

Coca-Cola South Africa Wins Annual Water Care Award

Water Care - Preserving life in the environment for the good of development

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Coca-Cola South Africa's Leak Repair Project was announced a winner in the Water Care Category at the Mail&Guardian's Greening the Future Awards on Friday, on June 6.

The Mail&Guardian is South Africa's quality, investigative newspaper that is also a local authority on environmental matters.

The Greening the Future judges – all of whom were well-known environmentalists – singled out Coca-Cola South Africa's Leak Repair Project for its sheer scale, positive impact and the reach of its partnerships. The judges also commended its flexibility, innovation and training elements, which are key drivers of the project's sustainability.

Funded jointly by Coca-Cola South Africa and The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, the Leak Repair Project aims to develop a water supply efficiency intervention through retrofits and replacement of plumbing fixtures at selected schools and certain properties in some of the country's townships. It started three years ago, targeting private properties in previously disadvantaged communities, as well as various primary schools, and it is intended to reduce high levels of wastage and lower non-revenue water loss. The project also enhances sustainable water management in communities and provides skilled and semi-skilled employment opportunities for unemployed people in those communities, while improving sanitation.

Samuel Mdulwazi, deputy principal at Vumbeni Primary School which received a facelift from the project, thanked Coca-Cola South Africa for its assistance: "Our school was in a bad condition before, with pipes leaking and unsanitary toilets. Now, thanks to Coca-Cola, everything is fixed."

Tulisiwe Mkatshwa, Community Affairs Manager at Coca-Cola South Africa, says the aim is to help residents to access safe drinking water and basic sanitation. "Even though the socio-economic conditions in disadvantaged areas have improved since the country embraced democracy in 1994, water problems still persist for various political, social and economic reasons. Most municipalities buy potable water in bulk from regional suppliers, and wasted water results in enormous financial losses for municipalities," Mkatshwa says.

Great milestones have been achieved, with over 6 000 houses serviced since the project's inception. It is estimated that the Leak Repair Project has directly benefited up to 22 000 people.

The project has now also been rolled in Polokwane, Durban and Buffalo City in the Provinces of Limpopo, Kwazulu-Natal and Eastern Cape respectively. It has used a multi-sectoral approach, partnering with non-profit organisations, business, environmental and consumer leaders, as well as the government and communities.



Zanele Sisilana (on the right) accepted the Award from TV personality Doreen Morris, who was the MC at the awards dinner, on behalf of Coca-Cola South Africa.

