

# Africa Storytelling Challenge— Notable Submissions: In Peace Nnabugwu's Words

*Committed to championing scientific innovations and advancements, Nnabugwu is affecting change in her community and throughout Africa—and this year's judges of the Africa Storytelling Challenge lauded these impressive efforts. Recognized as a runner-up in this year's contest, Nnabugwu shares her essay submission below.*

## **What are you working on?**

I am currently working on finishing our hub that will play host to a community of Scientists with innovative and commercially viable STEM project ideas. This is born out of the fact that many years back, I had no idea I could contribute anything to the nation with my background - assisting my parents in trading hot drinks and cigarettes by the roadside. Today, having trained as a Physicist (for which I was told I would end up teaching in secondary schools) and now a Renewable energy expert. I design renewable energy solutions as well as mini-grids to help individuals gain access to electricity for their businesses and homes ultimately contributing in solving part of the nation's prevailing energy problems. There is only one 'me' but with the 'Hub' there will be many other innovators with real time deployable solutions with focus on solving the nation's numerous problems as seen on [www.safafira.org](http://www.safafira.org).

## **Why is it important?**

This is extremely important as I think it is a viable way of not only meaningfully engaging our youths with work placement in their fields of endeavors but also a way of marketing science disciplines as profitable ventures so as to serve as a vehicle for encouragement to prospective students and undergraduates as well as graduates of STEM disciplines as it has been done in Theatre Arts, Music, Computer science even Comedy and Football that are not academic disciplines which now enjoy professional trainings and recognition. This will be a vehicle to create more jobs.

## **How will your work impact people and society?**

This I believe will have a ripple effect when more than one person is proffering scientific solutions for their immediate communities solving people's problems. Science will be better celebrated and endear more students who will not be biased to take any of the STEM disciplines as their first options rather than being compelled to pick them as supplementary courses which they never practice.

### **Who inspires and motivates you?**

Marie Curie with her simple belief and hypothesis contributed to a fundamental shift in scientific understanding in her time when sexism was a limitation, not only did she invent the x-ray van, she further trained a hundred and fifty (150) female attendants. This is my inspiration while my yesterday motivates me, as the first graduate, first female scientist from my family on a third degree, I long to see a ripple effect in low income homes who will produce renowned scientists in Nigeria and Africa in general.

### **Why do you think it is important to tell stories of science?**

It is said that a society gets what it celebrates. Africa has a lot happening for her but no one tells her true story, people tell our story from afar, foreigners have a wrong impression about us based on what they heard of us. Science and technology, they say is the bedrock of any national development but how can we have that when the young ones don't hear or speak good about science. Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, Google and other technology giants has created a whole new world for emerging, current and even non-computer scientists. I am overly excited at how the Johnson and Johnson Champions of Science Africa Story Telling Challenge (a first of its kind for science) will revolutionize the face of science for scientists and emerging scientists for which I am excited to contribute my story and earnestly hope to be part of it.

*The content and views presented here are those of the individual Challenge participant.*

### **About the Africa Storytelling Challenge**

The inaugural [Champions of Science—Africa Storytelling Challenge](#) took place between May and August 2018. Open to all scientists doing innovative work in Africa, the contest drew more than 100 submissions. An independent selection committee of scientists, policymakers and science journalists reviewed the applications and selected the winners. Each winner will be awarded \$5,000 and will have the opportunity to share their stories at the 2019 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual meeting in Washington, D.C.