

Sports, Entertainment and Culture

Sports, entertainment and culture are three areas of economic activity which have established themselves in the development of industrialized countries. In countries such as the United States of America, Canada, China, England and Germany these are billion dollar industries. It is extremely unlikely that this has come about per chance, but rather the vision of the economic and social benefits would have been a driving force behind the decision to invest in the sporting and cultural industries.

These industries have the potential of maximizing the talents and skills of our human resources, and in so doing allows for creativity and innovation to emerge. The greatest benefit of embracing sports and culture into the economic pillars of any economy is the level of employment that it creates.

It is left to governments and politicians in small island developing countries to explain why the promotion of the sports and cultural industries as areas of economic activity, have not been vigorously pursued as in the case of many industrialized countries. It is sometimes advanced that geographical size is a significant factor in the pursuit of an economic strategy. The case can be made that this is more likely to be the figment of the imagination than anything else.

The success of Caribbean Sports personalities and artistes in the culture and entertainment sector who through the years have emerged on the global stage, has not been readily exploited or capitalized by the regional governments. There has always been the cry that the resources are lacking to drive initiatives, but to their credit regional governments of the Caribbean such as Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica are focusing on sports and the cultural industries as part of their sustainable development plan.

The fact that the region continues to showcase to the international world that it has a dearth of talent, this means that there is a need to carefully examine how the region can position itself to ensure the growth and development of the sports, culture and entertainment industries respectively. One way of doing this, would be for government and private sector interests to partner in developing these sectors. Efforts to attract major investment in these fields serve to accelerate the pace of development.

What are the draw backs facing the development of the sports, cultural and entertainment industries in the region? Maybe it is the political will to provide the required investment and incentives, and the failure on the part of the private sector to broaden the scope of their business horizons. The startling fact is that there seems to be a cautious approach to investment necessary to drive the potential of these new sectors. Jamaica has taken the lead in making things happen and are seeing the results.

Maybe the business model that they have initiated needs to be replicated across the Caribbean region.

The move from amateur to professionalism in the sports, cultural and entertainment industries is a significant factor if these fields are to develop. Mindful of this, developing societies can expect that the pace at which progress can and will be achieved, is dependent on the pace at which efforts and resources are directed to bring about results. It simply is not an overnight thing.

In the development of the sports, cultural and entertainment industries, the matter of facilities must engage the authorities. The long and short of it is that infrastructural development will play a significant part in the developing of the sectors. Whatever activities are developed, and if there are to be sustained and grow, the importance that is attached to them will remain an important factor. Lip service will not cut it.