

BY SIMON OKITELA

After emerging overall national winners of the Company of the Year (COY) competition 2025, Aga Khan High School now stands a chance to bag a \$3,000 prize as the Africa Company of the Year Competition winners in Nigeria. The group represents Renewablock Company, which aims to provide housing solutions to every Ugandan, regardless of their income status, through recycling plastic waste into durable bricks and pavements.

They also seek to turn captured toxic gases throughout the melting process of plastics, which are reacted with a chemical to produce a raw material for plant fertilisers.

The students, four in number, were flagged off by Absa Bank Uganda on Monday, in partnership with Junior Achievement (JA) Uganda, ahead of their trip to

High School Innovators Competition: Aga Khan to compete in Nigeria

Abuja, Nigeria.

This year's continental competition, which is themed *ACT! Action for Climate Transformation* challenges young innovators to develop AI-driven, sustainable solutions addressing environmental and societal challenges.

Speaking during the flag-off ceremony held at Absa Bank headquarters, Helen Basuuta Nangonzi, the marketing and customer experience director, underscored the programme's significance for the country's youth.

"Uganda is a youthful nation with tremendous potential. The Company of the Year competition equips young people with essential financial and entrepreneurial skills, enabling them

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The JA Company Programme is the flagship programme of Junior Achievement. The model helps young people aged 13-18 appreciate and better understand the role of business in our society.

With the support and guidance of volunteers from the local business community, JA Company Programme provides basic economic education for high school students.

It unlocks the innate ability in high school students to fill a need or solve a problem in their community by launching a business venture and unleashing their entrepreneurial spirit.

to actively contribute to economic growth. At Absa, we pride ourselves on supporting impactful initiatives that align with our commitment to empowering the next generation of financially competent and entrepreneurial leaders,"

Nangozi stated.

She also spoke about how this partnership supports Absa's commitment to promoting financial inclusion and building a more resilient, knowledge-driven Ugandan economy by empowering young people to make

responsible and innovative choices.

Rachael Mwangale, the executive director of JA Uganda, who was represented by Geoffrey Wakhakuny, the programmes manager at JA, highlighted the profound impact of the partnership, explaining how Absa's continued support is empowering young people to pursue their dreams.

"This continental competition provides immense learning exposure, fostering entrepreneurship, leadership and problem-solving skills within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). We remain committed to equipping these change-makers with the skills and knowledge they

need to thrive in the 21st century," Mwangale noted. John Arinaitwe, a student representative from Aga Khan High School, expressed the team's readiness to compete at the next stage, stating that they intend to scale up once they complete school.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL COMPETITION

Aga Khan High School emerged as national champions in the September 25 competition out of 45 participating schools, with their innovative venture, "Renewablock," a solution which converts plastic waste into durable building materials. They are the 15th cohort to represent Uganda.

Cresta International Christian School took first runner-up position with an air-powered wristband that monitors air pollutants. The Ugandan national finals featured eight schools, showcasing diverse student enterprises.