



# MARIAN ASANTEWAH NKANSAH

*Africa*

Environmental chemistry

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Dr. Nkansah's research is focused on identifying and characterizing the presence of both inorganic and organic contaminants in water, food, soil, the atmosphere and other environmental matrices, as well as on developing strategies for environmental remediation. By preparing and analyzing samples from different environments, she can determine the levels present and effects of contaminants such as heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are generated by urbanization, industrial activities, artisanal activities and mining. It is important to Dr. Nkansah to also make the public aware about the risks of heavy metals, which she has found in unexpected places such as spices, lipstick, edible clay, and classroom dust.

Growing up as one of six children during an economically difficult period for Ghana, Dr. Nkansah from an early age had a desire to give back to society. After completing her bachelor's and master's degrees in Chemistry at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), she travelled to the University of Bergen-Norway to pursue a PhD in Environmental Chemistry, which she received in 2012. She then returned to KNUST where she worked as Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer before being promoted to Associate Professor in 2019, making her the youngest woman at the university to hold this position.

Besides her research, which has resulted in 33 peer-reviewed articles and books, as well as teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, Dr. Nkansah has undertaken training in science diplomacy and is involved in advocacy and initiatives of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences and of Women in STEM-Ghana. She mentors both school children and younger colleagues. Her many achievements have resulted in recognitions such as the TWAS F.M Al-Kharafi Prize in 2016, a feature in the first book on *Women in Science: Inspiring Stories from Africa*, and a slot on the commemorative Periodic Table of Younger Chemists, by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), in 2019.

“ *This award is a huge endorsement of my scientific and professional endeavors. It is definitely going to further increase my visibility and offer more opportunities for growth and impact of my causes, including research on environmental contamination, mentorship and outreach.* ”