Summary
Propelling Africa’s scientific community onto the global stage, the inaugural 2016 Next Einstein Forum Global Gathering (GG2016) inspired varied and important media coverage as it assembled leading African and global scientists, policy-makers, business people, journalists, civil society representatives and entrepreneurs to Dakar, Senegal on March 8-10, 2016.

Using a deliberate strategy that included lead up and post-event traction, the NEF communications team working with the Thatcher and Company media agency, yielded a successful media output for AIMS and the NEF, NEF partners and for Africa’s scientific renaissance. Notable milestones include:

- Confirmed the attendance of 120 journalists on site
- Achieved global media penetration – distinct cross-continental top-tier coverage in North America, Asia, Europe, and Africa in English, French, German, Chinese, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, and Arabic
- Powerful, engaging content on panels and plenaries; positive feedback from attendees
- Front-page and in-depth coverage – secured 250 distinct media placements and counting; Inspired 700+ pickups and repeat coverage
- Drove outstanding message pull-through in coverage – strategic NEF messaging shone through, making a powerful case of science-led development on the continent
- 2+ billion estimated global reach across digital/ print outlets
**Strategy**
The NEF worked to build anticipation for the NEF Global Gathering by engaging global political, business and scientific press at the highest levels. The executed media strategy included:

- Pre-briefings and interviews with NEF Spokespersons and Fellows, leveraging their stories and achievements to create a receptive media environment in anticipation of the NEF Global Gathering 2016. Story angles designed to create awareness of and interest in STEM research and innovation from Africa among the international scientific community, international political/economic influencers and digital influencers including:
  - NEF Leadership in the media before the GG2016
    - Thierry Zomahoun, Neil Turok and Philip Clay commenting on the role of STEM in Africa's development and the need for the investment in research and development
  - NEF Fellows expert commentary on
    - Vaccine development - Zika virus, malaria
    - Hypertension - salt intake studies
    - Technology for development – big data and cybersecurity
    - Cosmology – discovery of gravitational waves
  - Women in STEM changing the face of Africa leading up to International Women's Day
  - Positioning Africa as science’s next frontier
  - Data sciences and STEM as effective development drivers in Africa

- Twitter chats hosted by influential Africa-focused media with NEF Fellows and incubator networks

- Pursued paid media opportunities with Le Monde, Financial Times and SciDevNet to amplify earned media results

**Results**
Ensuing coverage took significant strides in amplying African scientists voice, particularly the NEF Fellows. A consistent message about the NEF was delivered by NEF spokespersons. On the digital side, the NEF increased its social media presence through interesting NEF digital content.

In addition, media attendance at the GG2016 was significant with 120 members, including 61 local reporters, and 70 regional/global Pan African reporters, of the press on-site over the three-day period. Some of the top media attendance included the following:

- Malick Ba, AFP
- Nicolas Haque, Al Jazeera
- Eliza Anyangwe, CNN Int’l
- Carley Petesch, AP
- Julian Siddle, BBC World News
- Marie Caroline Lachowsky, Radio France Internationale
- Colin Baker, Economist/Bloomberg
- Amadou Oury Diallo, Jeune Afrique
- Matthieu Millecamps, TV5 Monde
- Cyrille Vanlerberghe, Le Figaro
- Serge Michel, Le Monde
- Nick Perkins, SciDev.Net
- Edourad Toure, APA News
- Reed Kramer, AllAfrica
- Dominique Leglu, Sciences Et Avenir
- Christophe Link, Stuttgart Zeitung
- Claudia Wolf, Bild Der Wissenschaft
- Natasha C. Joseph, The Conversation

Key media highlights include:

- Will the Next Einstein Come From Africa? BBC News “Discovery”
- Africa’s Elite, Nature
- A new forum hopes to bring Africa’s scientific researchers together, The Economist
- Einstein forum aims to stem Africa brain drain, Al Jazeera
- The Next Einstein Forum begins TED Blog
- Next Einstein Forum : la science africaine se réveille, Le Monde
- L’Afrique est à la recherche du “prochain Einstien”, Sciences et Avenir
- Six Africaines qui font avancer la science, Jeune Afrique
- Et si le prochain Einstein était africain? Le Figaro
- L’Afrique veut garder sa matiere grise L’Humanite
- Start-Up für den Kontinent Die Zeit
- New research and exchange initiatives to boost science University World News
- Meet 15 of Africa’s most brilliant young scientists – one of them could be the next Einstein Mail and Guardian
- Interview with an African genius: why the next Einstein will come from Africa, the surprising countries leading the way and what’s holding us back Mail and Guardian
- Africa’s slow journey to becoming a global science hub The Daily Nation (Kenya)
- Could one of these young African women scientists be the next Einstein? The Daily Nation (Kenya)
Social media efforts included Twitter chats fueled increased participation leading up to and during NEF GG2016. Newly generated hashtags #NEF2016, #AfricasEinsteins and #IfEinsteinwasAfrican resonated with multiple audiences, engaging and motivating academic and online communities while fueling attendance and participation in NEF GG2016.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA: FULL COURT PRESS

Between February through 8 April, press coverage spotlighting the Next Einstein Forum reached a global audience of 2 billion unique visitors. A combined total of 255 unique digital/print articles ran in global media outlets between February and March 2016. Between February through March 12, upwards of 47 clips aired on both radio and television stations, including features on CCTV America, Al Jazeera and BBC News Radio outlets reaching audiences overseas and in the U.S.

- 11+ unique BBC World Service TV and radio clips including, Focus on Africa, Newsday and BBC Upfront; and BBC Discovery documentary
- 27 clips re-aired on U.S. radio stations stemming from BBC clips
- 16 clips aired including coverage on Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera America, CCTV America and Voice of America
- AFPTV global dissemination

Pre-Event Coverage
In February, leading up to the inaugural event in Dakar, 20 digital/print articles ran in top media outlets in Canada, France, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, U.S. and the U.K., reaching a combined global audience of 90+ million unique visitors.

Event Coverage
NEF MEDIA COVERAGE: March 2016

Media pickup/hits

(Source: Meltwater)

SOCIAL MEDIA: BUILDING ENGAGEMENT, EXPANDING THE AUDIENCE

In an effort to expand the Next Einstein Forum’s brand and increase its global online reach, the NEF social media team implemented a comprehensive social media engagement plan between February 11 through to March 30. From design to implementation, the month long strategy focused on driving more clicks to the newly created lamEinstein.org online 1Mill campaign and bringing compelling awareness on STEM in Africa from NEF spokespersons, NEF Fellows and leaders in academia and research.

During this time, three media-hosted Twitter chats were hosted by key influencers in media and STEM fields to discuss the various themes around the NEF initiative and to encourage investment in science on the African continent. Twitter chats provided visibility on partnered social networks; and topics and questions were thoughtfully crafted to engage a lively forum online. Moreover, a #IfEinsteinwasAfrican initiative was also implemented into the overall plan to drive interest on the topic in younger audiences, particularly in West Africa. Other hashtags included #NEF2016 and #AfricasEinstein.

As a result, NEF amplified its online voice and expanded its brand recognition earning a total of 2,378 (1518) Twitter followers, increasing its audience by 93%. During this period, Twitter impressions soared 488%, from 4,500 to 26,500, and retweets also increased substantially from 13 to 89.
Twitter Chat I & II: UpFront Africa - Voice Of America (VOA)

On February 18, VOA Upfront Africa host Jackson M’vunganyi led a Twitter chat on “Exploiting Africa’s Laboratory.” The chat explored opportunities to find African solutions to global problems. Incubators NEST Nairobi and Woelab Togo, and NEF Fellow Jackson Marakalala all participated.

Results from February 18

- Over 10k organic impression on tweet chat
- highest number of impressions for February/ second highest impressions were 4.5k on February 12th
- 78 Retweets /daily average=13 retweets
- 38 link clicks /daily average = 11 link clicks
- 11 replies/ daily average = 1 reply
- Gained 37 followers during promo and chat

For more information on the VOA chat, please see: English [http://bit.ly/1VgRQR7]; French, see: [http://bit.ly/1R1lgkm]

On February 25, VOA’s Jackson M’vunganyi continued to engage the online community building on the success from the first Twitter chat on, “#AfricasEinstein’s discuss #WomeninSTEM”. The chat explored the challenges and solutions surrounding the inclusion of #WomeninSTEM. Amanda Weltman, Tolu Oni, and Ghada Bassioni, NEF Fellows; Danielle Lee, blogger, Scientific American; and MEST Ghana, incubator all participated and provided thoughtful insight leading up to International Women’s Day.

Results from February 25

- Over 20k organic impression on tweet chat day highest number of impressions for February/ second highest impressions were 4.5k on February 12th
- 70 Retweets /daily average=15 retweets
- 6 link clicks /daily average = 11 link clicks
- 18 replies/ daily average = 2 replies
- For more information on the February 25 VOA chat, please see: [http://bit.ly/22ouE8R]

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1 Source: Twitter analytics
2 Ibid.
Twitter Chat III: BBC Africa

On March 7, BBC Africa hosted the final tweet chat on "Bringing Back #AfricasEinstein". The chat discussed ways to bring back talented scientists back to the African continent. Participation included Axel Ngonga, NEF Fellow; Makhtar Diop, vice president, World Bank Africa Region; Hephziab Angela Tagoe; Scientific founder; Jemila Abdulai, blogger; and My Africa Is.

Results from March 7

- Over 140k Organic impressions on March 7
- Gained 429 followers between promotion of event and March 8
- 98 link clicks earned
- 212 Retweets earned
- 31 Replies earned

For more information on the BBC Africa chat, please see: http://bit.ly/1RlSiF

#IfEinsteinwasAfrican Initiative

The #IfEinsteinwasAfrican initiative focused on driving further public interest leading up to the Global Gathering and build momentum for NEF’s IamEinstein.org campaign. Zikoko, an emerging “buzzfeed” modeled media outlet based in Nigeria, co-partnered with NEF for an editorial listicle piece. Editor-in-Chief Dami Odufuwa created a list on the topic, titled, "16 problems that would be solved if Einstein was African" which linked back to NEF’s campaign site. The editorial piece ran on Zikoko’s website during the event and was posted on the outlet’s Facebook and Twitter pages. On Facebook, 908 likes were earned and 31 people shared the post.

Between March 9 through March 14, the listicle reached 1.1 million people on Twitter and was a trending Twitter piece in Nigeria on March 9. The partnership also included a sponsored adverstorial on TechCabal the technology, internet and mobile focused sister site of Zikoko. The piece was a list stating five reasons to support #AfricasEinstein. This list was published on Tech Cabal on March 7th in anticipation of the Global Gathering and was picked up on select Africa-focused tech sites including PCTech and others. TechCabal is a go to resource for all thing Tech, helming from the African continent

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3 Ibid.
4 Source: Facebook analytics
LESSONS LEARNED

• **Getting a Head Start** – Beginning media outreach for GG2018 a year in advance will offer more opportunity to build deeper media relationships, develop story lines, plan for and link series across traditional and social media.

• **Statistics** – Media was clamoring for empirical data. Numbers and data points can be very effective means of illustrating a story. For GG2018, the NEF could pitch its own benchmarking study results under embargo and unveil the data at the Global Gathering, making a concrete case for NEF’s mandate.

• **The Value of Personal Stories** – The most in-depth coverage of fellows’ scientific research this year resulted NEF fellows stories. The NEF will continue to work with the Fellows and Ambassadors to share their personal pathway to professional endeavors as we lead up to the GG2018.

• **Content is King** – Videos, photos, infographics will feed traditional and social media coverage. Building on the first viral campaign, the NEF will continue to develop a suite of media-agnostic content leading up to GG2018.

• **Third-Party Validators** – Media interest in outside sources underlined the need to develop and execute a “third-party” comms strategy to further build mindshare for NEF and highlight the generous support of our partners.

• **Strategic Sponsorships** – Enhancing earned media coverage, strategic media partnerships and sponsorships paid dividend via online and print advertisements, advertorials and/or sponsored content – in particular engagement with *SciDev.net, Le Monde*, and *Financial Times*. Looking ahead, the NEF will explore and expand similarly effective strategic partnerships on an ongoing basis and in the lead up to NEF GG2018 as budget permits.

Immediate Follow Up Opportunities

• **BBC Africa Debates**: Producer Alice Muthengi has indicated interest in a future episode on Science/STEM in Africa.

• **BBC Focus on Africa**: Correspondent Anne Soy is interested in visiting South Africa to film a package on NEF Fellows Tolu Oni and Alta Shutte (SA) related to their work about heart health and obesity.

• **Forbes Africa**: Reporter Ancilar Mangena is working on an article on the health sector in Africa slated for May 2016. We are coordinating interviews with Seema Kumar, VP at Johnson&Johnson and Fellow Wilfred Ndifon.

• **CNN Marketplace Africa**: Stemming from our NEFGG2016 outreach, producer Earl Nurse is interested in touching base at NEF’s next news point.

• **France24: Eye on Africa** is interested in a fellow-centered follow up segment.
GOING FORWARD – WHAT NEXT

Thought-leader Opportunities: Develop, pitch and place expert commentary pieces from NEF Community of Scientists such as op-eds and contributed commentary on ongoing platform. Also, offer NEF leaders, Fellows and affiliated scientists as experts for breaking news commentary on relevant STEM and innovation-related topics of interest.

Continued Fellow Engagement: Expand opportunities to leverage NEF Fellows, spotlighting their individual areas of expertise as well as thematic topics such as women in STEM, a call to action for increased funding, etc. Also, build media campaigns around upcoming milestone events and initiatives such as the IBM Research Center visits, etc.

Innovation Challenge and Ambassadors: Beyond the Fellows, continue to feed the media’s appetite for innovative STEM-based African solutions by leveraging the Ambassadors to local/regional journalists and media covering the space.

Ambassador Activity: Build out a campaign for NEF’s ambassadors to engage them on an ongoing basis. Potential opportunities including launching an Africa Science Week in May in tandem with the South African Science Week, encouraging Ambassadors to host, organize and drive a series of initiatives to raise awareness in their specific countries.

World Economic Forum Africa/ Thought-Leadership Engagement: Explore opportunities to capitalize on NEF’s presence at the upcoming WEF Africa in Kigali as well as other high-level thought-leadership gatherings. This includes pitching media around the fellows, ambassadors and innovators leveraging on-the-ground media to secure briefings and media opportunities for NEF’s leadership and community of scientists.