

THE CAISO Quarterly

NOVEMBER 2023
SPECIAL ISSUE

BACK CHAT

Celebrating LGBTQI+ Caribbean Voices

BARBIE PREMIERE

A Community Food Bank Fundraiser

HONOURING BEVERLY JONES

Commemorating 50 years of an activist gone too soon

BACK CHAT

Celebrating LGBTQI+ Caribbean Voices!

More than words and bigger than the bigotry that faces the LGBTQI+ community; Back Chat returned to the stage with new life and even more fire. The annual event, which began in 2017 in collaboration with Bocas Lit Fest, took place on April 27th with a packed house at CB's Bar & Lounge, Woodbrook.

This year's theme was Telling Our Stories: Celebrating LGBTQI+ Caribbean Voices; and celebrate we did. Bursting out of the venue were people from every walk of life and identity imaginable... Safe, sound, and joyful. Beyond its steadfast activism and advocacy, it was exactly the type of event and experience CAISO has become known for; a haven for hearts and minds to connect and grow.

Hosted by the vivacious Velvet, Back Chat featured lauded authors, poets, and artists the likes of Adam Lowe, Andre Bhagoo, Simmy D' Trini, Deneka Thomas, Shivanee Lochan, and our very own darling of a director, Angelique V Nixon - who quite literally spoke truth to power!

See for yourself... Click below to check out the Back Chat 2023 gallery now!



Honouring IDAHOBIT

An Insights Review



For the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, CAISO gathered members of the media and held its very own media conference to address the appalling trend of violence, discrimination, and harm members of Trinidad and Tobago’s LGBTQI+ community faces.

The Conference was held on May 15th via Zoom and was attended by every national media outlet in the country, ensuring coverage of the critical call for change and care.

Findings from 2022 Wholeness and Justice Programme’s Insights Report was also shared with media, further bringing to the fore the myriad challenges affecting the LGBTQI+ community as well as outlining clear steps for more progressive, inclusive legislative and policy changes.

Watch the entire conference or read our Insights Report now!

Community Nature Day

It’s no secret that the people around us can either help make your life wonderful or leave you *wondering*... That’s why we at CAISO never take for granted how isolating and lonely life in T&T can be for LGBTQI+ persons, and actively seek out ways to help build safe and loving community through affordable and accessible activities.

Check out our most recent foray into nature with a lovely, sunny hike into the scenic and tranquil Avocat Falls for our Community Nature Day.



WHOLENESS & JUSTICE

Share Space & Capacity Building Work



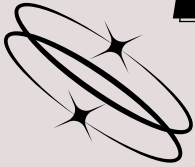
Wholeness & Justice hosted a **Virtual Share Space on Safety & Social Services** facilitated by Rae & Chinyere on Tuesday 29th August - where we invited LGBTQI+ community members to share experiences with social services. This offered important reflections to the WJ team as we developed a Resource Guide on Navigating Social Services.

And then we followed up with our Wholeness & Justice **Clinical Webinar - Navigating Social Services** - Facilitated by Rae & Kellog. Thursday 7th September - where we shared reflections and guidance on how to navigate social services and offered recommendations and best practices for engaging with services that can be very challenging for community members. We also launched Resource Guide - which is available for download and use on our website.

Click the link below for more!



BARBIE PREMIERE



Community Food Bank Fundraiser



During the month of July, CAISO decided to take advantage of one of the most highly anticipated movies of the year and hosted a very successful fundraiser with a Barbie Movie Premiere!

Barbie, easily one of the most popular icons across generations, with special meaning to us in the LGBTQI+ community. This, of course, is exactly what we needed as ALL profits from ticket sales went exclusively to our Community Food Support Fund.

The Fund supports LGBTQI+ people who need food and toiletries and are unable to purchase them on their own due to tough economic times, and we are thrilled to announce that we were able to raise TTD\$12,000!

While the main purpose of the event was to help sustain CAISO's vital Community Food Bank, we also found ourselves enjoying a beautiful evening filled with progressive minds and compassionate hearts, and that was priceless.

From the bottom of our hearts, we want to extend our deepest thanks to you for showing up and sharing your *KENergy* with CAISO!

A Special Thank You to the Diplomatic Core:

- **British High Commissioner, Her Excellency Harriet Cross;**
- **Australian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Sonya Koppe;**
- **Argentinian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, His Excellency Marcelo Suárez Salvia; and**
- **Former German Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Ute König**

We also want to thank the businesses that supported us:

- **Advisors Next Door:** For your environmental consultations and more
- **XR Performance:** For your genuine car parts
- **RIK Services:** For your schoolbooks, stationery and craft supplies

We couldn't have done it without your support, contributions and presence!

Visit CAISO's website for more Barbie event photos!



BEVERLY JONES COMMEMORATION



September 17, 2023 was the fiftieth anniversary of the funeral of Beverly Jones. To mark this somber occasion, we hosted a reading of the eulogy delivered by her mother, Viola Jones, in its entirety along with other reflections from fellow comrades.

We heard first-hand recollections and reflections by Ozzy Warwick, Merle Hodge, Khafra Kambon, Amilcar Sanatan, Richard Young and others. Closing with a re-reading of Beverly's eulogy by Jacquie Burgess, co-convenor and representative of Women Working for Social Progress.

"Beverly Jones was a revolutionary! she was a young woman. She was a Trinbagonian. She was a patriot. Beverly Jones and the others believed that another world was possible." - Ozzy Warwick, Chief Education and Research Officer, OWTU

"The presence of guns, pointing at our people, will not solve the problem. Poor people all over the world are clamouring for a change. The people of Trinidad and Tobago are also part of that call for change. Shooting us, the people, will not be that change. Only a serious look at the economic and political structure of our country will bring it about." Viola Davis, mother of Beverly Jones.

This event was hosted by CAISO, in collaboration with WOMANTRA, Oilfields Workers' Trade Union, and Women Working for Social Progress.



MAPPING (IN)JUSTICE

A Restorative Justice Education Campaign

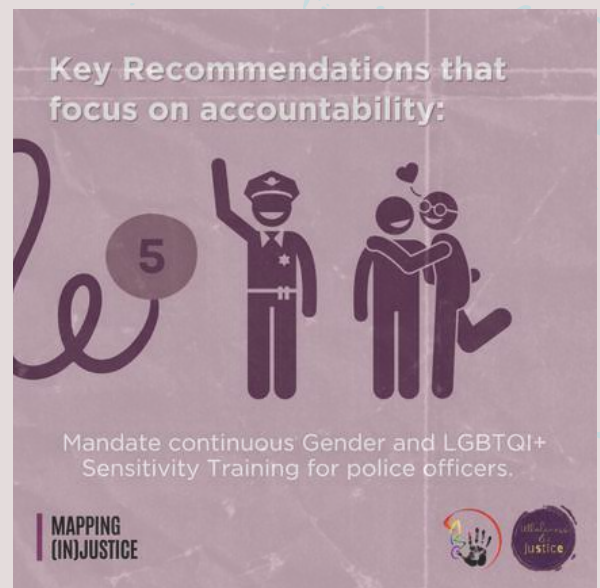
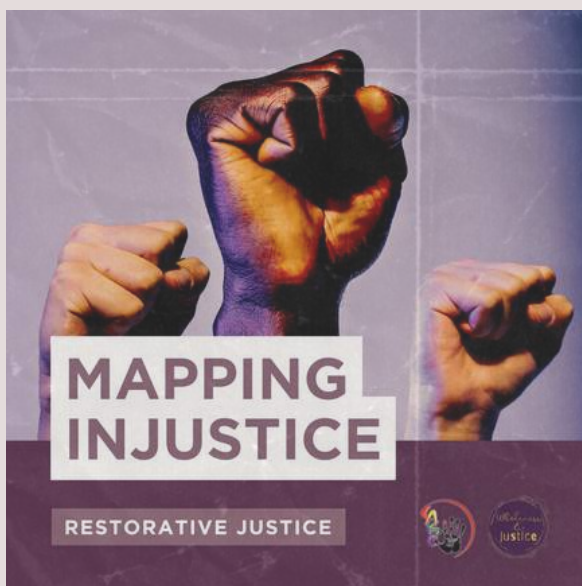


Building from our 2022 campaign on Anti-Police Violence, CAISO's 2023 campaign continues to explore Mapping (In)Justice through looking at restorative justice and discussing alternatives to policing and the prison system in Trinidad and Tobago. Its purpose is to shed light on the flaws in the current criminal justice system and advocate for a more just and effective approach to addressing crime and its consequences.

The campaign is important because it addresses critical human rights issues, including police violence and the inefficiencies of the prison system. It aims to highlight the need for reform and change in the criminal justice system, focusing on racial profiling, police brutality, overcriminalization, mass imprisonment, and recidivism as systemic flaws that must be addressed.

Mapping (In)Justice is an anti-police violence social media campaign for better policing. The 2022 campaign employed a "know your rights" methodology to create awareness and mobilise key stakeholders.

You can see these engagements archived on the CAISO website or follow any of our social media accounts to see the campaign yourself!



SIGN TOGETHER

Graduation Ceremony



CAISO celebrated Deaf Awareness Month with the **Sign Together Graduation and Closing Ceremony** on September 28, 2023, at the British High Commissioner's Residence. Six students successfully completed the five-level Trinidad and Tobago Sign Language (TTSL) program introduced by CAISO in 2021. The program had 17 hearing participants from the LGBTQI+ community, civil society, and private sector organizations in its first phase, with 33 initial enrollees, and they achieved Level 3 certification in TTSL.

In the second phase, conducted in partnership with the Deaf Empowerment and Advancement Foundation (DEAF), nine students enrolled, and six of them completed Level 5 in August. Sign Together is the only free TTSL program offering tuition up to Levels 4 and 5. As a result of the program, over 20 LGBTQI+ individuals and service providers now have various levels of TTSL proficiency.



Congratulations to the six Level 5 Graduates for their achievement and best wishes for their continued journey toward cultural integration and providing more inclusive services to Deaf LGBTQI+ individuals.



UPCOMING EVENTS



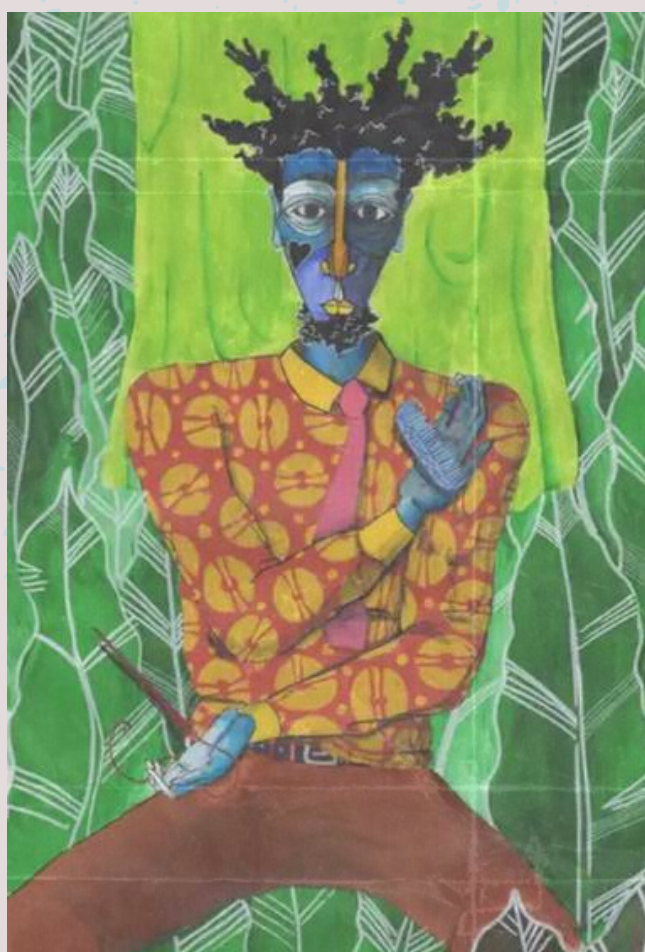
Hard Head Award

Inspired by CAISO's founding director, Colin Robinson, the Hard Head Award (HHA) recognises and honours exceptional leadership in transforming how others see and imagine the world, particularly in the spheres of Transformational Activism, Artistic Boldness and Meaningful Solidarity.

This year's award is open to Community Organisers living in Trinidad and Tobago, who:

- Are engaged in activism for social change, promoting the values of human rights and justice;
- Demonstrate transformative leadership and courage in their work/politics;
- Demonstrate artistic boldness and creativity;
- Are committed to organising with others on shared issues/concerns and building coalitions to effect social change;
- Possess any of the following attributes: focus and clarity of vision and purpose, relentlessness, and/or resilience.

Stay tuned for the announcement of the 2023 HHA Winner on Human Rights Day – 10th December!



STAY TUNED & GET FAMILIAR:

- **Educate to Empower - 16 Day Campaign Series**
- **2nd Annual LGBTQI+ Art Exhibition - Submissions are open!**
- **Community Food Bank - Holiday Donation Drive**
- **New & Improved Website**
- **CAISO's Annual Report**



Get to know our team!



Angelique Nixon (she/her)
Director



Omar Mohammed (he/him)
Director



Catherine Shepherd (she/her)
Director



Elron Elahie (he/him)
Director



Johannah-Rae Reyes (she/her)
Project & Community Outreach



Kellog Nkemakolam (they/he)
Programme & Research Officer
Wholeness & Justice Coordinator



Rae Alibey (she/her)
Community Caseworker
Wholeness & Justice



Donielle Jones (she/her)
Community Lawyer
Wholeness & Justice



Akilah Riley-Richardson (she/her)
Community Therapist
Wholeness & Justice



Psyche Gonzales (she/her)
Financial Manager



Chinyere Brown (she/they)
Research & Admin



Alessandra Hereman (she/her)
Research & Admin



Jo Johnson (she/her)
Content & Social Media



Say hello to our volunteers!



Dominique Absalom (she/her)
Volunteer



Nikoli Attai (he/him)
Volunteer



Shaden Alexander (she/they)
Volunteer



Taylor Lutchman (she/her)
Volunteer



Chandelle O'Neil (they/them)
Volunteer



Maiah Cooper (she/they)
Volunteer



Francisca Ferret (she/her)
Volunteer



How to support:

1. Become a **Resource Volunteer**! Donate to us through our FCB Bank Account (details below) and support our work!
2. Become a **Projects or Events Volunteer**!
3. Contact us at **outreach@caisott.org**

DONATE TO CAISO

BANK INFORMATION

Name: **CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice**
Bank: **First Citizens Bank**
Account No: **2415395**
Type of Account: **Chequing**

NOTE:

Please email us at **info@caisott.org** with your donation information and indicate whether the donation is for **Community Food Support, Client Emergency Support**, or any other **Operational Support**.

Get in touch with us:

-  **caisott.org**
-  **1 Robinson Ville, Belmont**
-  **wholenessandjustice@caisott.org | info@caisott.org**
-  **1-868-28-CAISO (22476) | 1-868-384-9557**

Follow @caisott on:



Stay connected!

