

Who are CAISO's drivers?

CAISO has an open, project-driven structure, in order to encourage talented, resourceful and committed people (like you) to bring your resources and energy to our work, and build skills while doing so. Our steering group (currently 17 men and women, seven of them 25 and under) meets monthly. A few people are focal points for key issues. As our Communications point person, Colin Robinson is a key access point to the group. Kareem Griffith & David Soomarie lead our Community Mobilization work.

What does CAISO's logo signify?

A collaborative process used to develop CAISO's logo has resulted in its visual elements taking on multiple, layered meanings and resonances.

Red, White & Black. The *black* handprint, in the palm of which a *white* map of Trinidad and Tobago emerges, and the 'voting finger' of which is stained *red*, like the 'swoosh' that frames the hand, are the national colours of Trinidad & Tobago.

Snap! We sometimes joke that the swoosh 'signifies the arc of a red snap, global symbol of gay flamboyance and attitude' – just so you know we have a sense of humour in CAISO, and we not just some boring activists who cyah fete or throw picong like de nex Trinbagonian.

Pride Colours. The 'swoosh' also forms the C of CAISO's acronym, followed by A, I, S and O in the six rainbow colours that have become an international symbol of "Pride" in one's sexual orientation and gender identity.

Hand print. On the one hand, this evokes the purple handprint, an early (but no longer familiar) symbol of gay resistance that originated at a peaceful protest against bias in a US newspaper's coverage of GLBT issues a few months after the 1969 Stonewall riots that birthed the modern American gay rights movement. Someone in the newspaper building above doused the demonstrators on the street with purple printers ink; and they proceeded to leave their handprints on its walls and throughout the city.

The symbol was adopted by a Turkish GLBT group, MorEl Eskişehir LGBTT Oluşumu.

Count! But for CAISO, the raised hand, with its stained finger, means a lot more. It symbolizes at once political visibility: 'I vote – Count me!' 'I am visible – I count!'; nation-



-building and service: 'I am volunteering – Count me in!'; mutual support and working together to build a nurturing community: 'I've got you – Count on me!'. It stands as well for putting a stop to violence, discrimination and prejudice, not just in word, but deed.

Leave your mark... Take hold of the future... One destiny.

Additionally, the hand represents leaving our mark on Trinidad and Tobago, that CAISONians are taking the future of human rights and citizenship in T&T in our hands. And that we share a hold on the nation's future. The map of the nation sits right on top of the hand's lifeline, saying 'boundless faith in our destiny'.

Just as natural. Finally, the hand (which can be read as either the print of a right hand or the palm of a left hand) is intended to convey that differences in sexual orientation are just as natural as right- and left-handedness.

The logo was developed pro bono by Liam Rezende, a multi-talented 20-year-old graphic designer and QRC graduate, who has been a social justice activist since his high school days when he co-founded the local Youth of the United Nations Group. He is the principal talent for a small design business whose other logos include YOUNG-TT, the Jazz Alliance of T&T, and several emerging small businesses.



CAISO
INFORMATIONAL
BROCHURE
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How can I contact CAISO, or learn more about you?

- By phone: (868) 758-7676
- By email: caisott@gmail.com
- On the web: gspottt.wordpress.com
- On Facebook: www.facebook.com/caiso
- Join our listserv:
caisott-subscribe@yahogroups.com

WHO & WHAT IS CAISO?

What does “CAISO” stand for?

The **Coalition Advocating for Inclusion of Sexual Orientation**. The name “CAISO” is also a play on calypso, one of our national art forms, showing that we are rooted in our country and culture, and linking CAISO to a native tradition of speaking out and holding our leaders accountable.

What is CAISO?

CAISO is a new coalition of both individuals and groups connected to the gay, lesbian, bi, trans (GLBT) communities in Trinidad & Tobago, who are taking leadership together for building a movement. The coalition includes groups such as 4Change, Friends for Life, MSM: No Political Agenda, and Velvet Underground, as well as people who are advocates, community organizers, party promoters and students. Basically, CAISO is about people who just want to make a difference – and hopefully that includes YOU.



What does “building a movement” mean?

CAISO represents a different kind of approach to what it means to build GLBT commu-

nity in Trinidad & Tobago. Our GLBT communities have been very active for decades, and have grown to be perhaps the most vibrant and admired in the Caribbean region. We believe the time has come to more effectively mobilize the tremendous resources within our communities and the considerable goodwill we enjoy from those outside our communities.

There has been a successful focus in our communities on social and recreational activity, pageants, and HIV awareness. But we need to pay greater attention to building a strong organizational infrastructure; creating the support and services that GLBT people who are young, old and in-between need to live healthy, happy and productive lives; and making it safe for people to believe they are children of God. And we must do much, much more to press our government to fight discrimination, protect us from violence and stigma, and ensure we are treated equally and justly – like the full citizens and human beings that we are. These are the key areas in which CAISO wants to focus, and to build. We want to provide a respected voice, visibility and leadership for our communities in all areas of national life. We also want to make our GLBT communities themselves more inclusive, representative and just spaces.

Can I join CAISO?

Yes! CAISO is currently building a confidential membership base. Becoming a member of CAISO means you want to be a part of our movement, and that we will share information with you, listen to you, and call on you to be part of CAISO’s projects. You don’t have to be GLBT to join in support of our work.

How did CAISO start?

CAISO’s founders originally came together on Emancipation Day 2007, to meet with Kenntly Mitchell, after he made news for successfully suing the police for mistreating him as a gay man. CAISO itself was formed on June 27, 2009, in response to a Cabinet announcement two days earlier that the final version



of T&T’s national Gender Policy would exclude the handful of policy measures and inclusive references to sexual orientation in a 2004 draft.

CAISO formed at a meeting intended to celebrate how GLBT activists from T&T and 15 other countries participating in the June 2009 Organization of American States General Assembly meeting had helped ensure passage of Resolution 2504 by all the governments of the hemisphere, committing them to take action against violence and human rights violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity

What is CAISO doing?

CAISO has built a web presence; and appeared repeatedly in print, radio and television media • CAISO is creating ways for GLBT Trinbagonians to practice their faith affirmatively, held our first church service in September 2009, and are working with local faith leaders to develop a theology of inclusion • CAISO is drawing attention to a pattern of opportunistic robberies, rapes and murders of gay men in Trinidad that have gone unprosecuted • CAISO is highlighting the role of GLBT people in the culture and history of our society, through calypso, writing, film and oral history • CAISO has started a movie/discussion night at Bohemia • CAISO helped to highlight international GLBT participation in the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and impact the civil society statement • CAISO has written and met with Government on sexual orientation and gender policy issues • CAISO is planning a law reform campaign.