

YANNA LAMBRINIDOU, PhD
Science and Technology in Society
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Biographical Statement

Yanna Lambrinidou, PhD is affiliate faculty in Science and Technology in Society at Virginia Tech and founder of the non-profit children's environmental health organization Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives. As a resident of Washington DC, Yanna experienced first-hand the District's lead-in-water crisis of 2001-2004. Since 2007, she has conducted extensive investigative, ethnographic, and public policy research on lead in drinking water nationally, including lead in water in US schools.

Her educational blog about the DC lead-in-water crisis of 2001-2004 played a catalytic role in making the science of lead in water, and problems with flawed government-sponsored research, accessible to affected and concerned communities. It also triggered the systemic changes that eventually took place in the leadership and culture of the Washington DC water utility.

Yanna's research on the federal Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) – the regulation that was passed in 1991 to protect consumers from lead and copper in drinking water – highlights regulatory holes and loopholes that may compromise the Rule's ability to provide the public health protection it intends. In 2014-2015, Yanna served on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) LCR work group, which was convened to issue recommendations for revisions to the LCR. Through work she conducted under a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) grant, she brought community voices about deficiencies in the LCR into the work group's deliberations. Her participation resulted in the group's sole dissenting opinion. On February 10, 2016, Yanna is scheduled to testify about the LCR at the Steering and Policy Committee Hearing of the US Congress.

As a member of the 2009-2011 Education and Communication workgroup of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures, Yanna spearheaded the recommendation for bidirectional learning between government, industry, and affected communities, as well as civic empowerment and capacity building surrounding matters of environmental health.

Together with Virginia Tech environmental engineer Marc Edwards, PhD, Yanna co-founded the National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsored graduate class "Engineering Ethics and the Public." A main emphasis of the class, is the importance of listening to – and understanding the technical and moral relevance of – the knowledge, values, and experiences of the diverse communities that engineers and scientists work to serve.