

Trinidad & Tobago

RISE Maximum Radio

RISE (Rehabilitating Inmates Seeking Empowerment) Maximum Radio was launched in Trinidad and Tobago's Maximum Security Prison in September 2012 to much fanfare and the involvement of then Minister of Justice Hon. Herbert Volney and then British High Commissioner HE Arthur Snell.

The project first germinated in 2009 when the hosts of the award-winning radio show *Eye on Dependency* – Garth St. Clair and Natasha Nunez – visited the UK and discovered the work of the Prison Radio Association (PRA) and its radio station, National Prison Radio. The discovery led into a fruitful relationship with Phil Maguire and Andrew Wilkie of the PRA, who assisted in selling the concept to government and prison officials.

RISE Maximum Radio is a hybrid setup involving prison officers and prisoners, who at the onset were trained in radio arts together and since the on-air launch, share broadcasting and programming duties.

Although *Eye on Dependency* is no longer involved in the day-to-day operations of RMR, we are proud to have contributed to this element of restorative justice in action.



- Anslem Spring, a prison officer and leader at RISE Maximum Radio, attended PRA Conferences in London in 2014 and 2015.
- A three-part radio drama about drug trafficking, scripted and performed by the RMR staff of prisoners and prison officers, was broadcast on RISE Maximum Radio and *Eye on Dependency*.
- There have been numerous simulcasts with RISE Maximum Radio and *Eye on Dependency* at Christmas, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day allowing prisoners to connect with family by sending recorded greetings and receiving live phone calls.

- Most of the prisoners working at RISE Maximum Radio are on long sentences but the experience has enriched their time by providing a meaningful contribution to enhanced communication with prisoners at MSP.
- RISE Maximum Radio has a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/risemaximumradio
- In 2021, *Eye on Dependency* will continue to lobby the prison authorities to expand the reach and impact of RISE Maximum Radio as well as to assist with programming that more accurately reflects the original intent of the project.



Officer at the controls (top left); Phil Maguire (PRA) at RISE launch (centre left), at the controls (bottom left), Minister of Justice Hon. Herbert Volney and then British High Commissioner HE Arthur Snell (above top), inmates and officers during setup with Max (above bottom)