



A total of \$9.3 billion has been disbursed by the Culture, Health, Arts, Sports and Education (CHASE) Fund to aid in the implementation of several developmental projects across Jamaica over its 10 years of operation.

This was disclosed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Fund, Billy Heaven, at a JIS Think Tank held on Wednesday, March 13, at the agency's head office in Kingston.

Of the total expenditure over the period, \$3 billion was invested into sports initiatives, representing 40 per cent of the total sum. Approximately \$2.7 billion went into early childhood education; \$1.9 billion in health; and \$1.4 billion in arts and culture.

While the CHASE Fund does not directly manage the disbursements of funds for sporting activities, it has responsibility to administer allocations for health, culture and arts, and education.

Elaborating on the investment in early childhood education, Mr. Heaven said the organisation has been supporting the infrastructural development of infant and basic schools. These include the building and upgrading of early childhood resource centres and the provision of required learning tools and equipment.

In addition, focus has been placed on health screening for students; teacher training through the provision of scholarships; providing nutritional support; and funding research projects.

In the area of health care, the CHASE Fund has supplied much needed equipment to health care facilities such as dialysis machines; built community health centres; and has made investments in training projects that will improve the delivery of health care in the island.

As it relates to arts and culture, Mr. Heaven said the Fund has provided institutional support to the National Dance Theatre Company and other such groups, and has assisted the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) with the staging of some of its cultural activities.

CHASE has also been instrumental in funding various publications, and supports the maintenance of several libraries, archives, museums, and historical sites, among others.

“In terms of our literary work, we have funded in excess of 50 books (and this is part of our efforts) to get the society to read more,” Mr. Heaven said.

CHASE was established in 2002, with a mandate of investing in projects and programmes that will lead to the development of the socio-cultural, economic, health and educational needs of the Jamaican people. It is financed through monetary contributions from the island’s gaming industry.

The funds are allocated in the ratios of 40 per cent to sports, 25 per cent to education, 20 per cent to health, and 15 per cent to arts and culture.

By Toni-Ann Rankine, JIS Reporter