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TECH

This waste management startup received \$227,000 to scale in Ni



Published 5 days ago on March 21, 2019

By



The [King Baudouin Foundation](#) awards the African Development Prize to [Wecycle](#) based waste management start-up. The Prize will allow Wecyclers to develop further business and increase their impact at national and international levels.

By 2100, Africa will hold 5 out of the 10 biggest cities in the world, and Lagos could be the biggest city in the world. Today, Lagos residents generate 15,000 tons of waste per day, of which only 40% is collected by the municipal government. Wecyclers' model is designed to help fill this gap and reduce solid waste in the streets of Lagos, improving both the environment and the well-being of populations.

The organisation utilises low and high technology solutions that comprise SMS text messages and a mobile application, as well as low-cost collection vehicles, which collect recyclable waste directly from households to sell to recycling plants before being made into new products.

“We are proud to recognise Wecyclers for their very effective model,” said Hervé L. de laet, CEO of the King Baudouin Foundation. “The independent Selection committee selected Wecyclers out of 244 applications for its innovative approach to engaging the community, turning recycling into an economic driver for communities and turning citizens into agents of change.”

The company has also been selected for its economic impact. By rewarding citizens with “points,” it allows low-income communities to capture value from their waste. Today, Wecyclers already benefits from the engagement of more than 17,000 subscribers in Lagos. It registers around 200 new members each month. The Nigerian start-up has created 200 jobs in 7 years, with a focus on women, who currently account for 60% of the workforce.

“Giving back to the community is in the DNA of Wecyclers. We want to expand our impact to other neighbourhoods. In the midterm, we want to be big enough to build our own recycling plant. Growing more for Wecyclers, means being able to give back even more to the community,” said Olawale Adebisi, CEO of Wecyclers.

From the beginning, Wecyclers could count on the support of key partners such as the Elumelu Foundation. Recently, Wecyclers have also partnered with major corporations like Unilever, to launch “kiosks” in places where there are no collection routes.

Through its financial support of €200,000, (227,361) the African Development Prize has enabled Wecyclers to upscale their model and increase their footprint, with plans to expand to other Nigerian cities and neighbouring countries. The Prize also provides access to a network of stakeholders in Europe and the US, who may support them as they grow. According to current growth projections, Wecyclers aim to collect 5,000 tons of recyclables by 2023 and could be serving 500,000 households by 2023.

Since Wecyclers launched its initiative, awareness around the issue has risen among the general public, spurring several other companies to develop new solutions to recycle.

“We have seen the impressive contribution of Wecyclers over the years. Their successful solution is changing the perception of waste management in the state. As the primary agency, we are particularly happy about the expansion of Wecyclers through innovative partnerships which will help them reach new locations and help drive the Lagos State Government’s waste management aspirations. I’m without doubt that this award is a big way in its ongoing expansion to new localities,” said Ola Oresnaya, CEO, Lagos State Waste Management Authority.

The award ceremony in the presence of King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium at the Royal Palace in Brussels, Belgium, will take place June 12, 2019.

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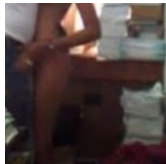
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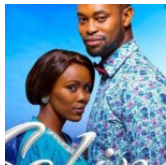
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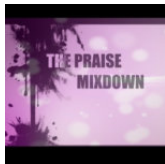
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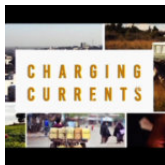
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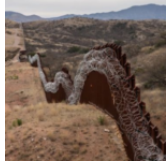
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