abuse, the Authority was able to identify successes in all areas of its operations.

REGISTRY

The Registry Unit is the central repository for all reports received by the Authority. This unit operates on a 24-hour basis and receives reports via almost any medium, with the Authority's hotline being the main avenue. Other channels include walk-ins, emails and facsimiles. The Registry team logs each report and with the assistance of the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS), determines the level of risk to which the child is exposed and then sends an alert to the Emergency Response Team for immediate action or to the Investigation Unit.

The Registry Unit also interacts with the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (CPU) on a daily basis. Each agency informs the other of reports related to children in need of care and protection.

The Registry Unit also updates each case with significant developments. Given its pivotal positioning within the organisation, the Registry Unit also acts as the major generator of data utilised by the Authority for statistical analyses and informed decision making.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Registry Unit successfully maintained 99.5 percent uptime of the Authority's hotline 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Despite the challenges presented by the customised database system and staff constraints, the unit fielded 20,943 calls and 431 walk-in clients resulting in the entry and processing of 5,522 cases of children in need of care and protection.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) is the unit within the Authority that gives a priority response to reports of children who are in situations of extremely high risk. The ERT operates on a 24-hour basis and works collaboratively with the CPU and the emergency teams at various health institutions across the country. The collaboration between the CPU and the Authority has been critical in effectively responding to emergency reports. Specifically, the CPU accompanies the ERT in the conduct of home, school visits and community enquiries, especially in areas deemed to be of high risk and in volatile situations where the safety of the Authority's officers may be jeopardised. The presence of the CPU also provides access to certain police powers that the Authority does not share.

Upon investigation of a report, if it is shown that the child is in imminent danger and there is the likelihood of physical, emotional, mental or psychological harm, then the child is immediately removed from the environment where he has been living. In those cases, the CPU works closely with the ERT to enter what may be dangerous environments, to stabilise risky situations.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Both agencies, the Authority and the CPU, having been created based on the child's rights philosophy, can attest to the fact that by working collaboratively, the removal of children has been less traumatic for the child and the removal team. The team responded to 576 emergency reports involving 605 children, 184 of whom were removed from abusive situations and placed in alternative care arrangements.

INVESTIGATION

The Investigation Unit has the responsibility for investigating all reports received by the Authority about children who are at risk. The team employs various techniques and conducts different types of enquiries to uncover the facts surrounding the circumstances of a child in order to determine whether the report can be substantiated or not. This involves prioritising the cases and 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 meets internal requests for the assessment of familial placement options for the child and external requests made by the courts to investigate and submit a report on the circumstances of a child whose situation is receiving the attention of the Court.

Similarly to the ERT, upon investigation, if it is shown that a child is in imminent danger, the child will be immediately removed and received into care.

Due to severe resource constraints and the increasing number of reports received, the Authority engaged the services of Independent Service Providers (ISPs). This is a supplemental group of 15 experienced Social Workers who investigate cases assigned by the Authority. Since December 1, 2015 the team has been investigating medium and low risk cases throughout Trinidad and Tobago. This strategy has been particularly useful in creating a steady presence of officers in Tobago to investigate reports originating in Tobago.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the period under review, the full time 12-member Investigation team successfully completed investigation into 849 cases. This is a noteworthy average of 70 completed cases per investigator. In addition to the 849 completed investigations, the team had also commenced investigation into 366 additional cases as at the year end.

PARTICULARS	TOTAL NUMBER
Cases Assigned	1215
Cases Closed	849
Children Received into Care	31
Preparation of Affidavits in support of Court Applications to Place Children	105
Court-Requested Reports	18
Suitability for Placement Assessment Reports	96
Cases Assigned to ISPs	117
Cases Closed by ISPs	96

Table 1: Summary of Work Completed by Investigations Unit

ASSESSMENT

The teams at the Authority's Assessment Centres conduct full multidisciplinary assessments of children who were referred to them by the Investigative Unit of the Authority. These assessments are carried out by a multidisciplinary team which includes a medical doctor, a psychologist and a social worker. Based on the particulars of the case, children are sometimes referred for psychiatric assessments. The product of these diagnostic assessments is the Treatment Plan prepared for each child, which details the recommended interventions necessary for the child to be rehabilitated and restored to full functioning. Also, in collaboration with the CPU, the Authority conducts forensic interviews with children who have been victims of crime.

The Authority has two Assessment Centres at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex and the San Fernando Teaching Hospital, respectively. Two other Centres in Chaguanas and San Fernando, respectively, which were under construction and earmarked for delivery by the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) in Fiscal 2016, were still under construction at year-end. It is hoped that these centres will be delivered in Fiscal 2017. There are also plans to establish a Centre in Tobago and another in Sangre Grande in Fiscal 2017.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Assessment function has been highly successful in delivering Treatment Plans that allow for some conclusion to be arrived on to the level of trauma that a child has experienced and to identify the nature of the intervention to restore the child to wholeness. Of the 231 multidisciplinary assessments completed, Treatment Plans were developed for 196 children.

The team completed eight forensic interviews and 288 forensic medical examinations on children who were suspected of being physically or sexually abused, which aided in the collection of Police statements and medical evidence to support the criminal investigations of the CPU, thus improving the likelihood of apprehension of alleged perpetrators and allowing child victims and their families to get some measure of protection and justice.

PARTICULARS	TOTAL NUMBER
Forensic Medical Exams	288
Forensic Interviews	8
Medical Screenings	76
Medical Checks	45
Full Multidisciplinary Assessments	231
Treatment Plans	196
Preliminary Assessments	40

Table 2: Summary of Assessments, Medicals, Screening & Treatment Plans

CHILD SUPPORT CENTRE

The Child Support Centre (CSC) is responsible for the temporary care of children who are determined to be in imminent danger and who require emergency accommodation. The CSC primarily functions for emergency and short-term placement to facilitate the immediate removal of children to a location that is secure, child-friendly and professionally staffed. The CSC can accommodate 20 children at full capacity, with a full complement of multidisciplinary staff.

During the period, all Caregivers at the CSC received training in the following areas:

- The Authority's mandate and functions
- Child Protection and Behaviour Management
- Child Abuse and Trauma linked with Child Development
- Crisis Management and De-escalation
- Basics in medical management, management of medical emergencies in children, communication skills with children, and
- Health, Safety, Security and the Environment (HSSE) issues in a child care environment.

Children at the CSC benefitted from safe accommodation, with access to medical treatment, individual counselling by the in-house Psychologist to address presenting clinical issues, and group therapy sessions. Additionally, they participated in daily psychosocial, recreational, creative and educational activities to ensure appropriate stimulation, addressing their psychosocial needs.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the period under review, the CSC provided emergency accommodation for 86 children in need of care and protection who were received into care. Seventy of these children were subsequently given alternative placement with community residences, foster parents, fit persons or suitable family members.

Sixteen children remained at the CSC due to the complexity of these cases. The Authority continued to assume responsibility for children at the CSC until alternative placement is finalised.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Child and Family Services Department (CFSD) provides a range of services to children and their families. These include support with family reunification, family reintegration, transitional living, services for children who display challenging behaviours, crisis counselling, referrals to external service providers, supporting children in group care, monitoring children who have been placed under a Supervision Order by the Court and monitoring children placed in families requiring intensive support. The Department provides a variety of psycho-social interventions for children in need of care and protection and their families.

With a growing number of court orders which require access to children to be supervised, the Department facilitates all supervised access visits at the Family Court. The provision of alternative spaces for supervised access is urgently needed to provide more convenient locations for those who are to use them as well as assistance with the transportation of the children who are to attend.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The CFSD facilitated a total of 477 supervised access visits for the period of 11 months that ended September 30, 2016. Children were transported from various locations including San Fernando, Princes Town, Point Fortin, Gasparillo, Preysal, Sangre Grande, Belmont, Diego Martin, Maraval, Arima, Curepe, Valsayn and Port of Spain, to the Family Court.

Another major undertaking by the CFSD was the Aware-Raising Group Sessions for teenagers aged 13 – 17 years. The sessions were conducted by a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and covered several areas including the Self, Power and Sex Education. The CFSD continued action on 522 cases under its purview, inclusive of individual and family counselling and parenting training.

ADOPTION

Adoption is the legal process in which children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents become full and permanent legal members of another family. With the proclamation of the package of children legislation, the Authority became the sole agency with responsibility for making arrangements for adoption of children through the Court.

According to section 5A of the Children's Authority Act Chapter 46:10, the Authority shall -

- (a) Receive applications from parents, guardians and prospective adopters in respect of the adoption of children;
- (b) Make such investigations concerning the adoption of children for the consideration of the court as may be prescribed;
- (c) Make recommendations to the court as to whether in its view the adoption is in the best interest of the child whose adoption is sought;
- (d) Advise the Minister regarding adoption matters generally; and
- (e) Listen to the views of the child.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the period under review six adoption orders were granted. The unit also monitored six potential adoptions during their probationary periods, with three at the point of finalisation. The Adoption Unit initiated several requests for overseas adoptions.

The Adoption Unit worked collaboratively with the Foster Care Unit with respect to handling Foster to Adoption matters. When children in out-of-home care cannot be safely reunited with their birth families, adoption is often the most desirable goal. In some cases, foster parents are willing to adopt their foster children, which give those children the most stable, legally binding relationship with their adoptive parents. The Authority has inherited a situation where there are many more prospective adopters available than there are children. However, adoption continues to be a preferred placement option once there is no natural family able to care for a child.

FOSTER CARE

Foster Care has been identified as an alternative placement option which is family oriented and flexible. With the proclamation of the children's legislation, a formal legal framework was created to establish a foster care system which the Authority was required to manage. For the period October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016, the Foster Care Unit focused on recruitment, assessment and approval of new foster care providers. Additionally, the team has continued to facilitate placement and case management of children in foster care.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

As part of the Foster Care recruitment strategy, the Unit participated in media interviews and sensitisation sessions with the public with the aim of attracting new foster carers. As a result of these efforts, for the reporting period, 47 Expressions of Interest were received and application packages were distributed accordingly. The increased recruitment has allowed for additional placement of children in safe and loving foster families.

PARTICULARS	TOTAL NUMBER
Expression of Interest	47
Home Assessments	8
Background Checks	20
Training for Prospective Foster Care Providers	4
Suitability Reports	11
Foster Care Placements	17
Home Visits	99
School Visits	24
Supervised Visits	46

Table 3: Summary of Work Completed by the Foster Care Unit

LICENSING AND MONITORING

The Licensing and Monitoring (L&M) Department ensures that community residences are compliant with the Children’s Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries (CCRFCN) Act Chapter 46:11 and are licensed or moving towards being licensed. The Act is enforced through inspections of the community residences for the purposes of licensing. Further the L&M Department conducted frequent monitoring visits to ensure residences maintained suitable environments that promoted the emotional, educational and physical growth of each child in their care, according to established standards.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Three community residences were issued licences to operate. The issuing of these licences signified that these residences had met approved standards according to the CCRFCN Act and supporting Regulations.

The Department also conducted pre-licensing activities to aid residences with their preparatory efforts to meet approved standards for the protection and safety of children in their care.

PARTICULARS	TOTAL NUMBER
Pre-inspection exercises	7
Licences issued	3
Formal Inspections	8
Monitoring Visits	132

Table 4: Summary of Work Completed by the Licensing & Monitoring Department

LEGAL SERVICES

The Legal Services Department is charged with the filing of Applications for Wardship and Orders pursuant to section 35 of the Family Law (Guardianship of Minors, Domicile and Maintenance) Act Chapter 46:08, Part 34 of the Family Proceedings Rules, 1998 and Sections 23 and 25 of the Children's Authority Act, Chapter 46:10. Wardship is a swift form of relief and the Court may combine this with a Care Order placing the child in the care of the Authority. Fundamental decisions, which would affect the child, are made with the Court's consent.

The Department also advises and represents the Authority in Civil and Public Law Matters on issues affecting children before the Civil High Court including the Court of Appeal. In some circumstances the Authority is made a party to the proceedings, in others it has attended as an interested party. Representation by the Legal Services Department includes the preparation of legal submissions which provide guidance to the Court on the interpretation of the package of legislation. This is a newly emerging area of jurisprudence and the role of the Authority has been recognised in several judgments to date.

The Department also provided a critical support function to all other Units within the Authority through the provision of training on the legislative framework and its implications on the Authority's operations, as well as the delivery of legal training on the new package of children's legislation to major stakeholders. It also advises the Authority on in-house legal matters such as employment issues and leases.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Legal Services Department obtained Wardship Orders for 93 children thereby bringing each child and all matters relating to the child under the purview of the Court. The following Orders were also applied for by the Legal Services Department and successfully obtained during the period under review:

- 70 Care Orders
- 84 Child Assessment Orders
- 6 Foster Care Orders
- 2 Freeing Orders
- 32 Fit Person Orders
- 12 Adoption Orders
- 2 Supervision Orders
- 1 Family Assistance Order

**See List of Key Terms for more information on each Order.*

JUVENILE JUSTICE (SUPPORT TO CHILD OFFENDERS)

The Authority has the overall responsibility for the well-being of all children in Trinidad and Tobago, including children in conflict with the law. In this regard, legislation mandates that the Authority be informed once a child has committed an offence in an effort to action the responsibilities of the Authority thereafter. There are significant changes expected with the impending proclamation of the Family and Children Division Act, 2016 which are discussed later in the report.

The Juvenile Justice Department works with children in conflict with the law by facilitating access to much needed assessments, which will identify areas of risk in their lives, and guide the interventions that are necessary for their rehabilitation. The Authority has also partnered with several agencies that are leading the way in Juvenile Justice Reform in the areas of rehabilitation programmes, Court processes and protocols that focus on restorative rather than punitive approaches.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the period under review, the Juvenile Justice Department commenced its assessment function. As at September 30, 2016 the Department conducted seven Juvenile Inventory for Functioning (JIFF)² assessments and three Youth Level of Service Case Management Inventory (YLSCMI)³ assessments on children in conflict with the law, referred by the various Courts in Trinidad and Tobago. The Department conducted psychosocial investigations including investigative enquires at the child's home, school, neighbourhood, and nearby Police Station. These assessments provide key information on the criminogenic needs of the child and intervention areas for both child and family.

Other key achievements are:

- Actively continued to monitor child offenders reported to the Authority and track children through the judicial system (bail, remand, released into parents' care)
- Conducted training exercises on the JIFF assessment tool

² The Juvenile Inventory for Functioning (JIFF) interview tool helps guide the creation of care plans by mapping out areas in the client and family life which may need improvement or support.

³ The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI 2.0) tool is used in case planning and management. This tool is especially useful for risk assessment of cases.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Public Education and Communications Department has at its core the role of advocacy. During the period under review, the department focused on public education through direct sensitisation of groups which included principals, teachers, medical workers and members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Fifty-five sensitisation sessions were conducted. Participants were informed about the role of the Authority, the new legislation and how it impacts their role in the new child protection system.

The Department was also responsible for the management of the organisation's corporate brand and its interaction with the media. The Department utilised media interviews, press advertising and public outreach as a means of educating the public on the role and function of the organisation, whilst advocating for a child-friendly society.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Department engaged with media workers to sensitise them about the importance of not identifying children in their reports. It was noted that often children and their families were further endangered when the public was able to identify the location and the child.

Subsequent to the media engagement sessions the Authority noted a significant improvement in the way issues involving children were reported in the media. In fact, within the media fraternity, media houses were vigilant in order to ensure that they upheld the rights of children within published and broadcast news.

Another key achievement was:

- Responding to more than 60 requests from the media for information

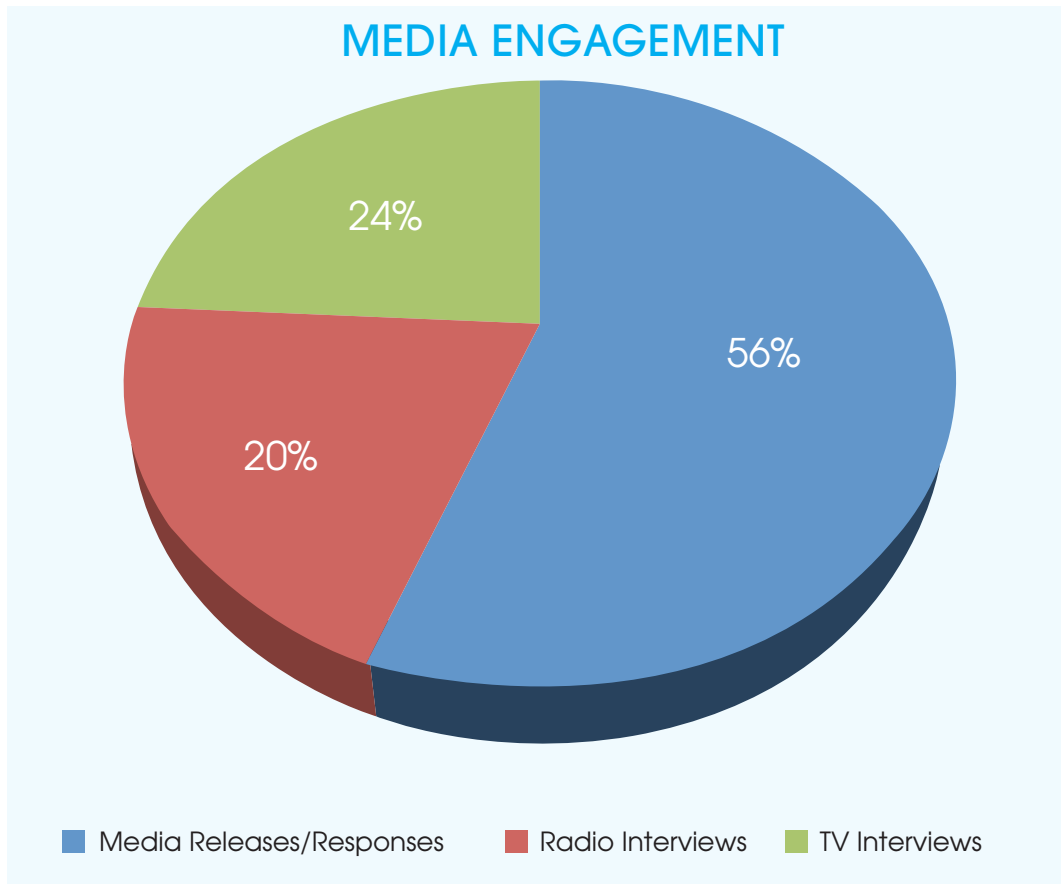


Figure 8: Media Engagement for the period October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

The Communications Department monitored newspaper stories daily to identify articles that highlight children’s issues and feedback on the work and performance of the Children’s Authority. An evaluation of the articles indicates that both the public and the Media have a good understanding of the role, function and services of the Authority, given the requests for information and the number of calls and cases received. During the period under review, 166 articles mentioned the Children’s Authority.

Encouragingly, there is a publication, *“Our Children, Our Media; A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners”*, which provides information on children’s issues, a Guide to Ethical Reporting, a Caribbean Children’s Broadcast Code and Guidelines for interviewing and Reporting on Children. The Authority was able to participate in a joint function to assist in sensitising the media on these issues.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sensitisation sessions were an integral part of the work of the Communications Department. Stakeholder sensitisations, in particular, were even more critical since they helped to educate agencies involved in the child protection sector, about the way children were to be treated under the new legislation.

During the period under review, the Authority engaged key stakeholders in sensitisation sessions on the various pieces of Legislation and their role in ensuring children’s rights were upheld. Following these sessions, the Authority received numerous requests from its stakeholders to conduct similar sensitisations for their clients as well as the general public.

As shown in the pie chart below, the majority of sessions were conducted through Public Education Outreach for the wider public and were held at locations throughout the country. During these sessions the Authority partnered with agencies like the Police, Government Ministries, Community Residences, the Counter Trafficking Unit and members of the public.

The chart also shows that those within the education sector (ECCE, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels), were the second largest group to receive sensitisation sessions from staff of the Authority. This group included school principals, teachers, Student Support Services Division (SSSD) staff – (guidance officers, social workers), persons employed in the education sector (security officers, janitorial staff) and students.

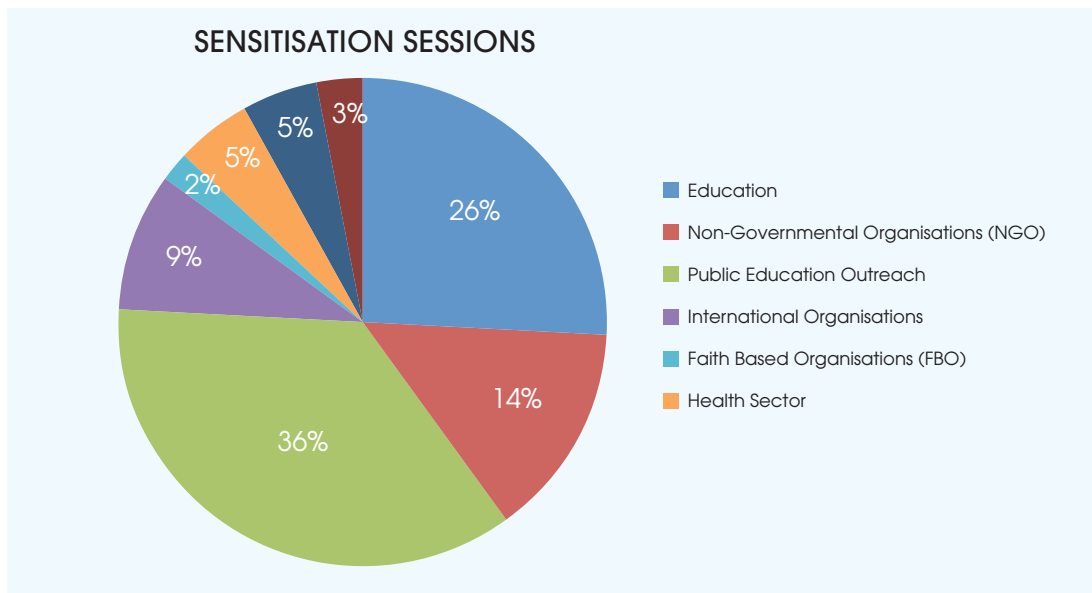
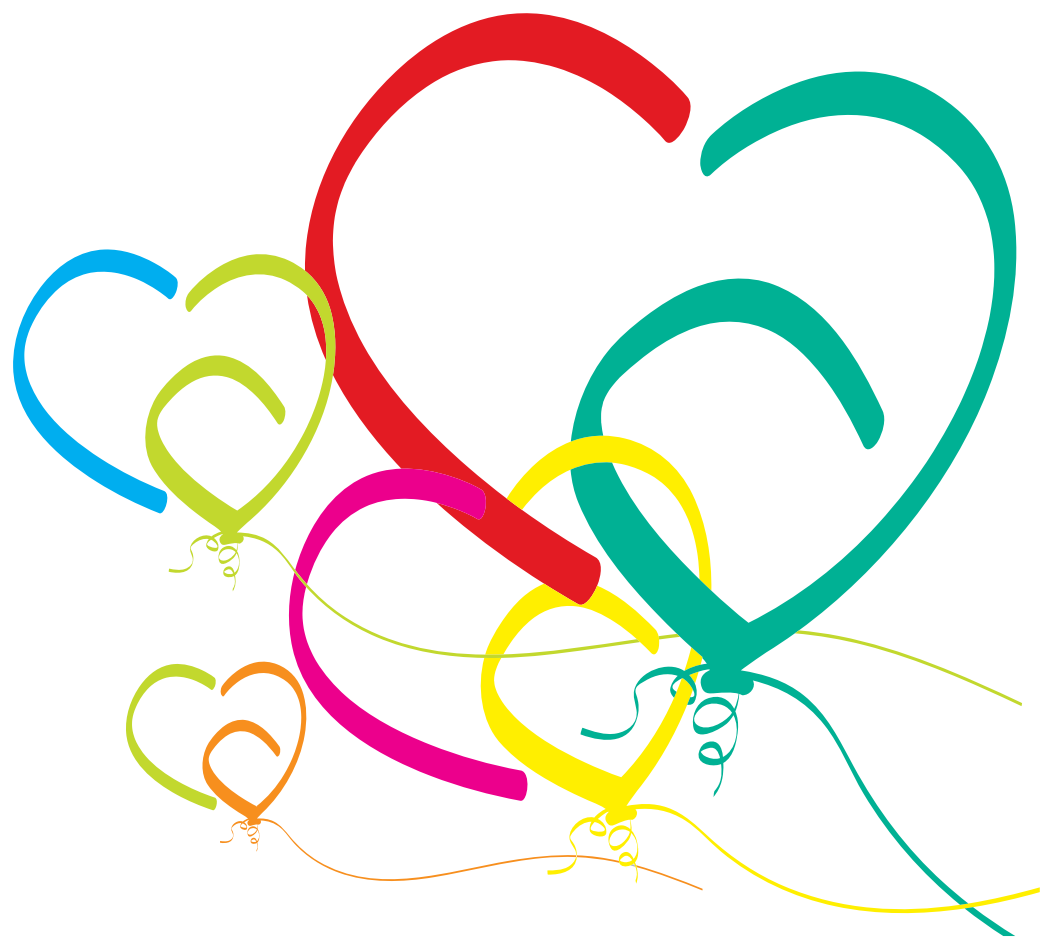


Figure 9: Sensitisation Sessions conducted for the period October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016





Corporate Services



CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services Function accommodates the support services for the Authority which include the Human Resources, Information Technology, Health, Safety, Security and Environment and Finance Departments.

The following sets out the work of these departments in support of the operations of the Authority.

Human Resources

Fiscal 2016 commenced four months subsequent to the operationalisation of the Authority. During the year, the Authority received an unanticipated influx of reports which challenged the organisation's human resource capacity.

By the start of the 2015/2016 financial year, recruitment to the core positions had been completed. The Authority's staff complement stood at 126 or 52 percent of the approved structure of 242 employees. The staff complement did not increase significantly since recruitment was not being pursued as aggressively as was done for start-up.

With the Authority severely under-resourced, the staff workload was onerous. Despite this, employees remained committed to responding to the needs of vulnerable children. The Authority in an effort to support and promote the well-being of its employees, implemented an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and undertook various wellness initiatives. The Authority's access to financial resources was affected by the prevailing economic and budgetary constraints and the pronouncement that expenses should be cut by a further 7 percent. By the end of the year, the staff complement stood at 137 employees.

While all staff positions have not been filled on account of budgetary allocations and other considerations, the Authority needs to boost its staff complement in order to deal with the volume of reports received that have to be investigated and other support services that have to be provided for at risk children and families.

A particular challenge arose as a result of the need to support visits for children with their families. This created a significant demand for transportation services for children from the various community residences located throughout Trinidad to the Family Court. Steps have already been taken in discussion with the Court to provide alternative arrangements.

Based on the review done of the first year of operations, certain gaps were identified in the delivery of services. Significant among these were:

- Adequate human resources to perform the volume of work that resulted from a high number of reports.
- Managerial capacity to oversee the operations of departments in which the responsibilities had grown exponentially on account of the number of reports received.

Given the key projects and activities identified for the next year of operations, staffing becomes the Authority's most urgent priority. It should be noted that an adequate number and quality of staff are required to execute the projects identified and to maintain the momentum established over the last 16 months.

A significant development during the last year was the passage of the Family and Children Division Act which has had significant implications for the work of the Authority. With the proclamation of this Act and particularly its Fifth Schedule, the Authority will be required to assume additional responsibilities with respect to children in need of supervision, the assessment of youth offenders, the investigation of these cases and monitoring both children and the facilities when they are accommodated in rehabilitation centres. The Authority therefore has to ensure that the requisite provision is made with respect to its organisational structure and resources to deliver on the new mandate.

In response to the increasing responsibilities under the purview of the Authority, a review of the strategic framework and organisational structure has been undertaken. The revised structure which would increase the staff complement by 200 to a total of 442 is intended to better streamline operations and enable the Authority to fulfil its responsibilities in a more responsive manner as well as respond to new duties and provide services that are geographically more widely accessible.

The revised complement of 442 staff would be expected to be recruited on a phased basis over the next three years. The immediate requirement is for the recruitment of 28 persons during the first six months of the new financial year, which falls within our approved organisational structure, but not the present budget.

Revision of the compensation package should also be pursued. The present approved compensation package was not competitive when it was introduced and in many respects compensation was set below that which had been established for standard contract positions in the Salary Comparator Framework for the Public Service. This anomaly resulted in the Authority's difficulty in attracting experienced candidates with the specialised competencies that the Authority requires, and in many cases suitable persons who have interviewed well have been lost because the remuneration is unattractive.

Health, Safety, Security and Environment

The main Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) responsibility as an employer is to provide a safe and healthy working environment for staff. Fire safety ranks as one of, if not the most important certification that should be acquired, as it demonstrates:

- a. Commitment to safety and emergency response which ensures that clients are kept safe during their visits and in the event of an emergency, there is a clear plan of action to ensure their safety and ability to leave the compound.
- b. Commitment by the management of the Authority to allocate the necessary resources and to provide the necessary support to ensure compliance with OSH Laws.

In April 2016, the Authority acquired Fire certification for a two year period. This signalled that the Authority had achieved compliance with all safety requirements. Going forward, the requirements of the certification will be maintained to ensure continued safety of internal and external clients.

In addition to having access control equipment at the clients' entrance to all facilities, another element of security for which planning has already begun is the installation of Closed Circuit Television Cameras. This will further secure staff from a client population who are sometimes very aggressive and confrontational.

Since the Authority will continue to amass a significant amount of information on at risk children, the safe keeping of information has become a top priority. In this regard, the Authority has installed a fire suppression system for its Registry and Adoption records since this information needs to be available and accessible for several years.

Information Technology

The physical infrastructural work was designed to link the office locations in North, East and South Trinidad to provide seamless interface for staff at the various locations.

Additionally, arrangements have been concluded with two suppliers, to provide cost effective communication arrangements for management and field staff. Effective and reliable communication for staff in the field is critical given the risks associated with field visits to volatile communities and households.

Keeping information and data secure continued to be a major objective of the Information Technology infrastructure. Given the number of reports received which had to be secured, the robustness of the Hardware firewall was continually under review.

The custom designed Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) database has had to deal with a number of reports that far exceeded the projections for the first five years of operations. This has created some instability with the processing of data and the generation of reports. Accordingly, initiatives for expansion and upgrade have been earmarked to ensure a more robust system in anticipation of the increasing number of reports.

The Child Protection Helpline which is the main mechanism through which reports of abuse and neglect are received has functioned well. The toll free 24-hour Hotline has had minimal downtime and the public has had mostly uninterrupted access to make reports.

The Helpdesk service continues to meet the needs of staff for the resolution of IT, Facilities and HSSE matters. The system has been valuable in providing interface with these support services so that there are no inordinate delays in meeting the needs of staff.

Finance

For Fiscal 2016, the Authority was allocated \$30M and \$5.7M for Recurrent Expenditure and Developmental Projects (DP) respectively. The Recurrent Expenditure allocation was the same as that which was allocated for the previous fiscal year. The DP allocation was reduced.

The Authority's initial budgetary submission was for the amounts of \$81,983,966 and \$13,383,500 for Recurrent and DP Projects respectively. These estimates were based on calculations of the anticipated costs for the Authority having experienced the first four months of operations during the previous fiscal period. The demand for the Authority's services had outstripped its ability to supply. As such, the budget submission included the recruitment of the requisite staff and the establishment of key infrastructure to support the work of the Authority.

Since the Authority anticipated that the operations would not be adequately maintained with the \$30M funding allocation, requests for increases were made at the time of the budget allocation and again at the Mid Term Review. However, since the Authority was unsuccessful in securing the necessary additional funding, the organisation remained under funded for Fiscal 2016. The result of this was that a number of development projects earmarked for implementation were stymied since the allocation of sustainable recurrent funding could not be confirmed.

During the Fiscal 2016, personnel costs accounted for 58 percent of the Authority's operating expenses, followed closely by rental accommodation and security expenses. It should be noted that these categories of expenses were significant on account of: (1) the people intensive nature of the operations; (2) the need to operate multiple facilities in order to provide services close to where they were needed and (3) 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.

Since the Authority had consistently observed compliance with the requirements for the auditing of its finances, Financial Statements for Fiscal 2014 and Fiscal 2015 were prepared and forwarded to the Auditor's General's Department for timely audit. However, since the appointment of an auditor remained outstanding, there was no formal feedback on how the Authority's finances were being maintained. Despite this, it should be noted that the Authority continued to employ sound financial systems and internal controls, which were evidenced by the unqualified Audit Reports issued by the Auditor General's Department from the inception to year ended September 30, 2013.

The Authority's financial statements for the period under review are detailed at the end of this report.



Significant Developments



SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

Legislative Amendments – Present and Future

The Authority is a creature of statute and its operations derive from its statutory functions and duties. Training in the structure and implementation of the package of children's legislation has been provided to senior and middle management and this has been an ongoing process as new staff were employed, as part of the start-up of the Authority. Individual coaching has also been available to staff and this has been seen as an essential tool for those who have to work in accordance with the interlocking provisions of a number of different Acts. Several of these Acts had been enacted in 2000, but then required amendment before proclamation as this area of the law evolved.

An aspect of this has been an increased awareness of the role of the Authority, but also an awareness of some inconsistent provisions, as well as gaps in the legislation. Some of these had been addressed even prior to the Authority becoming operational. The Children Act, 2012, which was proclaimed at the same time as other Acts in the package on May 18, 2015, both strengthens our appreciation of offences against children, but also addresses the manner in which authorities should interface with children when they come into contact with the law. It replaced much older legislation that was no longer in keeping with our philosophy as to the treatment of children. Importantly, its Third Schedule also contained consequential amendments to ten other statutes making necessary adjustments in keeping with the new awareness of the need to implement children's rights. Such legislative tweaking is vital if legislation is to match the current needs of society and from the perspective of the Authority, the needs of our children.

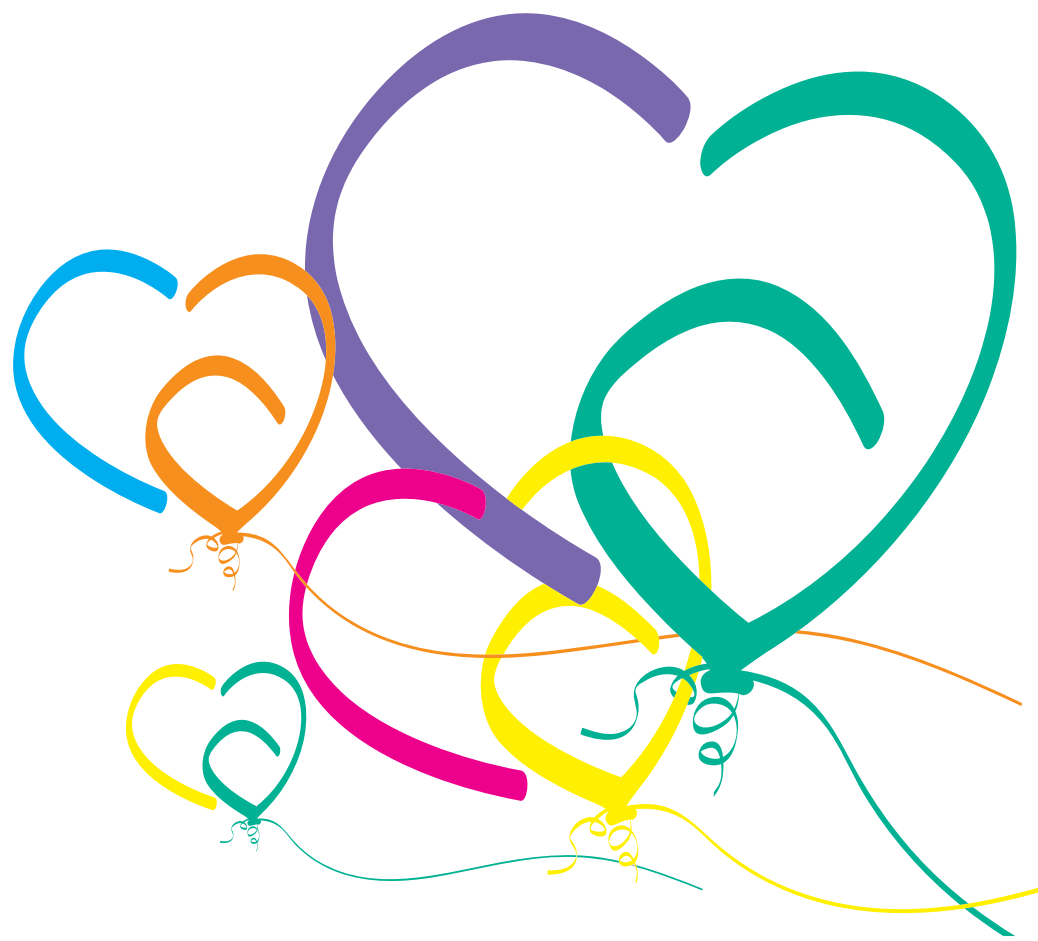
Since the proclamation of the legislation, the Authority has constantly reviewed its implementation of the operational aspects of its legislative duties and powers, and inevitably, has also become aware of a number of challenges.

The history of the legislation that has shaped the Authority and its role dates back even prior to 2000, with significant changes to the treatment of women and children. In relation to divorce (November 1973), taxation and nationality (both with effect from 1975), followed by abolition of discrimination against children born out of wedlock and the important provision that the welfare of a minor is the first and paramount consideration in proceedings about his custody or upbringing (March 1983), building to a cluster of child related legislation in 2000 that remained unproclaimed but was the core of the present package of legislation proclaimed in 2015.

Even in the absence of legislation there was also the significant development of the Family Court Pilot Project, which has advanced the recognition of, family issues and the evolution of jurisprudence around these. We have moved to understanding the importance to society of family relationships and the need to empower parents and children when these relationships change. We now see family law as a specialised area of legal practice. The Family Court, which opened in May 2004, was where we first saw the Court drawing in social services and the option of mediation, so as to become solution orientated and attentive to providing customer service. It did this without dedicated legislation and now this has fed into the development of the Children Court, which will build on the experiences of the Family Court.

However the Children Court Project will have a legislative basis, which the Family Court will share and the Family and Children Division Act, No. 6 of 2016, which is awaiting proclamation, will address both the Family Court and the Children Court. These will be the Courts where the Authority's Legal Services staff will be appearing and continuing to learn from this evolving area of the law.

As with the Children Act, 2012, there are important amendments to 17 other Acts, set out in a Fifth Schedule, which continue the process of clarifying and improving provisions in related legislation. In particular, the role of the Authority in relation to children who are in the criminal law system will be clearer and there will be a new balance established between the Prisons Service and the Authority. The Authority has been involved in many collaborative meetings as a stakeholder in the development of this legislation and the new regulations that are required to accompany it.





Conclusion / Looking Ahead



CONCLUSION / LOOKING AHEAD

At the end of Fiscal 2016, by which time the Authority had been in operation for 16 months, a significant number of reports of abuse were received. It was clear that the sensitisation and outreach programmes were bearing fruit. The Authority had gained the confidence of the public and was making an impact in the lives of children who were at risk. Not only was the public aware of the Authority's existence, but it played a significant role in bringing to the attention of the Authority children who were suspected to be in need of care and protection.

Various mechanisms were put in place which allowed the Authority to receive and investigate these reports, receive children into care and to conduct assessments of the children taken into care.

While there were not adequate resources to investigate all reports received, the mechanisms allowed for effective response to reports of children deemed to be in imminent danger, with robust support from the CPU. However, there still remains a significant child population who should receive help a lot sooner. The Authority anticipates that with the provision of adequate financial resources, the staff complement could be increased to an appropriate level to meet the growing needs.

In the course of having to meet the needs of clients and making efforts to satisfy the mandate of a growing portfolio, the Authority was able to conduct a review of its operations and identify where there were gaps in the resources and identify approaches to fill those gaps. Since insufficient human resources were a critical issue, in the new fiscal year efforts will be made to implement the revised organisation structure and the related compensation package so that work can be more streamlined which would allow for more timely response to all reports of child abuse.

Additionally, the review done of the operations, which also ushered in a review of the strategic framework and the organisation structure, highlighted the need to provide a focus on the prevention of abuse of children as a strategy. This additional focus gave rise to the need for new and redesigned jobs not originally catered for in the approved organisation structure. A focus on early intervention and prevention would be more cost-effective in the long term than responding to crises, or treating with the impacts of abuse and neglect.

Whereas the number of reports received highlighted the acute problem of child abuse in Trinidad and Tobago, it further emphasized the need for all agencies in the child protection sector to respond to children's issues in a timely manner. While the Children's Authority Act clearly identifies the mandate and scope of work of the Authority, the support of all agencies in the child protection sector is critical for the referral of children and their families to receive timely intervention.

With the anticipated approximate six thousand additional reports of abuse in Fiscal 2017, for effective service delivery, referral service agencies need to adequately ready themselves to receive cases and to provide the requisite services. The Authority's anticipated response, with respect to the conduct of an increasing number of assessments and forensic interviews of children at risk, is in train. Plans are already in place for the establishment of additional Assessment Centres inclusive of Tobago and for providing more timely services for clients.

Some of the issues which were highlighted at start-up still persist: accommodation for children in conflict with the law, transitions homes, facilities for children with special needs and therapeutic homes for children with mental illness. It is evident that more needs to be done to support children and families in crisis with increased intervention programmes for parents and quality restorative care for juvenile offenders.

The role to be played by the Authority in the Juvenile Justice system is expected to undergo some transformation with the passage of the Family and Children Division Act. However, the State's effort towards the provision of Rehabilitation Centres is ongoing since to date, no adequate rehabilitation centres have been established.

The Authority's efforts at collaboration are ongoing. Stakeholder engagement continues to be an all-important strategy for sensitisation on child protection issues. Additionally, the development of a national protocol that will identify the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies when responding to families and children in crisis is closer to becoming a reality. Significant discussions have been had with the Police, stakeholders in the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Judiciary. However, a lot more still needs to be done by all sectors to be more responsive to the needs of children and to deliver services to children and families throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Implementation of approved policies such as the 'Pay per Child' initiative will bring significant relief to children and alleviate the frustration currently experienced in securing placement for children in community residences or with therapeutic and other care providers. With a record number of 70 children that had to be taken into care and for whom placement had to be secured, the provision of the monetary assistance will aid community residences in more readily accepting children.

While community residences play a critical role and their services are essential for placement of children, there is a limit to the number of children that any residence can accommodate and the quality of care that they can be expected to deliver. It should be noted that although community residences have been working towards licensing, their reality is that they are also plagued by scarcity of human, physical and financial resources which is hampering the improvement of care that they can offer.

Even though more than a year has passed, only three community residences have been able to improve their operation and meet the requirements for licensing. In the context of the 47 homes that are operational, a lot more support needs to be given to improve the performance of this sector.

The Authority has already reduced the dependence on community residences for emergency placements with the establishment of the North Child Support Centre. While over the next year this Centre will continue to provide these services, it has to confront the challenge of reducing the length of time that children are accommodated as a short term placement. Options with fit persons and foster parents will have to be more aggressively pursued.

The other long term placement options of Foster Care and Adoption have come into their own. The Authority has been able to recruit and rely on foster parents for emergency, therapeutic and other placements. Foster care should become the number one placement option since the Authority recognises that children thrive best in a family environment. However, at present, this option is not always pursued since the financial responsibility attached to this placement serves as a constraint.

Adoption as an option continues to be a very attractive option for couples. While this process is a lengthy one, the public's willingness to exercise this option continues to be high. A disproportionate interest in adoptions, compared to the number of children available for adoption, has placed the Authority in a difficult position to satisfy the needs of prospective adoptive parents (PAPs). As such, foster care as a precursor to adoption is being researched further to determine whether it is a safe, feasible route to meet the needs of expectant PAPs.

Ultimately, in order to change the fortunes of abused children, the work of the Authority and other child protection agencies need to be given robust support. The link between breakdown in families, the absence of adequate protection for children and crime, has already emerged. Abused and traumatised children grow up to inflict similar and sometimes greater trauma on vulnerable groups and citizens in general. Achieving the result of positively impacting crime may be better achieved when agencies with responsibility for intervention work collaboratively to address the presenting issues and robust systems are put in place to support victims of abuse and juvenile offenders for whom intervention and rehabilitation need to be timely, consistent and focused.

Since child protection is everybody's business, there is room for the several players to each carve a niche for themselves and provide support to children and families such as Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in addition to the other established stakeholder agencies in the child protection sector.

YEAR IN PHOTOS



Meeting with Peer Volunteers of the Juvenile Court Project



Media practitioners during the Authority's Media and Child Rights Workshop



Staff at a wellness workshop exercise



Staff of the Authority during its Christmas luncheon.



The Authority's Eid Luncheon

YEAR IN PHOTOS



Chairman Stephanie Daly, Deputy Chairman Reaz Dabiedeen, Minister of Gender and Child Affairs, Ayana Webster-Roy and former Director Sharifa Ali-Abdullah.



Khin-Sandi Lwin, Representative, UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area; María Cristina Perceval, UNICEF Regional Director, Latin America and the Caribbean and Chairman Stephanie Daly, S.C.



Mrs. Sharifa Ali-Abdullah and Head of the CPU, Supt (Ag) Odette Lewis



Sensitisation with Medical Social Workers in Tobago.



Staff of the Authority during an outreach with the University of the West Indies Social Workers Expo.



Engagement with children during an outreach at the Trincity Mall

YEAR IN PHOTOS

Go back to school to see all my
Friends & Family



Thank you for everything you have done for me.
And for giving me another chance at having a
Proper life, an a chance to a child again.
It means the world to me so know that
Someone finally listened and did something.

You Will Forever
Be In My Heart



I Love You

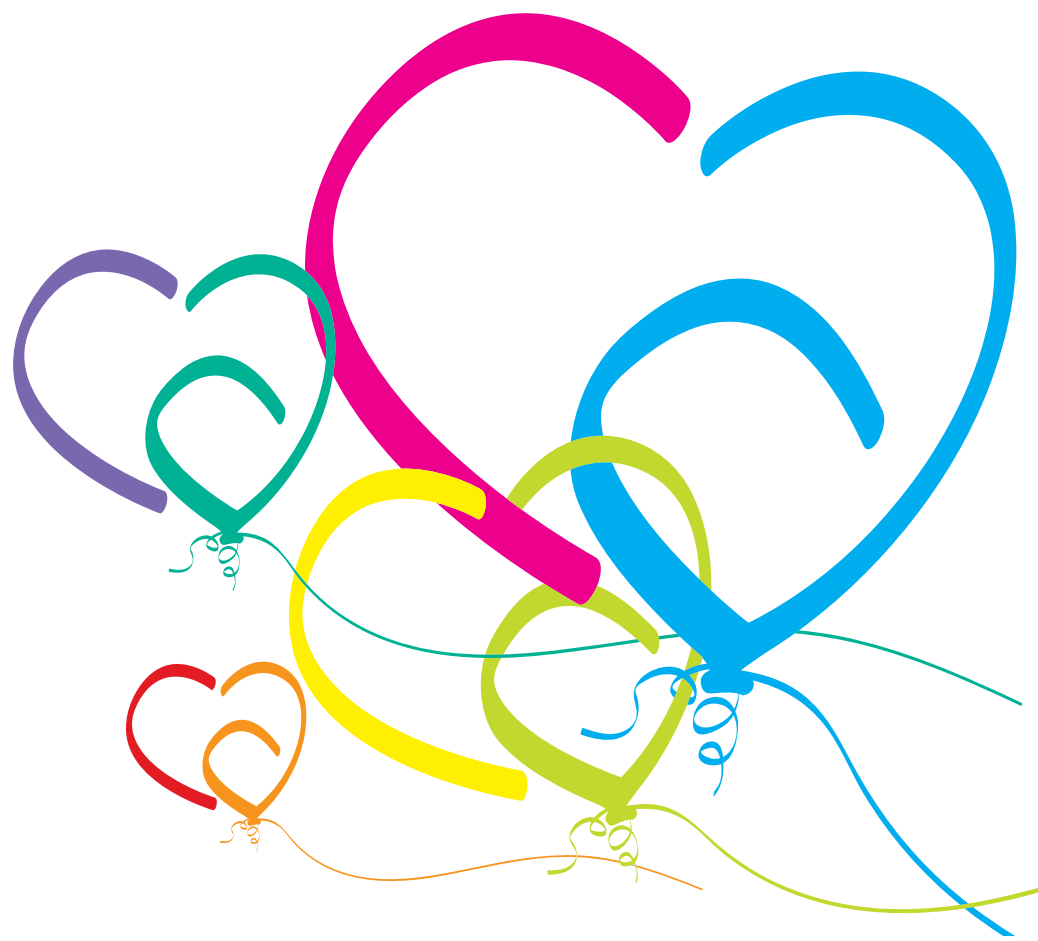
One good
thing children
authorities did
for me was

Show me
love and comfort
me and am
thankful for
that.

CA
Provided me
Food, clothes, shelter
and increased my
understanding
of life

They let us
speak
about
our
feelings

Voices of the Children in response to being in the Authority's care.





Financial Statements

CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
 (Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

		September 30	
		2016	2015
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
	Notes		
Investments		\$ 269,589	\$ 268,533
Cash in hand and at bank		8,502,511	17,432,028
Receivables and prepayments	C	6,679,378	5,950,960
		<u>15,451,478</u>	<u>23,651,521</u>
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		15,451,478	23,651,521
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	D	11,454,634	12,021,322
		<u>11,454,634</u>	<u>12,021,322</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		26,906,112	35,672,843
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Payables and accruals	E	1,157,875	1,381,620
		<u>1,157,875</u>	<u>1,381,620</u>
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,157,875	1,381,620
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Deferred government grants	F	11,454,634	12,021,322
		<u>11,454,634</u>	<u>12,021,322</u>
RESERVES			
Accumulated fund		14,293,603	22,269,901
		<u>25,748,237</u>	<u>34,291,223</u>
TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES		\$ 26,906,112	\$ 35,672,843

CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND ACCUMULATED FUND

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

	Note s	Year Ended	
		September 30 2016	2015
Government grants	G	\$ 33,948,560	\$ 35,281,816
Other income	H	1,121	1,963
Project expenses	I	(858,220)	(698,758)
Operating expenses	J	(38,923,604)	(31,664,329)
Depreciation	K	(2,138,638)	(1,691,418)
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Finance cost		(5,517)	(5,401)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		<u>(7,976,298)</u>	<u>1,223,873</u>
ACCUMULATED FUND			
Balance at beginning of year as previously stated		22,269,901	21,046,028
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		<u>(7,976,298)</u>	<u>1,223,873</u>
BALANCE AT END OF YEAR		<u>\$ 14,293,603</u>	<u>\$ 22,269,901</u>

CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

	Year Ended September 30	
	2016	2015
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	\$ (7976,298)	\$ 1,223,874
Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	2,138,638	1,691,418
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	-
Changes to operating assets and liabilities:		
Increase in receivables and prepayments	(728,417)	(5,744,903)
Increase in accruals	(223,745)	7,468
NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	<u>(6,789,822)</u>	<u>(2,822,143)</u>
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(1,571,951)	(4,201,232)
NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES	<u>(1,571,951)</u>	<u>(4,201,232)</u>
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Government grants received	33,381,873	35,281,816
Government grants utilized	(33,948,560)	(37,791,630)
NET CASH (USED IN)/PROVIDED BY FINANCING ACTIVITIES	<u>(566,687)</u>	<u>2,509,814</u>
(DECREASE)/INCREASE IN CASH	<u>(8,928,460)</u>	<u>(4,513,561)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	17,700,560	22,214,121
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR	<u>8,772,100</u>	<u>17,700,560</u>
Represented by:		
Cash in hand and at bank	8,503,075	17,432,587
Investments	269,025	267,973
	<u>8,772,100</u>	<u>17,700,560</u>
	\$ 8,772,100	\$ 17,700,560

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016**

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE A – ESTABLISHMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (the Authority) was established in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago under the guidelines stated in the Children's Authority Act, Chap. 46:10. The Authority has been set up to fulfil the objectives of the Act, which are to promote the well-being of all children in Trinidad and Tobago; to provide care and protection for vulnerable children; and comply with certain obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Authority is managed by a Board of Management, which is appointed by the President. 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.

NOTE B – SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(i) The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Basis of Preparation – The financial statements of the Authority have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRS"). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified by the revaluation of certain assets and liabilities.

The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with IFRSs requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimates are revised and in any future periods affected.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)
 (Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE B – SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES – (Continued)

(ii) Changes in Accounting Policy and Disclosures

A number of new standards, amendments to standards and interpretations are effective for annual periods beginning January 2013, however, none of these amendments has any material impact on these financial statements.

(iii) Functional and Presentation Currency

Items included in the financial statements are measured using the currency of the primary economic environment in which the Authority operates ('the functional currency'). The financial statements are presented in Trinidad and Tobago dollars which is the Authority's presentation currency.

(iv) Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

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

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using either the reducing balance or straight-line method. The following annual rates are used for the depreciation of property, plant and equipment.

Reducing balance method:

Computer equipment	- 33.3%
Software	- 25%
Furniture and fixtures	- 10%
Office equipment	- 20%
Security equipment	- 20%
Medical equipment	- 20% - 33.3%
Motor vehicles	- 20%
Straight line method:	
Leasehold improvements	- Over 12 years

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)**

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE B – SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES – (Continued)**(iv) Property, Plant and Equipment – (Continued)**

The assets' residual value and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted, if appropriate, at each statement of financial position date.

Assets are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than the estimated recoverable amount. The amount recoverable is the higher of the asset's fair value less cost to sell and value in use.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These are included in the statement of comprehensive income.

(v) Financial Assets

The Authority classifies its financial assets into the following categories: loans and receivables and available-for-sale. The classification is determined by management at the initial recognition and depends on the purpose for which the assets were acquired.

Classification**Loans and Receivables**

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. These are included in current assets, except for maturities greater than 12 months after the statement of financial position date. These are classified as non-current assets and are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

(b) Available-for-sale Financial Assets

Available-for-sale investments are financial assets that are intended to be held for an indefinite period of time, which may be sold in response to needs for liquidity or changes in interest rates, exchange rates or equity prices or that are not classified as loans and receivables, held-to-maturity investments or financial assets at fair value through profit and loss.

Recognition and Measurement – Regular-way purchases and sales of financial assets are recognised on trade date – the date on which the Authority commits to purchase or sell the asset.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)**

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE B – SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES – (Continued)**(v) Financial Assets – (Continued)****Recognition and Measurement – (Continued)**

Financial assets are initially recognised at fair value plus, in the case of all financial assets not carried at fair value through profit and loss, transaction costs that are directly attributable to their acquisition.

Financial assets are derecognised when the rights to receive cash flows from them have expired or where they have been transferred and the Authority has also transferred substantially all risks and rewards of ownership.

Available-for-sale financial assets are subsequently carried at fair value. Changes in the fair value of monetary and non-monetary securities classified as available-for-sale are recognised in other comprehensive income.

When securities classified as available-for-sale are sold or impaired, the accumulated fair value adjustments recognised in equity are included in the income statement as net realised gains on financial assets. Interest on available-for-sale securities calculated using the effective interest method is recognised in the income statement. Dividends on available-for-sale equity instruments are recognised in the income statement when the Authority's right to receive payment is established.

Impairment

At the end of each reporting period the Authority assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired. A financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired and impairment losses are incurred only if there is objective evidence of impairment as a result of one or more events that have occurred after the initial recognition of the asset (a 'loss event') and that loss event (or events) has an impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset or group of financial assets that can be reliably estimated.

(vi) Cash and Cash Equivalents

In the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents includes cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)**

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE B – SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES – (Continued)

(vii) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Authority has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events; it is more likely than not that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation and the amount has been reliably estimated.

Where there are a number of similar obligations as a whole, a provision is recognised even if the likelihood of an outflow with respect to any one item included in the service class of obligations may be small.

(viii) Revenue Recognition

Interest income is measured using the effective interest method on the accruals basis.

(ix) Government Grants

Grants from the government are recognised at their fair value where there is a reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and the Authority will comply with all attached conditions.

Grants received where the Authority has yet to comply with all attached conditions are recognised as a liability in the statement of financial position and released to income when all attached conditions have been complied with.

Grants related to the acquisition of property, plant and equipment are treated as deferred grants and recognised in the statement of comprehensive income over the life of the assets.

Grants related to compensation for non-capital expenditure are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income in the period it is received or receivable.

NOTE C – RECEIVABLES AND PREPAYMENTS

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Sundry receivables	\$ 6,531,140	\$ 5,885,160
Security deposits	60,800	45,800
Prepayments	87,438	20,000
	<u>\$ 6,679,378</u>	<u>\$ 5,950,960</u>

CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)
(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE D – PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	Computers and Software	Furniture and Fixtures	Office Equipment	Medical Equipment	Security Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Leasehold Improvements	Total
<u>Cost</u>								
At beginning of year	2,642,696	2,181,319	655,694	959,589	314,799	1,723,735	7,907,048	16,384,880
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Additions	717,273	279,533	36,975	446,201	91,969	-	-	1,571,951
At end of year	<u>3,359,969</u>	<u>2,460,852</u>	<u>692,669</u>	<u>1,405,790</u>	<u>406,768</u>	<u>1,723,735</u>	<u>7,907,048</u>	<u>17,956,831</u>
<u>Accumulated Depreciation</u>								
At beginning of year	915,209	571,285	296,499	97,748	24,698	421,207	2,036,913	4,363,559
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current year charge	694,866	177,315	73,211	215,515	58,304	260,506	658,921	2,138,638
At end of year	<u>1,610,075</u>	<u>748,600</u>	<u>369,710</u>	<u>313,263</u>	<u>83,002</u>	<u>681,713</u>	<u>2,695,834</u>	<u>6,502,197</u>
Net Book Value 2016	<u>1,749,894</u>	<u>1,712,252</u>	<u>322,959</u>	<u>1,092,527</u>	<u>323,766</u>	<u>1,042,022</u>	<u>5,211,214</u>	<u>11,454,634</u>
Net Book Value 2015	<u>1,727,487</u>	<u>1,610,034</u>	<u>359,195</u>	<u>861,842</u>	<u>290,101</u>	<u>1,302,528</u>	<u>5,870,135</u>	<u>12,021,322</u>

CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE E – PAYABLES AND ACCRUALS

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Sundry payables	\$ 124,756	\$ 331,832
Accruals	1,033,119	1,049,788
	<u>\$ 1,157,875</u>	<u>\$ 1,381,620</u>

NOTE F – DEFERRED GOVERNMENT GRANTS

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Year Ended September 30, 2016		
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 12,021,322	\$ 9,511,508
Grants received for capital expenditure	1,571,951	4,201,232
Transfers to statement of comprehensive income	(2,138,638)	(1,691,418)
Disposals	-	-
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 11,454,634</u>	<u>\$ 12,021,322</u>

NOTE G – GOVERNMENT GRANTS

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Recurrent expenditure grant	\$ 31,039,720	\$ 30,091,630
Development expenditure grant	770,202	3,498,768
Development expenditure grant utilized for recurrent expenditure	-	-
Transfer from deferred government grant	2,138,638	1,691,418
	<u>\$ 33,948,560</u>	<u>\$35,281,816</u>

CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
CHILDREN AUTHORITY FUND
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)
 (Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)
NOTE H – OTHER INCOME

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Miscellaneous	\$ 64	\$ -
Interest earned	1,057	1,963
	<u>\$ 1,121</u>	<u>\$ 1,963</u>

NOTE I – PROJECT EXPENSES

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
IT infrastructure	\$ 303,668	\$ 259,104
Consultants	27,864	89,237
Public awareness	-	42,764
Outfitting Costs	453,459	210,070
Assessment Centre	73,229	-
Standards for residences	-	97,583
	<u>\$ 858,220</u>	<u>\$ 698,758</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 – (Continued)**

(Expressed in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars)

NOTE J – OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating expenses include the following:

	2016	2015
	_____	_____
Salaries	\$ 22,758,366	\$ 18,743,232
Directors' fees	759,000	700,504
Gratuity	715,051	600,260
Accommodation cost	3,771,560	3,674,578
Number of employees (Monthly average)	129	111

NOTE K – FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Fair Values – The carrying amounts of short-term financial assets and liabilities comprising cash in hand and at bank, investments, receivables and prepayments and payables and accruals are a reasonable estimate of their fair values because of the short maturity of these instruments.

Credit Risk – The Authority has no significant concentration of credit risk.





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