

Africa's top high school entrepreneurs go head-to-head in Nigeria

The 12th Annual JA Africa Company of the Year (COY) Competition, Africa's largest high school entrepreneurship challenge, will take place from 7-9 December in Lagos, Nigeria under the theme, "Fueling Changemakers." This will be the first in-person event in two years, after pandemic restrictions confined it to a virtual format.

COY is JA Africa's annual celebration of winning teams from the JA Company Programme, a programme which equips senior secondary school level students with the entrepreneurial skillset and mindset to solve problems in their communities by launching a business venture and unleashing their entrepreneurial spirit. The young entrepreneurs who compete at the JA Africa's COY go through qualifying competitions at national and sub-national levels, competing against thousands of youth startups to qualify for the regional competition. This programme transitions them into employment and transforms them into employers. Having emerged as national winners, they will represent their countries on the continental stage where they have the arduous task to impress a panel of international business professionals who serve as judges.

This year, nine student startups representing Eswatini, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe will put their business acumen to the test as they present the achievements of their businesses in numerous formats in order to win the prestigious title of JA Company of the Year and other prizes from the sponsors. The highest among the prizes at stake will be the opportunity to represent the Africa region at the Ralph de la Vega Global Entrepreneurship Competition which will bring together COY winners from the six regions where JA Worldwide operates to compete for awards, \$15,000, educational opportunities, and more.

"Given the increasingly complex set of global challenges facing young people around the world from unemployment to climate change and food shortage, we focus on equipping our students to be solution providers who bring about positive change within their communities while developing businesses that generate wealth," said Simi Nwogugu, JA Africa's CEO. "Our students have demonstrated great resilience and innovation in grappling with these challenges and I am extremely proud of all of them. I am also deeply grateful to all our sponsors who stayed with us throughout the pandemic period and contributed greatly towards making this a live event again."

For more information, visit: <https://ja-africa.org/coy2022/>