



Yaba Green Challenge

Promising Practice

Implemented by: Yaba College of Technology (YCT)

Where: Nigeria

Status: Held from 4 to 26 October 2022

Summary: The Yaba Green Challenge initiative provided an opportunity for industry and academia to come together and share knowledge and best practices on circular economy, waste to wealth initiatives, entrepreneurship opportunities, sustainable consumption, as well as waste management.

Overview

Yaba College of Technology (YCT) is a public TVET institution with eight Faculties (schools) and seven Academic Units running over

50 TVET courses and programmes

in Engineering, Fashion Design, Building Technology, Survey and Geo-informatics, Environmental Studies, etc. It has been in existence since 1947 and caters for over

20,000 students

with a **staff complement of 1,900**.

Description

Showcasing innovative solutions

The Yaba Green Challenge was an initiative of Dangote Cement, a Nigerian company, as part of their sustainability week. The company partnered with YCT to design and host the initiative, which showcased students' innovative solutions related to circular economy, sustainable consumption and waste management. Successful projects were awarded prizes and some of the most sustainable and innovative projects included:

- Aluminum pull tab and crochet technique for wearable art;
- Mixed media painting;
- Use of plastic waste to produce cheaper and better paving blocks/stones;
- Animal feed from water hyacinth; and
- Metal scraps for beautiful artworks.

Planning process

Yaba College of Technology, a UNEVOC Centre, in collaboration with the School of Environmental Studies, published a call for the green initiative on circular economy, to which forty-seven students across various disciplines responded and applied. A campus-wide sensitization programme on circular economy and waste management was organized, and this was followed by an evaluation of the applications and a selection process which identified the participants of the Yaba Green Challenge.

The planning process included:

- Meeting with the stakeholders;
- Awareness and sensitization of circular economy (radio and physical programme);
- Call for studies and research on circular economy;
- Collation and selection of submitted entries on circular economy;
- Green Challenge contest and knowledge sharing by stakeholders;
- Scoring of projects by experts; and
- Selection of outstanding projects for follow up by industry.

Involvement of various stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in the initiative were Dangote Cement, YCT School of Environmental Studies, students and the YCT community.

Objectives

The objectives of the Yaba Green Challenge, which targeted industry, students and the YCT community, were to:

- Promote sustainable living among students;
- Bridge the innovation gap between industry and academia;
- Initiate innovation on the concept of circular economy, resource conservation and preservation;
- Enhance the principles and practices of circularity at the college; and
- Demonstrate the entrepreneurial opportunities in waste management.

Addressing issues of national importance by promoting sustainability

The initiative addresses issues of national importance, such as:

- Waste management;
- Sustainable consumption;
- Increasing costs of production materials; and
- Unemployment, especially among young people.



Yaba Green Challenge

The Yaba Green Challenge is innovative as it:

- Provides alternative solutions to waste production, accumulation and management by reducing, reusing and recycling;
- Contributes to sustaining the “Value Hill” of production and use of resources by sustaining the life cycles of products in circulation, thereby enhancing optimal utilization and conservation of natural resources from over exploitation.
- Provides economic benefits through wealth creation from waste; and
- Encourages partnerships with industry which create employment opportunities.

Outcomes and impact

The initiative saw the participation of 136 students, 25 teaching staff, 15 non-teaching staff and 35 representatives of industry.

The outcomes of this initiative are:

- Enabling knowledge exchange between the industry and academics on waste management;
- Developing innovative products from waste material;
- Creating awareness on sustainable solutions through waste sorting, reducing, reusing, redesigning, recycling and refurbishing;
- Promoting direct and indirect green jobs such as collecting and selling used plastic bottles and cans; and
- Recommending art works for exhibitions and sales.

The highlights of the impact of the initiative are:

- Opportunities for new collaborations with companies in the private sector;
- Additional support for selected research projects, such as applying for patents and providing market opportunities for projects; and
- Further partnership opportunities for other research work.

Challenges

Matching the availability of academia and industry

Since the initiative involved the participation of academia and industry, one of the challenges faced was the reality that both parties were busy and had conflicting schedules. The college addressed this challenge by making use of technology to organize hybrid meetings with stakeholders.

Publicizing the call for applications

Another challenge was the short timeline for the call for studies and research on circular economy. Social media was used to publicize the call for applications in order to reach more students in a short time span.

Selecting the best student projects

A final challenge was related to the collation and selection criteria of outstanding research work from entries. The process was facilitated by developing rubrics. These proved to be useful to assess the students' projects and to select the best ones.

Insights

The initiative provided participants of the Yaba Green Challenge with a unique opportunity to enhance theory and practice in greening. Students were encouraged to think creatively and develop sustainable solutions that address real world problems. They were motivated by the relevance of the problems to industry and society, as well as by the innovative approaches to provide sustainable solutions.

Next steps

Following the success of the Yaba Green Challenge, the college plans to:

- Make the Yaba Green Challenge an annual event and extend it to other institutions and industries; and
- Work on additional calls for research on innovative green initiatives.

Learn more

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To learn more about Yaba College of Technology, visit: <https://www.yabatech.edu.ng>

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