A Q&A with 2017 Summit Keynote: Derreck Kayongo

CAN YOU TELL THE SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT AUDIENCE A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND?

Derreck Kayongo was born in Kampala, Uganda just before General Idi Amin Dada seized power in a military coup, and established a regime known for its brutality. As violence spread through the country and civil war erupted, Mr. Kayongo and his family fled to Kenya and became refugees. He later immigrated to America to attend university. Though most well known as a 2011 CNN Hero and founder of the Global Soap Project, Mr. Kayongo is a renowned expert in environmental sustainability and global health, as well as the current CEO of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2016 the Georgia State Senate passed a resolution recognizing Mr. Kayongo's incredible journey from refugee to CEO.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL SOAP PROJECT AND HOW DOES IT HELP TO NOT ONLY REDUCE WASTE BUT SAVE LIVES?

The Global Soap Project is an NGO that takes partially used bars of soap and recycles them into brand new soap which is then distributed to 90 countries around the world to humanitarian and natural disaster victims. There are two million kids that die every year due to lower respiratory diseases, and this project helps mitigate that by providing soap to kids at schools, refugee camps and the like. We also use the soap to fight Child Bed Fever by helping midwives wash their hands before delivering a child.

HOW DO YOU THINK HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABILITY ARE TIED TOGETHER? HOW CAN THE TWO ISSUES SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER?

The right to health is key to human survival and is a key right under the United Nations Articles of the UDHR. Part of that human right has a lot to do with creating a milieu that creates balance in the ecology of our environment. So throwing away soap is unsustainable and this goes to the pollution issue which affects other aspects of our human experience and existence.

WHAT MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION ACHIEVED? WHAT GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR 2017?

We have given away over 10 million bars of soap in the last six years. We are affecting health in a positive way in poor countries like Malawi where we have reduced infection rates by as much as 30% from 90%. My goal in 2017 is to start another recycling project around food waste in America.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

The Global Sustainability Summit is the only event this year designed with the specific needs of the food retail and consumer products industry in mind. It is the one conference you will attend that will focus on the interconnected issues impacting retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers.

The Summit is designed BY the food and CPG industry FOR the food and CPG industry. Each element of the Summit will represent a deep dive into the serious issues impacting sustainability, offering real-life solutions to the important challenges as companies face an uncertain future.

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