

A CASE STUDY ON BUSINESS FOR PEACE



COKE STUDIO PAKISTAN: THE PRIDE OF SELF DISCOVERY

BY KAREN A. COLLIER 2013



'Living in Pakistan and being Pakistani in this day and age, there's very little positive news coming out about us, especially in the Western media... I'm very intrigued by the response we're getting outside of Pakistan, the massive amount of feedback coming in from all parts of the world. Coke Studio represents a great, softer image of Pakistan that's going out there and people are happy about it ... we're hungry for it.' **Rohail Hyatt, Producer Coke Studio Pakistan**

Key words: Coke Studio Pakistan; The Coca-Cola Company; Business for Peace; UN Global Compact; social entrepreneurship; cultural leadership

Abstract

In 2008, The Coca-Cola Company recognized a timely opportunity to invest in Pakistan, through its sponsorship of *Coke Studio*—establishing a stand out example of ‘business for peace.’ The investment-turned ‘cultural institution’ innovated by local producer Rohail Hyatt—is a live fusion of diverse musical influences with the stated mission of; ‘providing a platform that bridges barriers, celebrates diversity, encourages unity and instills a sense of Pakistani pride.’¹ Following critical acclaim in Pakistan, *Coke Studio* amassed a large following in India with demand for its own localized series, and inspired a growing international franchise, of which *Forbes* remarked—‘Coke Studio has broken geo-political boundaries.’² Coca-Cola Pakistan earned over Rs50 billion in revenues in 2012 with volume growth of 23 percent, gaining market share dominated by rival PepsiCo.³ Aiming to inspire economic activity, employment and inclusion, Coca-Cola plans to invest \$278 million in Pakistan by 2014.⁴ This research paper evaluates Coca-Cola’s leading strategic social investment, which commits voluntarily to the UN Global Compact, and examines the nexus between leadership, business and peace.⁵ A case study proposes that sustaining the *Coke Studio effect* can promote a culture of peace, build economic and social resilience, and project a softer image of Pakistan -- which the country desperately needs to prosper.

*‘It is helpful to see peace as the product of institutions and structures,
not merely as the absence of violence.’*

(Breslauer, 2013) Institute of Economics and Peace

Introduction

The Architecture of a better world

Since its inception in 2008, *The Global Peace Index*—which measures the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of peace annually—traces a trend line of deteriorating indicators underpinning Pakistan’s *peacelessness*, which ranked 157th of 162 nations on the 2013 Index.⁶ Despite stifling conditions undermining peace and security, Pakistan’s general election in May was considered a democratic milestone—drawing renewed attention to constraints on growth, including a chronic energy crisis and structural trade barriers, presenting both challenges and opportunities to stimulate development and sustain foreign investment. The PML-N government inherited a dormant economy demanding repair, while PM Nawaz Sharif, an industrialist and businessman, acknowledges that improving relations with India—the fastest growing economy in South Asia—will be a means to this end to stay abreast of the ‘Next 11’ economies towards growth and prosperity.⁷

Trade has been the main driver of the Pakistan-India peace process, which stalled as a consequence of the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, and remains fraught in its development by perpetual setbacks. Along this trajectory (Iqbal, 2013) notes, FDI into Pakistan declined steeply from \$5.5 billion in FY 2008, to \$760 million in FY 2012.⁸ Inflows of foreign investment doubled from 2012-13, reflecting an upward trend compared with the preceding fiscal year, yet conditions undermining secure trade, place the government under mounting pressure to institutionalize dialogue and improve conditions to attract foreign investment.⁹

Despite a host of complex challenges confronting the country, the *Marketing Association of Pakistan* (MAP) remains optimistic about Pakistan’s resilience. (MAP, 2012) accentuates Pakistan’s demographic dividend in its review, *Pakistan Opportunity*, describing a ‘virtually hidden consumption boom’ to the outside world expected to usher in explosive growth. According to the Association, the consumer space in Pakistan is ‘a hugely under-branded market.’¹⁰ Recognizing such potential, Coca-Cola Beverages Pakistan (CCBPL)—a joint venture between the US-based parent and Turkey-based partner, Coca Cola İçecek—pledged to invest \$248 million in Pakistan over the next two years.¹¹ Both Pakistan and India are key markets to Coca-Cola’s growth in Asia.

As part of Coca-Cola's broader strategic plan to do 'work that matters in the world,' *Coke Studio* has helped the company make inroads into Pakistan, spearheading leadership in the region with consideration for the triple bottom line—'people, planet and profit.'¹² Under the leadership of Muhtar Kent, Chairman and CEO since July 2008, The Coca-Cola Company has been credited with setting a 'gold standard' on global sustainability leadership,¹³ positioning the company at the vanguard of 'next practices.'

Through a case study on Coca-Cola's leading social investment in Pakistan, this paper examines the components that identify *Coke Studio* as a stand out example of investment at the so-called 'base of the pyramid.' From a business perspective: it impresses how marketing innovation that delivers 'brand experience,' strengthens the business case for creativity; and within the framework of academic peace studies: aims to inspire deeper cultural sensitivity and engagement, to strengthen *attitudes* supportive of 'business for peace' vis-à-vis Pakistan. *Coke Studio* embodies what (Mildenhall, 2012) describes, 'the existence of opportunities for brands to promote greater inclusion, diversity and equality.'¹⁴ Advancing this idea throughout his life, the late C.K. Prahalad, 'a master of business strategy and champion of the poor,' described this principle, 'the democratization of commerce.'¹⁵ This paper asserts that the distinctive case of *Coke Studio* has set a benchmark to *enlighten* MNCs to implement business strategies that create shared-value, while encouraging a culture of global stewardship. A growing movement known as 'business for peace' (B4P) is advancing this concept expansively, which formalizes voluntary, progressive participation with the UN Global Compact (UNGC).¹⁶ In line with the philosophy and principles of the Compact, the unprecedented success of *Coke Studio Pakistan* exemplifies how local social investment, combined with global entrepreneurial spirit can help strengthen the attitudes, structures and institutions that build resilience and underpin peace.

This case study is informed by current research spearheaded by both *Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies* (PIPS) and *The Institute of Economics and Peace* (IEP). As Breslauer (IEP, 2013) asserts, 'it is helpful to see peace as the product of institutions and structures, not merely as the absence of violence.'¹⁷ In the tradition of peace studies, this condition that necessitates human flourishing is described as 'positive peace' (Galtung cited in IEP, 2013).¹⁸ In conclusion, the paper illuminates how the *Coke Studio* effect has helped sustain deeper impact on social attitudes, while promoting peace and projecting a softer image of Pakistan, beyond any industry initiative in Pakistan's history.¹⁹ The Pakistani-led initiative has been mutually reinforcing for both Coca-Cola's image throughout Asia and 'Brand Pakistan'—as (Hamid, 2013) remarked, 'hope takes many small forms. One of them is Coke Studio.'²⁰

Business for Peace

In an era of greater accountability and increasing interdependence, the business sector can help ensure markets, commerce and technology advance in ways to further benefit humanity, while addressing global priorities in the shared interest of international peace and security. To this end, examining the dimensions of peace can help deepen our understanding of the social, political, cultural and economic factors associated with more peaceful societies. As a driver of globalization, the business sector is increasingly dependent upon respect within the communities in which companies operate, as UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon acknowledged, ‘bridging divides helps keep the peace...businesses know that in today’s globalized world, they have to be able to compete in multicultural environments’²¹ (UNGC, 2009). A survey of signatories to the UN Global Compact conducted in 2008, that inquired into perceptions about ‘business and peace,’²² found that MNCs recognize their unique position to contribute to peace and development inside the countries they operate business.²³ The Compact considers that, ‘growing tensions and polarization along cultural, religious and ethnic lines undermine stable, sustainable business environments.’²⁴ This was reinforced in a joint report between the UNGC and the *Alliance of Civilizations* in 2009, stressing, ‘lack of a stable political and economic framework and violence disrupts production and supply lines, increases operating costs and delays business activities’²⁵ (UNGC, 2009). (Brauer and Marlin, 2009) describe impediments to business development and the existence of violence and conflict a form of ‘insecure trade.’ As their study details, ‘removing structural obstacles to trade expands markets and GDP,’²⁶ or in other words—business is good for peace.

Enlightened Global Business

Launched in 2000, The UN Global Compact is a strategic policy initiative which encourages ‘enlightened global business,’ that asks companies to *voluntarily* align their strategies and operations with a set of ten universally accepted principles. The world’s largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative, seeks to mainstream these principles and galvanize business action in support of broader UN goals.²⁷ Over 10,000 corporate participants and stakeholders from over 130 countries are signatories to the Compact, and approximately half of these participants are from developing countries. These companies aspire to embrace universal values in the areas of human rights; labour; environment; and anti-corruption—that overall; ‘works toward the vision of a sustainable and inclusive global economy, which delivers lasting benefits to people, communities, and markets.’²⁸

As is well noted by the *Institute of Economics and Peace* (IEP) the value of peace to the global economy is still poorly understood. IEP is committed to shifting the world's focus to a deeper understanding of peace as a 'positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well being and progress.'²⁹ (Killelea, 2013) asserts; 'peace improves gradually and must be nurtured over the long term by strengthening the attitudes, institutions and structures which support peaceful societies – known as the Pillars of Peace.'³⁰ A conceptual framework derived from an empirical and statistical analysis of data sets derived from the *Global Peace Index* identified eight 'Pillars of Peace', or factors found to be closely associated with more peaceful environments.³¹ These include: well-functioning government; sound business environment; equitable distribution of resources; acceptance of the rights of others; good relations with neighbours; free flow of information; high levels of education; and low levels of corruption³² (IEP, 2013). As these pillars are interdependent in nature and mutually reinforcing, this model asserts that 'sustainable improvements in peace only result from improvements in the entire system.'³³ This architecture considers a broader conception of peace reflecting today's global realities, and intuitively why peace building -- *tammeer-e-aman*, is in the self-interest of *all*.

'Coke's investments will further establish our position as a Company which truly believes in Pakistan's potential.' (Seward, 2013)

Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges

A six-year trend-line of the *Global Peace Index* indicates that Pakistan became less peaceful in 2012.³⁴ According to (GPI, 2013) three indicators deteriorated in 2013: the intensity of internal conflict, terrorist activity and the level of violent crime. Conflict spiked in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) compounded by the continuation of US drone strikes,³⁵ and although none of Pakistan's scores on the GPI improved from 2012, a historic democratic transition between civilian governments in May, broke from a culture of military coups. *Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies* (PIPS, 2013) observed a 28 percent increase in sectarian violence, yet since 2012, noted 'a downward trend in the number of overall incidents of violence and casualties' in its annual Security Report. The Report also noted a 7 percent decrease in cross border attacks; a 29 percent decrease in suicide attacks; and overall—a 41 percent decrease in drone attacks.³⁶ In light of the insidious affect terrorism has had on Pakistan's economy, beginning his third term in government, PM Nawaz Sharif promoted 'restraint, responsibility and dialogue,' as the cornerstone of government policy.

The 'Next 11'

According to *The Marketing Association of Pakistan*, 'outsiders are missing the real story on Pakistan,' due to the absence of positive narratives about the country (MAP, 2012). By 2020, Pakistan will be one of six countries that are 'home to half of the world's teen population and the global population.'³⁷ Over 100 million of Pakistan's population of 180 million, are below 30 years of age and by 2030, Pakistan is expected to become the fourth largest country in the world due to rapid population growth, propelling economic growth.³⁸ Reiterating Pakistan's place on 'the growth map' (O'Neill, 2011) predicts that Pakistan will be one of the world's 'Next 11'—a term O'Neill coined in 2005, referring to 11 countries identified as next in line to become economic powerhouses.³⁹ Although Pakistan scores among the bottom third of the Next-11 nations, its score is rising, and *Goldman Sachs* forecasts that by 2025, Pakistan will be among the top 20 economies in the world.⁴⁰ As MAP points out, these combining factors present immense opportunities in Pakistan's consumer space.⁴¹

Pakistan Potential

Defying expectations, the FMCG sector in Pakistan has experienced an unprecedented sales boom since 2008, and is a key market expected to continue to experience explosive growth.⁴² Coca-Cola was introduced into Pakistan in 1953 and retained leadership in the local market share for over 35 years.⁴³ Pakistanis are estimated to have spent approximately Rs110 billion (\$1.3 billion) on carbonated beverages in 2011,⁴⁴ and in the rapidly growing soft drink market, Coca-Cola aims to increase its market share as growth slows in western markets. Following an investment of \$172 million in Pakistan in 2012, Coca-Cola Beverages Pakistan (CCBPL) plans to invest another \$248 million in the country over the next two years. 'We see great potential in Pakistan's future, which is why the company is investing significantly in upgrading infrastructure and adding value to allied industries,' states country manager, Rizwan Khan (2013).⁴⁵ Coca-Cola officials state the proposed investment will be foreign direct investment that will flow into the country over the next two years.⁴⁶ Coca-Cola's planned investment is 'a stand out as an example for other companies to invest in Pakistan,' Khan remarked. With inference to risk aversion in conflict-sensitive environments, he urged; 'our aim is to inspire economic activity, create employment and increase tax revenue for the government. However, it is the government's responsibility to ensure that a productive investment and business operating environment is provided to local and international companies.'⁴⁷

The highest FDI inflow into Pakistan in FY13 came from the US at \$632 million, followed by Hong Kong and the UK, investing \$242mn and \$223mn respectively and \$90mn from China. Direct trade between India and Pakistan currently amounts to \$2.3 billion (World Bank cited in Husain, 2013) and could potentially rise by 200 percent, if Pakistan were to accord MFN status to India.⁴⁸

Australia and Pakistan met in Islamabad, 20 June for the 4th Joint Trade Committee talks. The Australian delegation, led by Paul Grigson, said ‘Australia recognized the great potential for increased trade and investment between Australia and Pakistan,’ welcoming that bilateral trade with Pakistan in 2012 increased to AUD\$879 million, a 50 percent increase from 2011. Grigson announced, ‘I also welcome the commitment of the new Government of Pakistan to overcome the current energy shortage and return Pakistani industry to being one of the most competitive and productive exporters in the South Asia region’ (DFAT, 2013).⁴⁹

‘Our Chairman Muhtar Kent often says, “we will not waste a crisis, this is the time to invest in our brand”’ (Mildenhall, 2013)

Vice President, Global Advertising Strategy and Content Excellence, The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company

Purpose and Profit

The Coca-Cola Company is the world’s largest beverage company, operating in over 200 countries and territories with diverse cultures, political systems, religions and histories. Coca-Cola (NYSE: KO) is driven by a stated mission that pledges: (1) to refresh the world (2) to inspire moments of optimism and happiness and (3) to create value and make a difference.⁵⁰ Acknowledging the growing importance of corporate responsibility to the international business sector, in 2006, Coca-Cola officially joined the United Nations Global Compact under the leadership of then CEO, Neville Isdell. ‘Coca-Cola’s participation is an affirmation of the growing momentum of the Global Compact around the world,’ remarked (Kell, 2006) Executive Head, UNGC—imploring how MNCs are in a powerful position to advance the tenets of corporate responsibility, and the ‘Ten Principles,’ that comprise the Compact.⁵¹

In line with the vision that inspires the philosophies of the Global Compact, in 2002, the late C.K. Prahalad, a visionary in ‘Base of the Pyramid’ studies, who spearheaded an area of

research from theory to practice, that explores ‘how businesses might pursue sustainable growth while playing a role in alleviating poverty,’ noted; ‘for corporations that have distribution and brand presence throughout the developing world, such as the Coca-Cola Company, the bottom of the pyramid offers vast untapped markets.’⁵² The concepts outlined in his seminal work, *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*, referred to widely as BOP, underpin Prahalad’s legacy, that strives to alter perceptions of how the world’s poorest people are perceived, and to urge the business sector to ‘re-imagine their role as agents of change,’ in the developing world.⁵³

During the 2013 *World Economic Forum*,⁵⁴ (Kent, 2013) cites ‘resilient dynamism,’ as a vehicle for the company’s ‘2020 vision,’ which aims to double Coca-Cola’s business by 2020, while reinforcing the important role the developing world plays in reigniting global growth:⁵⁵

History has shown us, time and time again, that the world’s most resilient organizations are those that do more than just prepare for change and turbulence. Instead they see -- they seize -- opportunity in the eye of the storm... they leverage the opportunities that exist in times of turbulence and global economic downturn.⁵⁶

Before Coke’s current CEO and Chairman, Muhtar Kent was credited with ‘redefining Coke’s culture,’ (Mildenhall, 2004) described a critical turning point during Coke’s journey at which point then CEO, Neville Isdell had declared the company ‘creatively bankrupt.’⁵⁷ The turning point was not without precedent. Before his death in 1997, Coke’s then CEO, Robert Goizueta, forewarned that the company had become ‘too conservative,’ marking a revelation during his leadership that necessitated the innovative drive for major transformation across the business. ‘The world was changing, and we were not changing with the world,’ Goizueta observed⁵⁸ (Goizueta cited in Suhaib and Rowe, 2008). Ever since, the company has sought to ‘shine a light on optimism and happiness,’ searching the world for ‘reasons to believe’, turning the brand into a ‘source of hope’ under the leadership of Kent.⁵⁹

Making its debut at 14th place (*Fast Company*, 2013) credited Coca-Cola with ‘turning a gigantic brand into a nimble marketing collective.’⁶⁰ Recognition of Coke’s global leadership in 2013, include a debut on *Fast Company*’s ‘Top 50 Most Innovative Companies in the world’ and Cannes Lion’s prestigious ‘Creative Marketer of the Year.’ Of this award (Mildenhall, 2013) maintained, ‘The Coca-Cola Company believes creativity provides a competitive advantage to unlock greater shareholder value.’ In 2012, Coca-Cola generated record net operating revenues over \$48bn, and returned \$9.1bn to its shareholders.⁶¹ The case of *Coke Studio* embodies this view, and will demonstrate ‘the business case for creativity.’⁶²

‘Coca-Cola continues to champion the belief that music has the power to bring people closer and that Coke Studio specifically, continues to transcend ethnic, age and cultural barriers and to influence positive change’ (Khan, 2013).

Case Study: Coke Studio Pakistan

Cultural Leadership

In 2008, during a crisis point in Pakistan and the onset of the GFC, Coke’s brand promise, ‘to inspire moments of optimism and hope’ tapped into Pakistani sentiments through its corporate sponsorship of *Coke Studio*, which as a branded concept and strategic social investment—has exceeded all expectations. Although *Coke Studio* initially found its precedents in Brazil as a branded concept, since its premiere in 2008, the TV series has become synonymous with Pakistan, evolving into something of a cultural institution. Launching its sixth season in Pakistan at the time of writing, *Coke Studio* showcases a wealth of musical talent that resides across Pakistan’s diverse provinces. (Khan, 2008) declares, ‘Coke Studio prides itself on providing a platform that bridges barriers, celebrates diversity, encourages unity and instills a sense of Pakistani pride.’⁶³ The series, which features live closed studio-recorded music performances by various artists, airs constantly across multiple media platforms in multiple languages and regional dialects across Pakistan, celebrating the country’s rich musical diversity—fusing regionally inspired eastern traditional folk music with contemporary western influences.

Forbes (India) remarked that the development of *Coke Studio* had been ‘Pakistan at its finest,’ crediting its trans-border popularity having ‘breathed new life into the rich musical tapestry of the subcontinent.’⁶⁴ (Ross, 2009) notes that initially, something about the Coca-Cola brand charter ‘struck a chord’ with local Pakistani producer Rohail Hyatt, when he was scouted to tailor a proposal for *Coke Studio* reflecting Coca-Cola’s brand values.⁶⁵ (Hyatt, 2011) a career musician and founder of Pakistan’s first leading pop band, *Vital Signs*, described to *Rolling Stone*, ‘I was on this spiritual trip, and suddenly here was a brand talking about sharing happiness, increasing connectivity, avoiding idolism, inclusiveness not exclusiveness...how does a corporation hold all these spiritual values?’

Early statistical insights available by (Wall St. Journal cited in Merchant and Tahir, 2011a) reviewed *Coke Studio*’s marketing campaign as developing one of the largest Pakistani *Facebook* pages, currently with 2.6 million fans; becoming the fourth most popular *YouTube* music channel in the world; and with over 30,000 members, one of the largest Pakistani *Twitter* groups. (Merchant and Tahir, 2011b) praise Coke’s stand out investment in *Marketing*

innovation in the Beverage Industry, observing:

Innovation in marketing has helped Coca-Cola make a resounding impact in its local market, by tapping into peoples' desire for something different and exciting, to strengthen its brand image and promote its corporate philosophy.⁶⁶

The *Coke Studio effect* is also observed by (Baloch, 2010) who reported in July 2010, Coca-Cola claimed 35 per cent of all cola sales in Pakistan, whereas rival PepsiCo's market share declined 65 percent from a dominant 80 percent in the 1990s, bolstered by its sponsorship of cricket.⁶⁷ In 2012, Coca-Cola Pakistan earned over PKRs50 billion in revenues with volume growth of 23 per cent and its brand equity has been recently estimated in the vicinity of \$70.5 billion, remaining the world's number one brand for 11 consecutive years on *Interbrand's* annual rankings until 2013 (MAP, 2011) and surpassed only by *Apple*.

An emerging appreciation of Pakistani culture attests to a shift in social attitudes by (Ahsan, 2013) who also found recently, '25 percent of all Google searches in India were about "Coke Studio Pakistan."' 26 year-old Pakistani Musician, Bilal Khan, who features in the series, credits *Coke Studio* not only with launching his music career, but also with reshaping popular culture in Pakistan and promoting a positive image of the country to the world.⁶⁸ 'What Coke Studio has done is given us something to be proud of when we talk about Pakistan,' Khan conveyed. 'It gives people hope in times when there is so much despair.'⁶⁹ Similarly, (Zmuda, 2011) honed in on shared sentiments amongst Pakistan's youth noting, 'Coke Studio shines a spotlight on a country that is all too used to being synonymous with terrorism.'⁷⁰ In 2013, *Coke Studio* musicians, Meesha Shafi, Fareed Ayaz and Abu Muhammad were cast in acclaimed Indian director producer, Mira Nair's screenplay *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2013) adapted from acclaimed Pakistani author, Mohsin Hamid's best-selling novel. In the spirit of cultural diplomacy, Nair established a culture of inclusion, to stimulate a dialogue borne of her observation that 'Pakistani culture is absent in the eyes of the world' (Nair, 2013). Hyatt reinforced this insight, proclaiming, 'there's very little positive news coming out about us, especially in the Western media... Coke Studio represents a great, softer image of Pakistan that's going out there and people are happy about it ... we're hungry for it.'⁷¹

'Hope takes many small forms. One of them is Coke Studio.'

Mohsin Hamid, Novelist (2013)

Conclusion

The Pride of Self Discovery

(Seward, 2013) pledged Coca-Cola's investments, 'will further establish our position as a Company which truly believes in Pakistan's potential.'⁷² Considering that Pakistan is one of the most water stressed countries in the world, Coke pledges to return an amount of water equivalent to what is used in their products and production by 2020, living up to C.K Prahalad's vision and *Award for Global Sustainability Leadership*, which 'exemplifies the fundamental connection between sustainability, innovation and long-term business success in a globalizing world.' (Mildenhall, 2013) cites Coke's so-called '2020 vision' declaring, 'the powerful position of the Coca-Cola Company, offers us both the opportunity and responsibility to create significant change in the world.'⁷³ For the wider business sector to 're-imagine their role as agents of change' (Prahalad and Hart, 2002) urged,

This is the time for MNCs to look at globalization strategies through a new lens of inclusive capitalism...for companies with the resources and persistence to invest at the base of the pyramid besides growth and profits the prospective rewards include incalculable contributions to human kind.⁷⁴

Exploring this convergence of leadership, business and peace, the observations presented in this case study sought to briefly evaluate Coke's commitment to the UN Global Compact in the area of strategic social investment. Ultimately, the Compact works towards the vision of a sustainable and inclusive global economy, striving to balance global reach with *local* contextualization of its ten principles (UNGC, 2006). Coke's voluntary participation in the Compact, and brand promise to its customers 'to inspire moments of optimism and happiness,' can be gauged, in part, by industry recognition in the areas of innovation, creativity and global sustainability under the leadership of Muhtar Kent. Coke and other UNGC participants' participatory progress can be analyzed further in detail, in the UNGC's ongoing and compulsory public 'Communication on Progress' (COP) Reports.⁷⁵

As the Marketing Association of Pakistan asserted, 'with sustained commitment by Coca-Cola combined with artistic independence Coke Studio stands as one of the biggest marketing successes ever observed in Pakistan in any industry' (MAP, 2011). Having observed Coke Studio's evolution since its inception in 2008, there is found to be an overwhelming consensus and evidence to support this claim both empirically and statistically to date. As an example of cultural leadership *par excellence*, *Coke Studio* demonstrates how The Coca-Cola Company places emphasis on engaging consumers and partnerships with cultural

sensitivity—in order to build trust, respect, and implement best practices within the communities it operates. The case study sought further, to consider the wider implications of strengthening the attitudes, structures and institutions that lead to greater social and economic resilience, that when strengthened, lead to a condition of ‘positive peace,’ a condition that necessitates prosperity, as consistently substantiated by the *Global Peace Index*.

Maintaining the *Coke Studio* effect, through deeper engagement and investment in Pakistan particularly via ‘business for peace’, can contribute to sustainable peace and development. Sharing best practices developed in Pakistan, *Coke Studio* continues to inspire a growing international franchise, successfully localized in India, Africa, and the Middle East to date. As more quantitative findings on the socio-economic impact emerge, a limited edition commemorative coffee table book, *Coke Studio – Sound of the Nation*, published in August documents ‘a vibrant visual journey that charts the cultural, social and emotional impact of a music platform that has regaled Pakistani and international audiences for over five years.’ In conclusion, the unprecedented impact of *Coke Studio* is best summed up by executive producer, Rohail Hyatt, who ruminates, ‘the obvious reason for Coke Studio’s success is the pride of self-discovery.’⁷⁶

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- Jonathan Mildenhall is the VP Global of Advertising Strategy and Content Excellence, The Coca-Cola Company
- ⁵⁸ See Riaz, S and Rowe, W.G (2008) *Strategic Leadership at Coca-Cola: The Real Thing*, Ivey Publishing, USA, 16 October 2008, pp. 3-5, Online at, http://hbr.org/product/a/an/908M40-PDF-ENG?cm_sp=doi_-_case_-_908M40-PDF-ENG&referral=00103
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- Criterion 28: The COP provides information on social investments and philanthropic contributions that tie in with the core competencies or operating context of the company as an integrated part of its sustainability strategy; and as stated in Criterion 30: The COP describes due regard for local customs, traditions, religions, and priorities of pertinent individuals and groups.
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