Young Gifted and STEM Profile – Who Am I?

Adama Saccoh – UK

1. **Who are you and what is your STEM Superpower?**

My name is Adama Saccoh and I am training to be a clinical scientist. My STEM superpower is being able to understand what is going on in the heart through pictures and videos.

2. **When did you first realise you were passionate about your STEM subject or field?**

At about 9 years old I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. I immediately said a Doctor and ran with it. I loved looking at anatomy books, I just found the covers of all the books fascinating. I was an incredibly curious child, always asking why and as I grew older, I became even more obsessed with the human body and wanted to learn how it worked. But little did I know my pursuit to study medicine would be overthrown by my love for all the 'in between' things science offers.

3. **Describe the route you took, which lead from finishing your GCSEs until now.**

I studied 8 GCSEs with all the sciences that were offered to me - Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Physics, and Further Maths. I then went on to complete my A-levels – Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Economics.

Following my A levels, I knew I really loved Biology, it was a subject that both naturally clicked for me and I was passionate about outside the general school syllabus. I went to university and studied **Medical Physiology** that allowed me to do a little bit of everything when it came to the human body. I then decided to pursue a **Masters in Echocardiography**, which allows me to study the heart, that just happens to be my favourite organ.

In between GCSESs, A levels and university I tried a lot of different things, through volunteering in a hospital to working with kids as a summer school activity leader. I also interned in a neuroscience lab and then went on to intern in the field of science communication.

4. **If you had to study/focus on ONE STEM area for the rest of your career what would it be and why?**

I would still focus on the heart, specifically studying it in all the possible forms e.g. on a cellular level and as the whole organ. The heart is both a simple but

complex organ. It takes perfect timings for everything to work smoothly and in unison and I would want to learn as much as I can about it.

5. What do you enjoy most about your day to day role?

The best thing about being a STEM student is the constant process of learning new things and realising that there is even more out there. I also enjoy knowing the work I do will impact lives. Seeing my favourite organ on a daily basis is also a massive plus!

Adama and her favourite organ

6. Who would name as your main STEMspiration and why?

My STEM inspiration isn't one person, but a collective. Every time I see someone in STEM that looks like me and is passionate about which ever subject. It motivates me to continue and reminds me why I love STEM. It is such a collaborative field that the passions of others excite me as I see how amazing the future could be.

7. **Outside of STEM, what are your other hobbies?**

I would say I am an avid Netflix fan. I love the art of movies and completely losing myself to a good story line. I specifically say Netflix because binge-

watching shows could be by part-time job! I also run a blog, so I enjoy story telling through words and the opportunity it gives me to build genuine connections with so many people.

8. Lastly, if you could give our Young Gifted and STEM readers one piece of advice, what would it be?

I used to always tie my worth to achievements and didn't really place any value in the efforts I put in regardless of the outcome and it started to affect my love for learning. It always had to be the highest grade possible or it wasn't enough for me. Because I wasn't always the smartest, although a hard worker I doubted my abilities and would shy away from things I really wanted to do, with the fear of not being smart enough. So…*always believe in yourself as you are the prize and remember that nothing you do is too small, and you can never dream too big.*