

children's extramural and sporting activities. During her leisure time, she enjoys participating in Parkruns, playing netball, and indulging in creative pursuits such as crocheting and crafting hand-made necklaces.

Her commitment to nurturing the next generation of scientists extends beyond the classroom, as she engages with young

individuals to support their academic endeavours and future aspirations. Additionally, she is a dedicated Sunday school teacher, contributing to the spiritual growth of her community. Dr Keretse embodies the essence of leadership, balancing professional excellence with personal fulfilment and community engagement. [👉](#)

Liepollo Ntlhakana

Dr Liepollo Ntlhakana (PhD) is a senior lecturer and the Head of Department (Audiology) in the School of Human and Community Development (SHCD), Faculty of Humanities, at the University of the Witwatersrand. She teaches theory and clinical courses across all years of undergraduate study and supervises postgraduate and undergraduate research. Her professional career in audiology spans more than 20 years and covers the health, education, and private practice sectors. Dr Ntlhakana's contribution to occupational health started in 2002 when she worked as a locum audiologist for Transnet, where she conducted audiometry medical surveillance for workers. Her passion for primary prevention of occupational hearing loss strategies for workers stemmed from her firm belief that, although this type of hearing loss is prevalent in various industries, it is preventable. Over time, her interest evolved into research during her postgraduate studies. She subsequently obtained a master's degree in Audiology, followed by a PhD in Public Health in 2021. She focused on hearing conservation programmes (HCPs) and risk assessment for the prevention of occupational noise-induced hearing loss (ONIHL) in mineworkers.

In 2010, Dr Ntlhakana joined the Medical University of South Africa, now Sefako Makgatho University, where her strong teaching and learning foundation was formed and firmly framed. There, she lectured in a theory course in occupational audiology and was also a clinical supervisor for the course. In 2014, she joined the University of the Witwatersrand's Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology.

Dr Ntlhakana is a guest lecturer in the Wits School of Public Health, where she teaches MPH and MSc exposure science postgraduate students about audiometry and medical surveillance. Her extensive teaching experience, which focuses on the prevention of ONIHL, risk assessment strategies for ONIHL, and the application of frameworks for hearing conservation – in both her undergraduate and postgraduate studies – solidified her research niche, which is the epidemiology of ONIHL. In her research publications, she has integrated outcomes aligned with the World Health Organization's Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being. Dr Ntlhakana's publications, teaching, and clinical practice in audiometry and medical surveillance recently contributed to evidence-based knowledge and guidance for the South African mines' implementation of the revised NIHL Standards, specifically regarding how to integrate standard threshold shift (STS) calculations for the early identification of ONIHL. Since 2015, she has published more than 15 peer-reviewed journal papers and book chapters. Four of her publications were co-authored with students: three with undergraduate students and one with a postgraduate student.

Dr Ntlhakana's significant contribution to the audiology profession started when she signed up as a member of the South African Association of Audiologists (SAAA). She was nominated to serve



Dr Liepollo Ntlhakana

Photograph: courtesy of Dr Liepollo Ntlhakana

in various positions, including Chairperson of the occupational audiology portfolio, and member of the local organising committee for local and international conferences hosted by the Association (of significance being the 2018 World Congress of Audiology held in Cape Town). Later, she served as President Elect, President, and Past-President of the SAAA, between 2019 and 2023. She is currently a non-executive member of the SAAA, representing the Association at strategic stakeholder engagements, including the South African Bureau of Standards and Inter-Professional Rehabilitation Indaba.

Dr Ntlhakana has held leadership positions at various levels in the University of the Witwatersrand. In 2022, she was the Deputy Head and Acting Head of Department (Audiology). From 2022 to 2024, she was Chair of teaching and learning for the SHCD. Outside of the University, she serves in decision-making positions that foster growth and collaboration as an active member of the SAAA.

Dr Ntlhakana has received awards in teaching and learning, research, and academic citizenship, including:

- 2024: National Medical Awards: Healthcare Leadership Award for the profession of audiology in South Africa
- 2023: Grant by the Wits Writing Intensive (WWI) Board to redesign an undergraduate course and to collaborate with a writing fellow
- 2021: Best oral presentation and the 'VCCA Special Award' for

a paper delivered at the international Virtual Conference in Computation Audiology (VCCA) in the Netherlands: 'Examining the association of standard threshold shifts for occupational hearing loss among miners exposed to noise and platinum mine dust at a large-scale platinum mine in South Africa'

- 2014: Best oral presentation at a local conference in Cape Town, South Africa, for her master's degree thesis

Martha Chadyiwa

Martha Chadyiwa is an Associate Professor of Public Health at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. Her multifaceted career spans academia, research, and international collaborations in the fields of environmental and occupational health.

Prof. Chadyiwa blends academic excellence with strategic leadership in her role as an environmental and occupational health expert. Her academic qualifications include an MBA from Twente University (the Netherlands), a PhD in Public Health from the University of the Witwatersrand, and a BEd Honours in Education Leadership and Management from the University of Johannesburg. Her leadership portfolio includes serving as Head of the Department of Environmental Health at the University of Johannesburg (2012–2017), where she spearheaded the development of the Master of Public Health (MPH) curriculum and pioneered the innovative MPH chatbot (<https://uj-mph-chatbot.netlify.app/>).

Her international influence is evidenced by her impactful tenure as a member of the Universitas 21 (U21), which is a global network of research-intensive universities that collaborate to enhance international education and research. As Vice Chair of the U21 Sustainable Development Goals Committee (2019–2024), she led international initiatives to shape health policy and sustainable development. She is a member of several prestigious international organisations, including the Horizon Europe Framework Programme, the Athens Institute for Education and Research, and the USA National Environmental Health Association.

A researcher and author, Prof. Chadyiwa has published in high-impact journals and contributed book chapters to significant works in her field. She serves as an editorial board member and reviewer for several prestigious academic journals, including the *Journal of Economic and Social Development*, *Water Resources Management*, *Health SA Gesondheid*, *Archives of Community Medicine and Public Health*, the *Malaysian Journal of Medicine & Health Sciences*, the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, the *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, the *South African Medical Journal*, and *Occupational Health Southern Africa*.

As a principal investigator, she has secured research funding from organisations such as the South African Medical Research Council and the University of Johannesburg's Global Excellence and Stature 4.0 for Societal Impact Initiative.

Her scholarly excellence has been recognised in the many accolades she has received. She was named among South Africa's Inspiring Fifty women in STEM (2021), received the Black Women

Dr Ntlhakana's scholarship of teaching, research, and academic service contributions highlight her experience in occupational audiology and medical surveillance. Her collaborative work continues to show the importance of preventing occupational hearing loss for workers in various industries in South Africa. [📍](#)



Prof. Martha Chadyiwa

Photograph: courtesy of Prof. Martha Chadyiwa

in Science Fellowship (2025), and was a recipient of the Olympus International Awards South Africa (OIASA2025), and of the University of Johannesburg's Special Recognition Award (2023).

As a dedicated mentor, Prof. Chadyiwa has supervised more than 30 master's students' research to completion. Her mentorship extends to creating pathways for the next generation of public health professionals. She is equally committed to community engagement, having developed and implemented numerous intervention programmes to address public health challenges in South African communities. Her work in community-based research has contributed significantly to environmental and occupational health issues in underserved populations.

With expertise spanning environmental impact assessment, occupational health and safety, and public health leadership, Prof. Chadyiwa continues to drive innovation in health education, through integrating technology solutions and developing frameworks for sustainable health outcomes in resource-challenged environments. Her career embodies a commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and community service, making her a transformative leader in public health education and practice across southern Africa. [📍](#)