

# Stanbic's school competition signals a broader bet on youth-led growth

**O**n May 11, Gayaza High School became the focal point of a growing national effort to reimagine Uganda's classrooms as incubators of enterprise, as students from 200 schools across the country gathered for the boot camp stage of the Stanbic National Schools Championships.

The 11th edition of the competition, sponsored by Stanbic Bank Uganda, was held under the theme "Powering Innovation for Job Creation", with the 2026 tagline "Flex your Genius". Organisers describe the initiative as one of the country's leading youth innovation platforms, combining entrepreneurship training with competitive pitching.

This year's participants competed for a share of Shs150 million in prize money, alongside an all-expenses-paid trip to South Africa for top-performing teams and alumni innovators.

The five-day boot camp brought together students and teachers for intensive training in entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. Sessions covered business modelling, pitching, marketing, sales, packaging and branding, as well as personal finance and psychosocial wellbeing.

For many participants, the programme proved to be as much about exposure and learning as it was about competition.

"I expect to gain financial insight into building startups," said Nansubuga Linda, a teacher at Kololo Senior Secondary School. "I recently started a business, though it collapsed. But in business you expect losses and profits,



Students during a session at the Boot Camp

and you learn again. I want to merge teaching and entrepreneurship."

Others focused on networking and refining their ideas through structured mentorship and peer learning.

"I expect to make friends, thrive in areas like the business model canvas and pitching, and go all the way to the grand finale," said Onan Saverio-

Louis Cornelio, a student at Kabojja International School.

The competition is structured into two categories: the Student Spark Challenge for school-based innovations, and the Business Fellowship, which targets alumni, teachers and past participants seeking to scale or refine existing

ventures.

Participants said the boot camp provided a rare opportunity to test ideas in a structured environment and learn from peers across the country.

"I expect to network with other students interested in business and entrepreneurship, and broaden my horizon – to learn, re-learn and

unlearn," said Gabriella Atuhaire Kusiima of Aga Khan High School Kampala.

Stanbic Bank Uganda said the programme is designed to shift mindsets among learners aged 13 to 18, encouraging them to view entrepreneurship as a viable response to unemployment and broader social challenges.

"The boot camp is aimed at mindset change among learners," said Diana Ondoga, Corporate Social Investment Manager at Stanbic Bank Uganda. "It seeks to extract what exists in these learners and get them ready to be part of solutions to challenges in society."

She added that the initiative complements Uganda's evolving education curriculum, which has increasingly emphasised practical skills and innovation.

As Stanbic Bank Uganda marks 35 years of operations, the bank says the schools championship remains a central pillar of its Positive Impact Agenda, focused on innovation-driven job creation.

Over the past decade, the programme has reached more than 600,000 students, teachers and community members, generating more than 600 business ideas annually and helping to catalyse over 200 new businesses across various sectors.