

Improving Quality of Life

An Interview with Ingrid Saunders Jones,
Senior Vice President-Global Community Connections, The Coca-Cola Company, and Chair, The Coca-Cola Foundation

EDITORS' NOTE In addition to her current post, Ingrid Saunders Jones leads the company's philanthropic efforts. Previously, Jones worked with the Honorable Maynard Jackson, then Mayor of the City of Atlanta; served as a legislative analyst for the president of the Atlanta City Council; served as the Executive Director of the Detroit/Wayne County Child Care Coordinating Council; and taught in the public schools of Detroit and Atlanta. Jones serves on the boards of The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation



Ingrid Saunders Jones

and The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, and as Chair of the National Council of Negro Women. She earned a bachelor's degree in education at Michigan State University and a master's degree in education at Eastern Michigan University. Michigan State University honored her with an honorary Doctor of Humanities Degree. She also received honorary degrees from Spelman College and Knoxville College.

COMPANY BRIEF The Coca-Cola Company (www.thecoca-colacompany.com) refreshes consumers with more than 500 sparkling and still brands. Led by Coca-Cola, the world's most valuable brand, the company's portfolio features 15 billion-dollar brands including Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite, Coca-Cola Zero, vitaminwater, Powerade, Minute Maid, Simply, and Georgia. Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in nearly 200 countries enjoy the company's beverages at a rate of 1.7 billion servings a day.

Would you highlight the importance of corporate philanthropy for The Coca-Cola Company?

Improving the quality of life in the 200-plus communities where we operate is an integral part of The Coca-Cola Company's business. We place the highest priority on being a responsible, engaged corporate citizen. As stewards of the world's most valuable and trusted brands, we have a deep responsibility to ensure that the work we do creates tangible value for our system and for the communities we serve throughout the world.

Our philosophy is to give back a portion of our operating income each year to the communities where we do business. We have committed to giving back at least 1 percent of our prior year's operating income to local

community programs. In 2012, The Coca-Cola Foundation invested more than \$70 million in communities worldwide. Since its inception, we have invested more than \$500 million to support the sustainability of global communities.

Is it important that the areas you support align with your business or do you look at your philanthropic efforts separately?

The Coca-Cola Company has been giving back to communities for 127 years. Several years ago, utilizing the perspec-

tive and experiences of our leaders worldwide, we conducted a series of strategic planning sessions to determine which areas we should support worldwide. We carved out four global commitments that we believe will yield the greatest impact: water stewardship, active healthy living, community recycling, and education. We also agreed to support local initiatives of critical importance, including HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in Africa, youth development in Latin America, and diversity in North America.

How are you supporting access to clean water and sanitation around the globe?

We are working with partners worldwide to steward and replenish the natural resources upon which we and our communities depend. Since 2005, Coca-Cola has conducted 382 community water projects in 94 countries, working hand in hand with local governments and partners including World Wildlife Fund, the United States Agency for International Development, The Nature Conservancy, and CARE.

One of our signature programs is the Replenish Africa Initiative (RAIN), which was developed in response to severe water challenges faced by nearly 300 million Africans living without access to clean water. RAIN's goal is to provide over two million people in Africa with access to clean water by 2015.

Would you provide an overview of your recycling and conservation efforts?

Recycling plastic for reuse yields financial benefits for communities, requires less energy than producing bottles with virgin materials, and reduces waste and greenhouse gases. We have invested in building PET recycling plants that produce bottles from recycled content in Australia, Austria, Mexico, the Philippines, Switzerland, and the United States.

In the United States, we support Keep America Beautiful, which since 2009 has placed more than 7,000 recycling bins in public spaces, including on college campuses. We also support the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, which last year yielded more than nine million pounds of debris from our oceans and local waterways.

Coca-Cola has been a leader in addressing education needs by providing scholarships and access to education programs. How challenging is it to tackle such a significant systemic issue?

At Coca-Cola, we believe education is the single greatest force enabling people worldwide to improve their lives and create sustainable communities for the future of their families and their society. Education has been a long-standing priority at Coca-Cola, but the execution of education initiatives varies by community. We look at the needs in a particular community and work with local leaders to address their challenges.

In the United States, we initiated the Coca-Cola First Generation Scholarship program in 1993 to answer the challenges faced by many who were the first in their families to attend college. To date, we have awarded more than \$32 million in first generation scholarships to more than 2,400 students at more than 460 college campuses.

Another example is our support of the Critical Difference for Women program at The Ohio State University. This program was developed specifically to assist women who interrupted their college education due to unforeseen obstacles such as family responsibilities or financial difficulties.

Are you focused on collaborating/partnering in your efforts and would you highlight some of these relationships?

Through our global community engagement activities, we are helping to transform the world. Our efforts involve many local and global partner agencies who share our goals, including CARE, the American Red Cross, United Way, Catalyst, and the World Wildlife Fund.

For example, empowering women to thrive in business is a global commitment for The Coca-Cola Company. Three years ago, we announced a bold initiative to enable the economic empowerment of five million women entrepreneurs across our global value chain by the year 2020. Last year, as part of our effort to empower women, we committed \$2 million to Catalyst Inc. to help women worldwide grow and thrive in business. ●