

Abstract

This case-study of Coca-Cola South Africa's (CCSA) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focuses on the company's potential for development in South Africa by way of examining its corporate social investment (CSI) projects. The discussion centres on the issue of relatively rapidly decreasing water resources, which are put under even greater strain in the context of an industrializing and 'developing' environment, thus demanding a re-evaluation of what one should take sustainable development to mean. The case-studies showed that CSI projects reproduced identified dominant trends of a wider capitalist globalization: namely processes of privatization and of increasing irresponsibility. One of the leak repair projects undertaken facilitated an overall move by the municipality towards the commercialization of water by installing prepaid meters; another community water supply programme highlights the lack of planning, and hence the degree of irresponsibility on CCSA's behalf. All case-studies led to the conclusion that CSI is little more than soft marketing, the funding of projects to protect the image of the company, and as a consequence CSI reports remain largely narrative as opposed to scientific, and exaggerative in their claims.