LOTUS STEMM

ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT NO. 026-01

2026

LOTUSSTEMM@GMAIL.COM WWW.LOTUSSTEMM.ORG

@LOTUS_STEMM (X) @LOTUSSTEMM (INSTAGRAM) @LOTUS STEMM (FACEBOOK)

Land Acknowledgement

Lotus STEMM's hub of operation is located in Peel Region in Canada.

We would like to begin by acknowledging the land on which Lotus STEMM gathers, grows, and operates. This includes the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit; the territories of the Anishinabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Ojibway/Chippewa peoples; the land that is home to the Métis; and the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Lotus STEMM also has team members and volunteers working around the globe, and we acknowledge the pan-Indigenous communities whose ancestral lands they join us from.

We acknowledge the privilege and the honour of living, working, learning, and building our programming and our community here, and we give our respect to the first inhabitants of these lands. We hope that this land acknowledgement serves as an invitation to reflect, and as an act of gratitude toward the lands and those whose territories we reside on and whose stories we grow within, past, present, and future.

As Lotus STEMM has grown over the years, we have continued to reflect on how our words of acknowledgement can become an act of reconciliation. We commit to learning about the first peoples of these lands, the rich history of the lands themselves, the history of colonial violence that our privilege and power were built on, the systems that still carry that violence forward, and about the exploitation of the environment that continues alongside it. Many of us are immigrants, or the children of immigrants, who came to Turtle Island with a dream of a better life, and we are deeply grateful for the opportunities these lands have afforded us. That gratitude also carries an obligation: to help dismantle the systems our opportunities were built on, and work towards reconciliation and do our part in improving equity for all.

At Lotus STEMM, we value and respect diversity of beliefs, cultures, backgrounds, and ways of knowing, and we strive to learn from cultural wisdom, tradition, and knowledge and to embed it into our work to create more equitable, safe, and inclusive spaces that honour the people and the lands we operate on. We draw on the concept of Etuaptmumk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, which describes seeing with the strength of Indigenous knowledge through one eye and the strength of Western knowledge through the other, and learning to use both together. Many of us in STEMM, or living in the West, have become accustomed to seeing the world through a single lens: data, models, and experimentation. Two-Eyed Seeing reminds us not to limit ourselves to one way of knowing, and that there is real value in holding more than one lens at a time. To see through an Indigenous lens is to recognize knowledge rooted in relationship with land, in community, and in generations of lived experience, and to carry is to make our work both stronger and more accountable to the people it serves.

Land Acknowledgement

Lotus STEMM's hub of operation is located in Peel Region in Canada.

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." This is a quote that Indigenous activists have said and captures how we understand our commitment to reconciliation - not as help we offer or what we bring, but the work that we share. It is rooted in empathy and in a shared sense of responsibility, urgency, reciprocity, and solidarity.

We call on ourselves and our community to reflect on what our role is, in the different positions we hold - as leaders, sisters, mothers, brothers, fathers, employees, employers, researchers, scientists - in working towards reconciliation, caring for the lands we reside on, honouring its first inhabitants, and disrupting the colonial and systematic harm that our society and institutions continue to perpetuate.

This means learning about the land we live on, the treaty we live under, and the Indigenous peoples it belongs to; learning their histories and their living cultures, not only the harm done to them; and reading and committing to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. It means learning from Indigenous scholars and knowledge keepers, citing them in our work, inviting them into our spaces, and compensating them for their time and energy, for those of us in research and community engagement, honouring Indigenous data sovereignty in how we collect, use, and share data, challenging our assumptions and biases about what counts as evidence, and asking who is missing from the table, particularly those from underserved and marginalized communities. It also means using the resources we hold with care; supporting Indigenous and minority businesses, artists, and organizations; showing up to community events and listening; passing what we learn on to our children and to one another; and practising Two-Eyed Seeing in our own lives, holding the knowledge our families and ancestors carry alongside what we have been taught to call knowledge here.

This land acknowledgement is not a formality we complete. It is intended to serve as a practice and invitation we return to, together, in active reflection, and action towards our commitment to reconciliation, to these lands, and the people who have cared for them since long before we arrived.



Zainib Nazir, MSc

Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement.....2-3
Table of contents.....4
CEO's Statement.....5-7
Chair's Statement.....8-9
Treasurer's Statement.....10-12
Accountant’s Financial Statement.....13
HR Dashboard.....14
About Lotus STEMM.....15
Our Impact.....16
Programs Offered.....17
Degrees of Success 18-23
STEM Outreach.....24-25
Multilingual SciComm.....26-32
Assume We Can.....33-40
In The Media.....41



CEO's statement

As I reflect on the 2025-2026 year, I am amazed at the strides we have made as an organization, both internally and externally. Lotus STEMM continues to grow as an independent non-profit organization, a name getting recognized by more people in Ontario, but also in Alberta!

First off, I want to thank every volunteer, Canada Summer Jobs employee, community member and partner, and funder that has interacted and engaged with Lotus STEMM for their continual support. This community building is at the root of any success, and Lotus STEMM would not be considered “successful” if it weren’t for the community that surrounds it.

While this last year has felt quieter on the public engagement front, there has been a lot of work and growth behind the scenes. I want to recognize the incredible work our 2025-2026 Board of Directors have done. A moment of recognition for the Board Chair, **Dr. Krishana Sankar** who stepped into the role without knowledge on structure of Lotus STEMM, and bringing the Board forward collectively. To our Board Secretary, initially **Mr. Arshdeep Singh Phagoora** followed by **Ms. Zainib Nazir**, thank you for leading the conversations on anticolonial practices. Our Board Treasurer, **Ms Ekta Choksi**, has been the most patient person as we discuss Lotus STEMM financial standings, and it does not go unnoticed. To **Ms. Puneet Kaur Johal** and **Ms Mubassira Rehman**, thank you for bringing new perspectives and energies with fundraising efforts and mentorship program support while navigating school. I am humbled to be working with each of you, and the insights they have all brought to organizational structure.



Roopali Chaudhary, PhD

I want to also take a moment to acknowledge **3 major projects** that Lotus STEMM has focused on in 2025-2026.

First, a heartfelt thank you to **Ms. Sadaf Adnan** who leads Lotus STEMM’s multilingual and multicultural science communication arm. Sadaf started with Lotus STEMM in 2022 leading the project of translating science-posts from ScienceUPFirst into multiple South Asian languages with a team of volunteers. In 2024-2025, Sadaf led the workshops with South Asian seniors on tackling science misinformation leading to Lotus STEMM earning the CASCADE Award from the Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC). This past year, Sadaf took on the challenge of discussing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in a culturally-informed and evidence-based manner

CEO's statement

to South Asian girls (13-16 yrs) and their trusted adults. Working with our partner, Joefin Peter at Oru Kutty Community, Sadaf ensured the information was approachable, digestible, and available in multiple languages. his was not an easy project. SRH is not talked about openly in the South Asian community, especially not in a room with adults and youth. Sadaf put in countless hours to develop the trust in the community for them to be engaged with the workshops, sometimes even in a public park with printed slides and her phone. With Sadaf's on the ground commitment, Lotus STEMM continues to excel at combating misinformation in a culturally informed manner. We are now taking on the task of combating AI-generated misinformation in an intergenerational and multilingual manner, which I am excited to share about in the future.

Secondly, Lotus STEMM would not function smoothly if it were not for **Ms. Anjali Barak** who leads the Assume We Can project funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada. The idea of the project, what barriers to South Asian women in STEMM face, has been with me since the inception of Lotus STEMM. With this on-going 3 year project, we are in a position of not only implementing GBA+ methodology, but to begin systemic change by targeting key stakeholders in South Asian women's lives: parents, educators, employers and community leaders. Anjali has handled every moving part of this project with grace, be it the research, data analysis, report production, workshop organization and facilitation, and wrangling the various people involved. This project included website design, learning module system (LMS) design, animators, videographers, volunteers, contracted workers, external evaluators, and coordination with our wonderful partner, Ms Gayathri Shukla from Campfire Kinship who supported all the workshop development. Anjali has been the backbone of this project, and I am so incredibly proud of the growth she has shown while working on the project. We are at a stage of having conducted multiple stakeholder workshops synchronously and piloted the LMS for asynchronous workshops. These self-directed workshops are now available for anyone interested, especially if you identify as a stakeholder (parent, educator, employer, and community leader) on the LMS.

I would also like to thank **Dr. Parshati Patel** for leading the volunteer team in organizing Degrees of Success, Lotus STEMM's annual STEM conference for families. Started in 2020, we have only grown each year, and this year, with Parshati's commitment, we were able to have the venue provided to us by the Economic Development Office at City of Brampton. Furthermore, Parshati led us to have a diverse set of outreach partners focused on Sustainability, and bringing South Asian female speakers and panelists together at a sold out event! The joy Parshati brings to STEM outreach was invigorating, and I am in awe of all she does!

CEO's statement

I said this last year too; every year when I sit down to reflect on our previous year, I always think we did not accomplish much. BUT, with the incredible year that Lotus STEMM has had with organizational structure, committed projects, and funding, I am humbled that our highest expense has been salaries. Lotus STEMM has truly become the organization that is providing opportunities. This makes me extremely proud, and all the struggles over the years worth it.

With heartfelt gratitude, deep humility, and excitement for the future, thank you for being a part of this journey!

Sincerely, and humbly,
Dr. Roopali Chaudhary
Founder, CEO & Lead Researcher



Chair's statement



Krishana Sankar, PhD

Dear Members, Volunteers, Supporters, Partners, and Friends of Lotus STEMM,

It is an honour and privilege to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of Lotus STEMM and to reflect on another remarkable year of growth and impact.

My connection to Lotus STEMM began well before I joined the Board. As a long-time supporter, I have had the opportunity to witness the organization grow from a grassroots initiative into a community committed to advancing representation, opportunity, and belonging for South Asian women and non-binary people in STEMM. To now serve as Chair and contribute to this next stage of Lotus STEMM's journey is especially meaningful to me.

This year has once again demonstrated the reach and importance of Lotus STEMM's work. Through initiatives such as Assume We Can: Break Barriers, Build Opportunities, multilingual and culturally informed science and health outreach, youth programming, and our 2026 Degrees of Success Conference, Lotus STEMM continues to translate research, community knowledge, and lived experience into meaningful opportunities for learning, connection, and action.

We were also incredibly proud to receive the CASC Award for Excellence in Science Communication. This recognition affirms the value of Lotus STEMM's approach to multilingual, multicultural, and culturally informed science communication and the importance of ensuring that diverse communities are active participants in how science is communicated, understood, and shared.

Lotus STEMM with stability, sustainability, accountability, and clear direction for the future. This work is fundamental to ensuring that the organization has a strong foundation from which it can continue to grow and deliver on its mission.

While these accomplishments reflect the visible impact of Lotus STEMM's work, one of the areas of growth I am particularly proud of this year has been taking place behind the scenes: the continued strengthening of the organization's governance.

Chair's statement

I have had the privilege of working alongside my fellow Board members to contribute to the shaping and tremendous growth and development of Lotus STEMM's governance model. As the organization continues to expand in its programs, partnerships, team, and reach, it has become increasingly important that its governance structures evolve alongside it.

Together, the Board has been working to strengthen our governance practices, clarify roles and responsibilities, and consider the structures, processes, and oversight necessary to provide Lotus STEMM with stability, sustainability, accountability, and clear direction for the future. This work is fundamental to ensuring that the organization has a strong foundation from which it can continue to grow and deliver on its mission.

Looking ahead, we will continue building the structures, resources, and strategic direction needed to support Lotus STEMM's long-term sustainability while remaining rooted in the values that have shaped the organization from the beginning: community, representation, equity, cultural relevance, and belonging.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our Founder and CEO, Dr. Roopali Chaudhary, for her vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment, and to our Board members, staff, volunteers, mentors, researchers, partners, sponsors, and community members whose collective contributions make this work possible.

As both a long-time supporter and now Chair of the Board, I am grateful to be part of this next chapter. I look forward to continuing our work together to strengthen Lotus STEMM and ensure it has the stability, sustainability, and direction to create lasting impact for years to come.

With gratitude,
Dr. Krishana Sankar
Chair, Board of Directors
Lotus STEMM - 2025 - 2026

Treasurer's statement

Good evening mentees, mentors, volunteers, partners, sponsors, board members, and members of the Lotus STEMM community.

It has been my privilege to serve as Treasurer and Board Member of Lotus STEMM since September 2025. As this is my first Annual General Meeting in this role, I am pleased to share reflections on my first year with the organization, along with an overview of our financial performance for the year ended March 31, 2026.

When I joined Lotus STEMM last September, I expected to learn about the organization's programs and finances. What I did not anticipate was how inspired I would be by the people behind the work. Throughout the year, I have witnessed individuals generously share their time, expertise, and passion to support, mentor, and empower others. Their commitment to creating opportunities for women in STEMM has made my first year with Lotus STEMM both meaningful and rewarding.

I am pleased to present the financial results for the year ended March 31, 2026.

As a result, Lotus STEMM recorded an excess of revenue over expenses of $10,087 for the year ended March 31, 2026.

These results demonstrate Lotus STEMM's strong financial stewardship and provide a strong foundation for continuing to create opportunities for women and girls in STEMM.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Roopali Chaudhary for her leadership and vision, and to the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, mentors, and members who have supported me throughout my first year as Treasurer. It has been a rewarding learning experience, and I greatly appreciate the trust placed in me in this role.

I look forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and impact together.



Ekta Choksi

Thank you.

Ekta Choksi
Treasurer
Lotus STEMM - 2025-2026

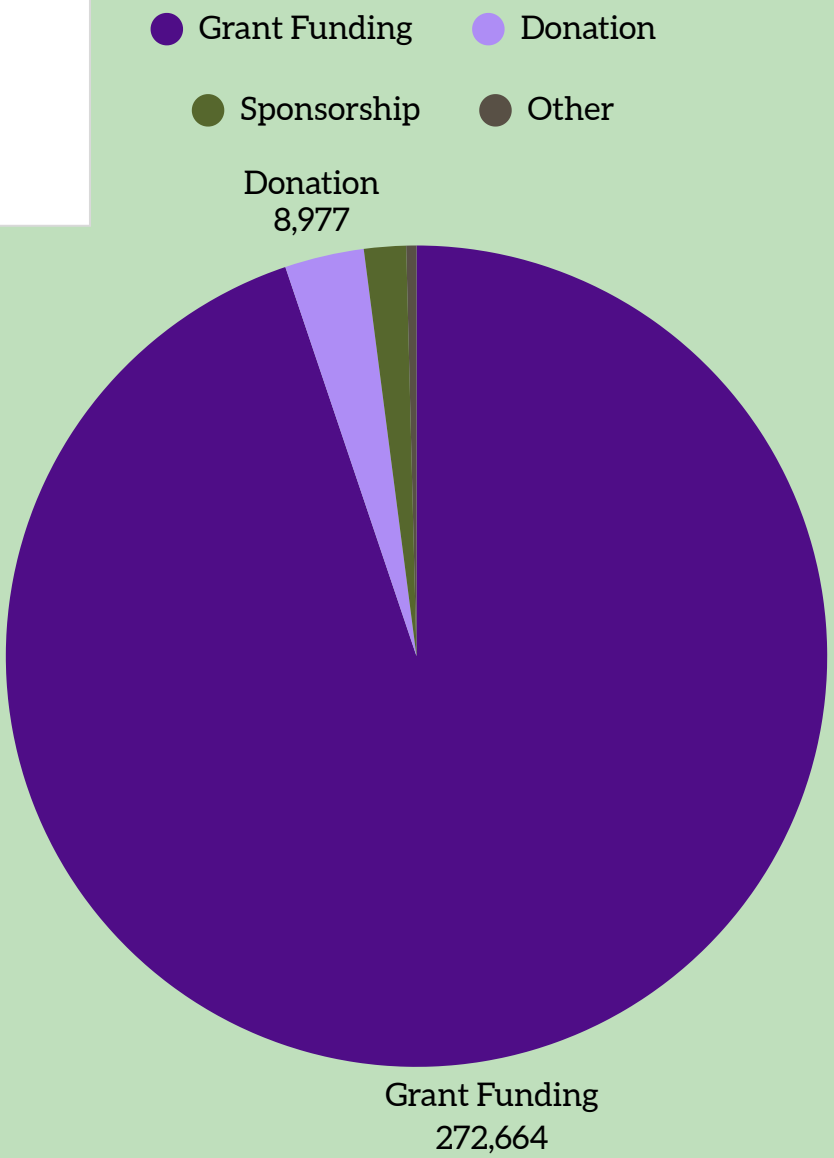
Treasurer's statement

Revenue

During the year, Lotus STEMM received:

- Grant funding: $272,664
- Donations: $8,977
- Sponsorship revenue: $4,750
- Other revenue: $477
- Fee-for-service revenue: $400
- Membership revenue: $200
- Interest income: $74

Total revenue for the year was $287,542.



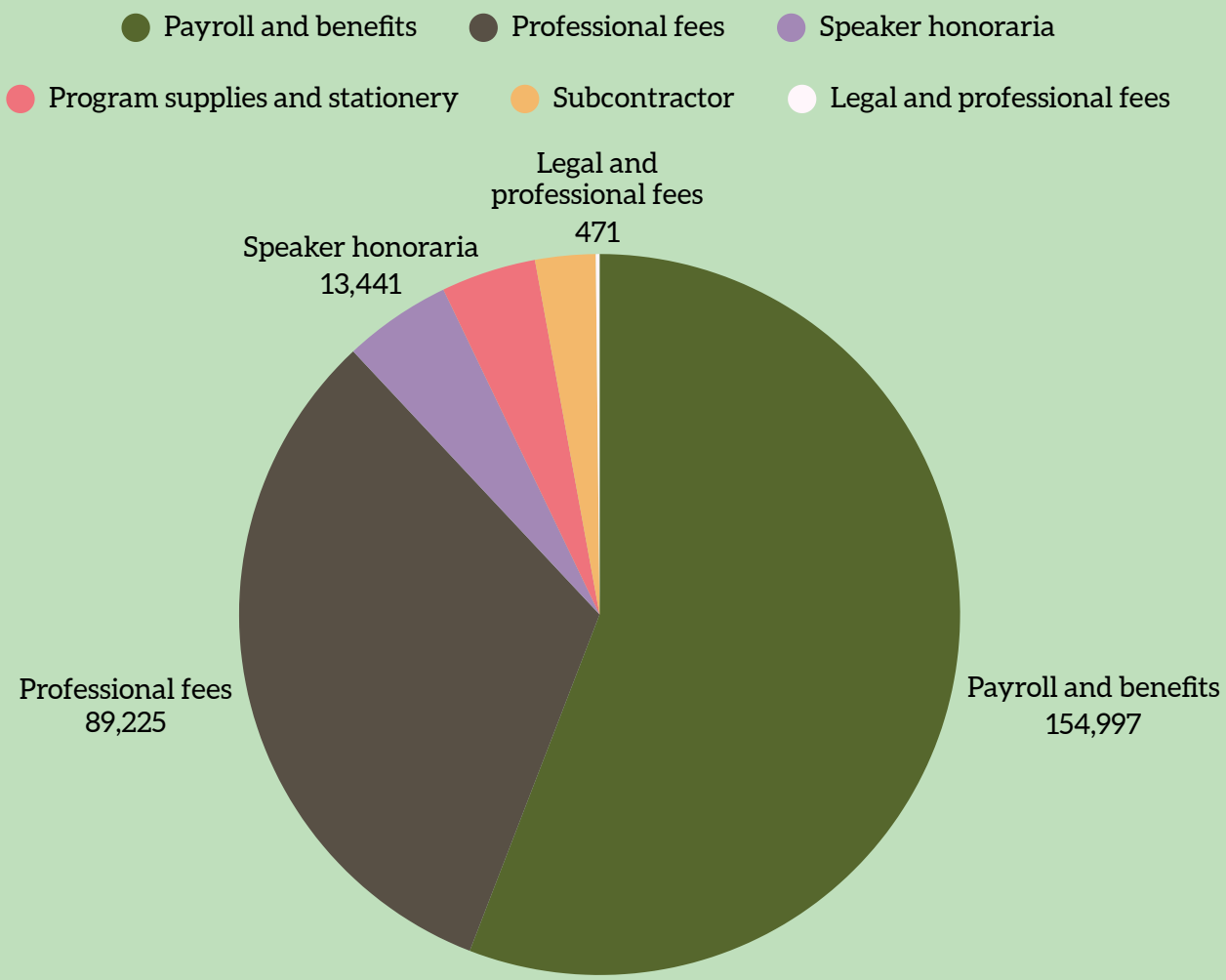
Treasurer's statement

Expenses

The organization's major expenses included:

- Payroll and benefits: $154,997
- Professional fees: $89,225
- Speaker honoraria: $13,441
- Program supplies and stationery: $11,820
- Subcontractor expenses: $7,501
- Legal fees: $471

Total expenses for the year were $277,455.



Accountant's Financial Statement

Lotus STEMM
Statement of Financial Position
As of March 31, 2026

		2026
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	$	54,404.00
Accounts receivable	$	82,000.00
Total Current Assets	**$**	**136,404.00**
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$	12,488.00
GST/HST, Corporate tax payable and source deduction	$	1,969.00
Deferred contribution	$	111,690.00
Total Current Liabilities	**$**	**126,147.00**
Net Assets	$	10,257.00
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**$**	**136,404.00**

Note: Above financial figures are extracted from the Compilation Engagement Report for the year -end March 31, 2026. Please contact Lotus STEMM for a detailed financial statement.

HR Dashboard

September 2025 - September 2026

4
SUMMER JOBS

3
CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

1
PERMANENT (PRO-BONO) POSITION

10
EXTERNAL PAID PARTNESHIPS

3
VOLUNTEER LEADERS

Lotus STEMM is happy to celebrate volunteers and employees who have been integral for the success that we have shared together.

About Lotus STEMM



Lotus STEMM is a grassroots federally-registered non-profit organization established in 2018

MISSION

Provide a networking & leadership platform for South Asian women & non-binary folks in STEMM

VISION

Have an intersectional cultural lens for greater representation of South Asian women in STEMM

COMMITMENTS

(1) Outreach
(2) Representation
(3) Research

Our Impact

Lotus STEMM's impactful annual conferences in the past have empowered students, fueled their STEMM passion, and created lasting community impact

Through ***hands-on activities, engaging presentations, dynamic guest speakers, and diverse participation***, we've transformed students' lives.



Outreach

Engaged 1000 + in hands-on activities at schools, conferences, & cultural events in last 2 years



Networking

3 global programs run annually to help bridge cultural and STEM barriers



Research

Ongoing 3-year research project on systemic change. Trained 9+ research students who have entered professional schools.

OUR PROGRAMS

The Lotus STEMM team continues to make an impact on the community all year-round. We offer various types of outlets for the South-Asian women of all ages to connect from not just within Canada but across the globe. Click on images to view our programs.









Programs Offered

1 Outreach

- Ongoing community outreach
- Degrees of Success conference (families, teacher, students)
- Gairdner Lectures - Networking Lunch
- Community and school workshops

2 Networking

- STEMM Mentorship Program (16+)
- Multilingual Multicultural Science Communication Workshops
- Science Translations
- Paksh - A mental health initiative for academics
- Networking

3 Research

- Breaking Barriers Research Project - understand how S.A. women can be supported in their STEMM careers.
- Develop skills in research and scientific methodology
- Conference presentations


Degrees of Success
February, 2026
Brampton City Hall

2026 CONFERENCE THEME

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Inspire Innovation 1



Sparking ideas and solutions for a cleaner, greener world

Engage with Community 2



Building connections through culture, science, and sustainability

Empower Lasting Change 3



Partnering to create a thriving future for generations to come

TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A BRIGHTER FUTURE FILLED WITH SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY AND BREAKTHROUGHS.

2026 METRICS



- 65+ CONFERENCE ATTENDEES
- 6 SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS
- 6 OUTREACH PARTNERS
- 8 CORPORATE SPONSORS
- 20+ VOLUNTEERS

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

HISTORY

5 **CONFERENCES**

COUNTLESS STORIES.
LASTING IMPACT.

70+ VOLUNTEERS MOBILIZED

22 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

315+ PARTICIPANTS REACHED

21 CORPORATE SPONSORS

40+ SPEAKERS / FACILITATORS



Message from the CEO

Each year that we plan and host Degrees of Success, I hear from volunteers and attendees alike about how unique the conference is. This year, what stood out was speakers telling me how this was the first conference where they felt comfortable enough to bring their young children. Sharing science at all ages was what LS-DoS was created for, and I'm happy to see it reaching its objective.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Deepinti Walke

A climate change and agribusiness consultant who helps companies navigate climate reporting and works across the entire agriculture value chain to strengthen our food systems.



Navneet Kaur Johal

A final-year Chemical Engineering Technology student and Corporate HSE co-op at IKO North America, applying safety and environmental best practices in real-world settings.



Dr. Sujane Kandasamy

An Assistant Professor at McMaster University and co-founder of PEACH Health Ontario and The Starfish Canada, working at the intersection of community health and planetary sustainability.

CONFERENCE PANELISTS

SUSTAINABLE LIVING ADVOCACY PANEL



Left to Right: Tisya Pramanik, Sapna Jain, Dr. Praneeta Mudaliar

Tisya Pramanik:
An environmental advocate and U of T student leveraging her background as a first-generation immigrant to bridge the gap between eco-conscious medical practices and public health.

Sapna Jain:
President of DAMA Toronto and Fund Development Manager at Iron & Earth, dedicated to organizational growth, strategic partnerships, and creating intentional career pathways for underrepresented groups.

Dr. Praneeta Mudliar:
An Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto Mississauga whose research and teaching examine power, justice, and the governance of natural resources across global landscapes.

OUTREACH PARTNERS





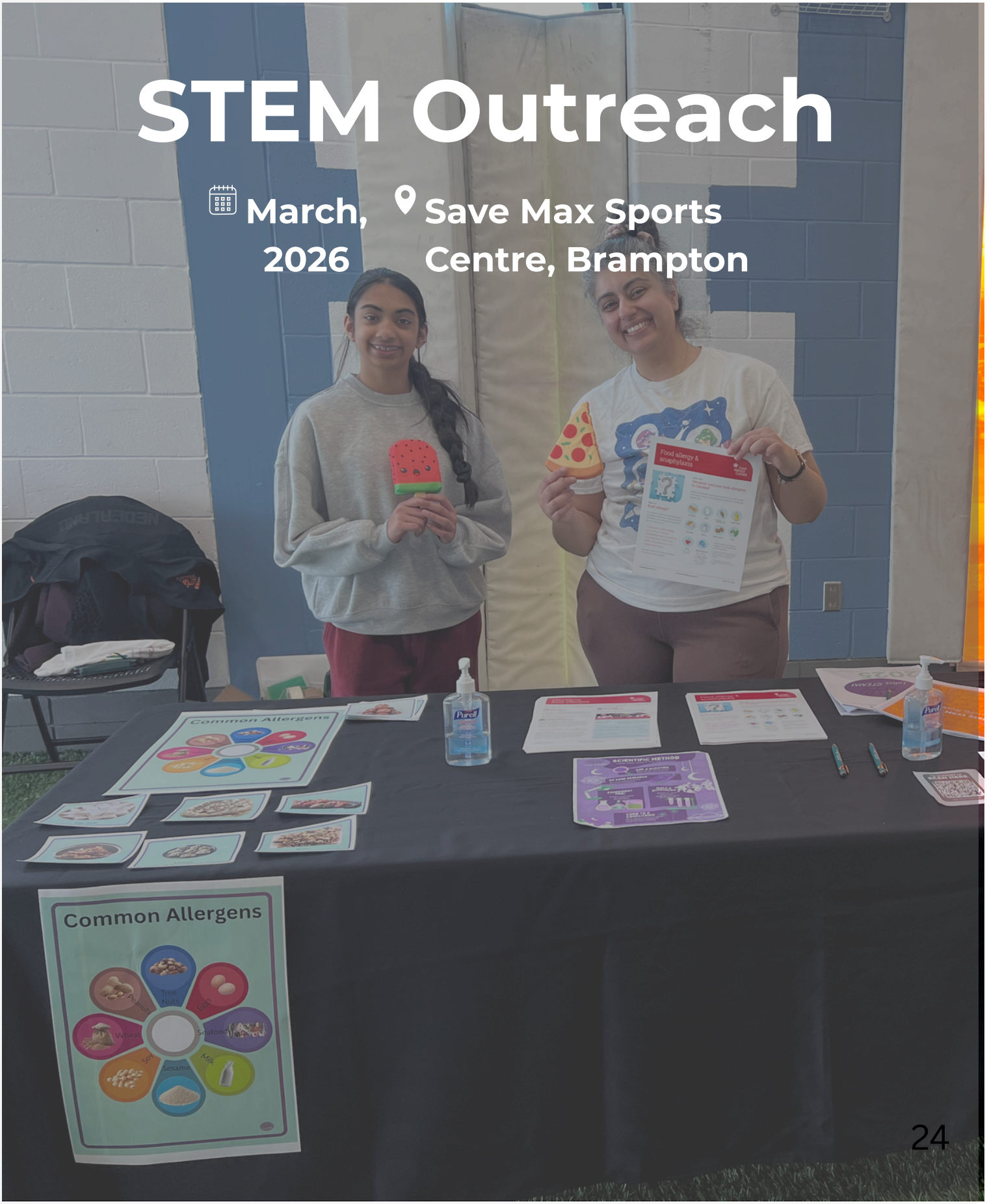








Our six Outreach Partners were the heartbeat of the 2026 conference, transforming the venue into a hands-on ecosystem of discovery. In observance of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, these organizations brought our Sustainable Living theme to life. Through interactive booth activities and an engaging "passport" system, they directly inspired South Asian youth and newcomers, bridging the gap between community leadership and the next generation of STEMM. The initiative also served as a launchpad for our youth volunteers, giving each of them a dedicated booth experience and meaningful exposure to a unique STEMM discipline.



STEM Outreach

March, 2026

Save Max Sports Centre, Brampton

STEM Outreach

March, 2026 | Save Max Sports Centre, Brampton

Lotus STEMM remains dedicated to collaborating with the community to deliver culturally-informed STEM outreach for young people. In partnership with the **Ontario Schools Cricket Association (OSCA)**, Lotus STEMM organized two activities focusing on food allergies, reaching over 100 youth in Brampton.

The event left many youth and adults astonished by how the immune system reacts to food allergies. Participants also gained insights into identifying common food allergens present in South Asian cuisine. They were surprised to discover that food allergens extend beyond just “peanuts.”









In collaboration with:

OSCA
ONTARIO SCHOOLS CRICKET ASSOCIATION
Energize Excite Empower



Multilingual Science Communication

Award-Winning

2026 In-person

4 YEARS

MULTIPLE TOPICS.
CULTURALLY INFORMED.
SCIENTIFCALLY ACCURATE

143+

TRANSLATED
SCIENTIFIC POSTS

7

LANGUAGES (HINDI, URDU,
PASHTO DOMINATED)

14+

TRASLATORS (2 EMPLOYEES,
12+ VOLUNTEERS

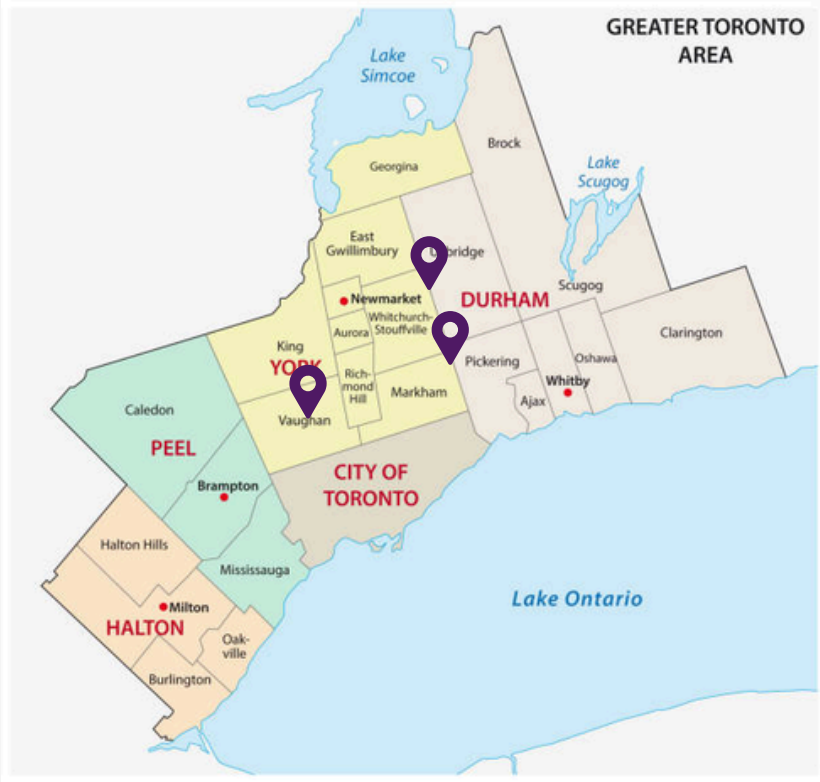
Sexual and Reproductive Health

2026 Various Locations

Lotus STEMM co-designed and delivered three evidence-based, culturally informed **Sexual and Reproductive Health** (SRH) workshops in collaboration with Joefin Peter, a South Asian registered doula and sexual health educator at **Oru Kutty Community**. The workshops integrated **ScienceUpFirst** materials into both the presentations and shared resources to ensure participants received accurate, accessible, and evidence-based information.

Sessions were provided in English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali in 3 locations

Curricula	
1.	**Periods & Myths (puberty, menstruation, reproductive health)**
2	**Vaccines & Fertility Health (HPV and COVID vaccines, fertility myths, PAP smear education)**
3	**Safe Sex (contraception, pregnancy, abortion myths, and consent)**



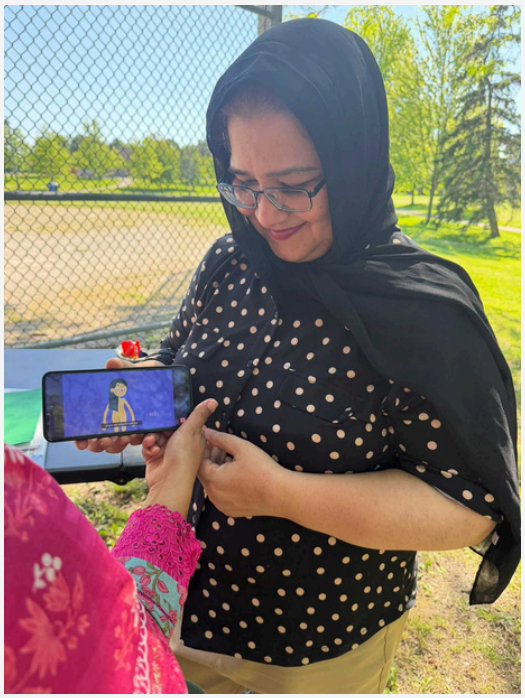
In collaboration with: ScienceUpFirst AN INITIATIVE OF CASC

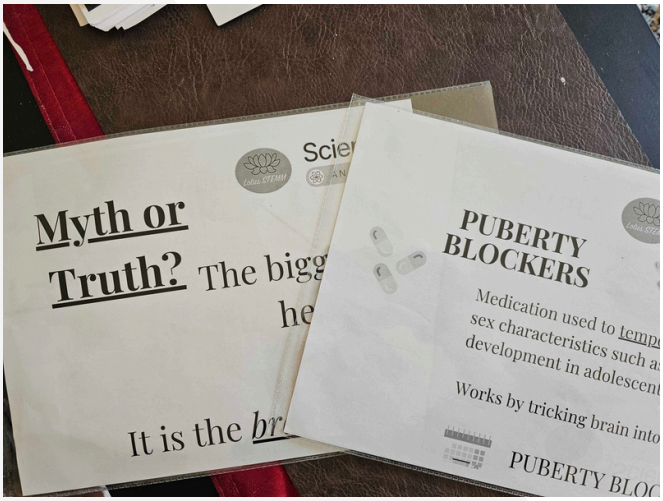
Sexual and Reproductive Health

2026 Various Locations

Workshop delivery was adjusted to **meet participant needs** and venue conditions. Facilitators adapted from small-group activities to whole-group discussions for inclusivity. They also transitioned projector-based materials to printed formats and mobile devices for a **community park setting**, ensuring quality and engagement despite logistical challenges.



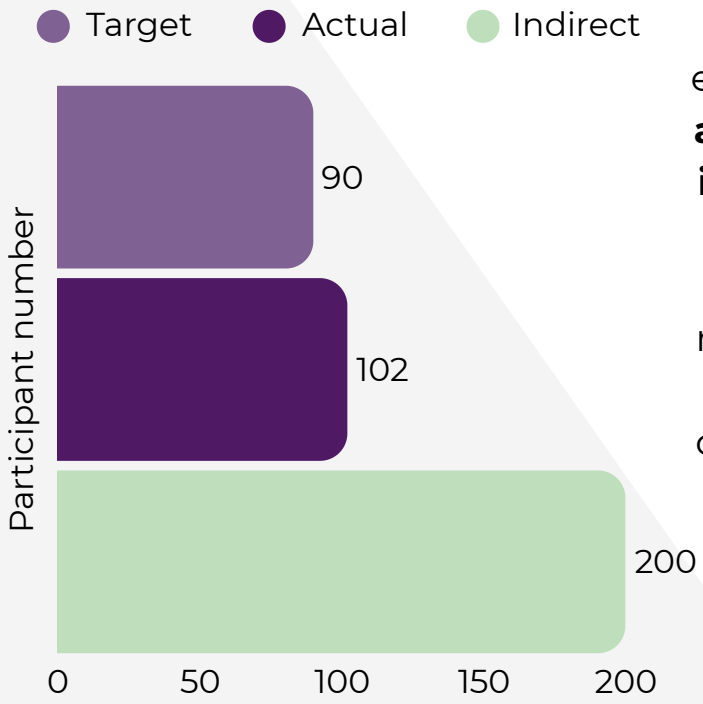




In collaboration with: ScienceUpFirst AN INITIATIVE OF CASC

Sexual and Reproductive Health

2026 Various Locations



The goal of 90 participants was exceeded, with **102 attending directly and an estimated 200 more reached indirectly.** All evaluation respondents identified as women or girls, and sessions successfully engaged a multigenerational mix of youth (13–17) and adult women, mothers, and caregivers — validating the program's dual-audience design.

“These multilingual sessions give us confidence to ask questions which we feel shy to ask openly with our adults .”

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

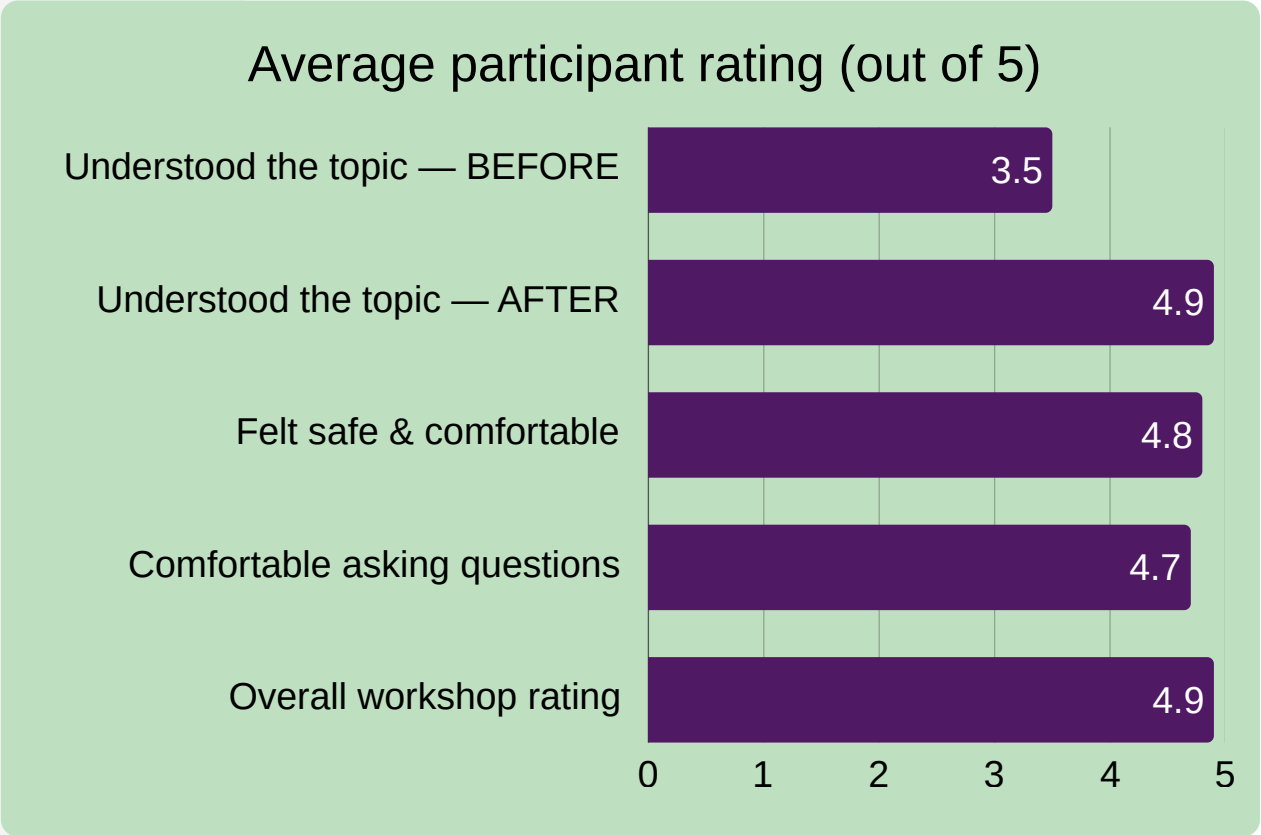




In collaboration with: ScienceUpFirst AN INITIATIVE OF CASC

Sexual and Reproductive Health

2026 Various Locations



+1.4 point gain in self-rated understanding — 3.5 before the session, 4.9 after, in a single two-hour workshop.

93% would recommend the workshop to a friend or family member. Not one participant left the room mid-session.

"I liked how you were open and confident about the topic."
Participant, May 16

In collaboration with: ScienceUpFirst — AN INITIATIVE OF CASC

Sexual and Reproductive Health

2026 Various Locations

What worked



Safety came before content
Community guidelines and a non-judgmental tone made the learning possible.

Word of mouth did the outreach
Between 53% and 80% of participants heard about us from friends or family.

Mixed generations in one room
Youth and mothers learned together — and the girls told us they wanted the adults there.

Play beats lecture
Kahoot, videos, raffles and open Q&A drove the strongest engagement of the series.

What got in the way



Parental consent
The single biggest barrier — youth who wanted to attend often could not get permission.

Organisational hesitancy
Several partners declined or asked to pre-review content because of topic sensitivity.

Pacing and terminology
Participants valued correct clinical language but flagged too many dense science terms.

Format requests
Asks for an online option, age-split activities, and longer sessions.

In collaboration with: ScienceUpFirst AN INITIATIVE OF CASC



2026

Virtual + In person

Assume We Can (WAGE funded)

Funded by : Women and Gender Equality Canada | Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

ASSUME WE CAN

BREAK BARRIERS BUILD OPPORTUNITIES

EVOLUTION: From Breaking Barriers to **Assume We Can** - advocating for a metareflexive shift for South Asian women in STEMM.



Our Research So Far

600+	190+	50	205+
Lives Impacted	Survey Responses	Focus Group Participants	Stories Captured

RESEARCH & DATA INSIGHTS

KEY DELIVERABLES:

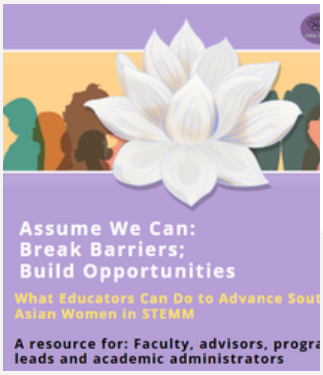
4 Infographic reports
4 Detailed stakeholder reports
1 Executive summary
1 Implementation toolkit

RESOURCES:

Collated practical resources for Educators, Employers, Parents, Community Leaders (on LMS & Website).

DATA VISUALIZATION:

Excel NVivo Dashboard developed; integrating key data visualizations into the website for an accessible online insights/data dashboard.









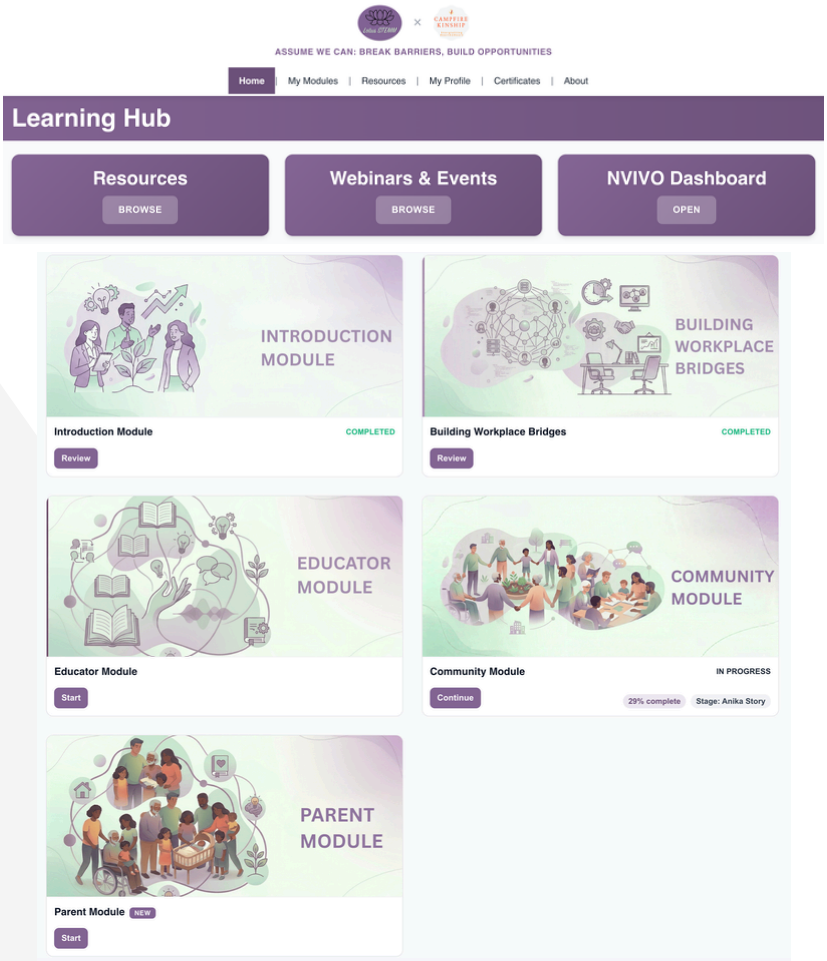
ASSUME WE CAN

BREAK BARRIERS
BUILD OPPORTUNITIES

DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

LMS DEVELOPMENT & PILOT:

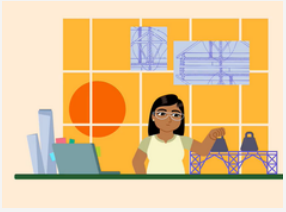
- Hired 2 animators, 2 videographers & a website developer.
- Developed an LMS with **5 modules** (4 stakeholder + 1 Intro).
- Completed 2 rounds of piloting & incorporated feedback.
- More than **50 participants** to date; final rollout planned for next week.
- Developed **3 animations** & integrated personal videos, experiences & anecdotes.
- Recorded a **Detailed Project video** (Feb 2026); second video planned for Sept 2026.
- Developed a CMS with backend



ANIMATIONS - 3 Stories, Many Lives



Anika : case study for employers



Sara : case study for educators



Aman : case study for community

Funded by : Women and Gender Equality Canada / Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada



ASSUME WE CAN

BREAK BARRIERS
BUILD OPPORTUNITIES

WORKSHOPS & ENGAGEMENT

KEY EVENTS:

- STAN (Jan) – Research findings
- Educator Workshop in Sudbury-CASC (partner Science Melting Pot)
- Virtual Employer Workshop (June)
- Virtual Parent Workshop (Aug)
- Community Workshop in Calgary (Sep 12, 2026)
- Educator Workshop with STAO (Nov 2026)

IMPACT:

Opportunities for LMS testing, feedback, research sharing, and dialogue on barriers & opportunities for South Asian women in STEMM.

OUTREACH, PARTNERSHIPS & TEAM

OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS:

- Reached out to 200+ organizational partners across Canada.
- Continued outreach to councils, community organizations, educational institutions & relevant organizations.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Active social media & outreach strategy; created multiple posts & materials.

TEAM GROWTH:

- Hired 2 animators, 2 videographers & a website/LMS developer.
- Added 1 part-time member & 2 volunteers (building on last year's 4 volunteers & 2 full-time research analysts).
- Hired participants through Canada Summer Jobs positions.

Funded by : Women and Gender Equality Canada | Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

ASSUME WE CAN

BREAK BARRIERS
BUILD OPPORTUNITIES

OUR TEAM



Dr. Roopali Chaudhary
Founder & CEO
Lotus STEMM



Dr. Gayathri Shukla
Founder
Campfire Kinship



Anjali Barak
Senior Program Coordinator
Lotus STEMM



Bhavya Abbi
Research Analyst
Lotus STEMM



Caroline Claussen
Developmental Evaluator



Dr. Rida Abboud
Developmental Evaluator



Sanzida Shams
Research Analyst
Lotus STEMM



Jiya Prajapati
Volunteer
Lotus STEMM



Malika Seth
Knowledge Translation
& Research Analyst
Lotus STEMM



Harman Kaur
Volunteer
Lotus STEMM

Contributors:

Our team above including Nikhil Gaikwad (Lotus STEMM), Stelth Ng (Tripe Painte Media Production), Richard Rosenman (Hatch Studios Ltd.), Hajar Moradi (Vivido Inc.), Sadaf Adnan (Lotus STEMM) and Tisya Pramanik (Lotus STEMM).

Funded by : Women and Gender Equality Canada / Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

ASSUME WE CAN

BREAK BARRIERS BUILD OPPORTUNITIES

TEAM TESTIMONIALS



Harman Kaur
Volunteer
Lotus STEMM

Being a part of the Assume We Can project has been a very rewarding experience for me and has contributed significantly to my personal and professional growth. This opportunity allowed me to develop valuable professional skills, particularly in reviewing and editing reports, communicating information concisely and creating engaging infographics. I will certainly carry forward the growth and skills I gained from this project into my academic and professional work. I am especially grateful for our team, whose support and encouragement have made this experience so valuable. It is an honour to be part of an initiative that examines the barriers faced by South Asian women in STEMM while helping create meaningful pathways for them to succeed.



Jiya Prajapati
Volunteer
Lotus STEMM

Working on the Assume We Can: Break Barriers; Build Opportunities reports with Lotus STEMM has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my time this summer. Throughout this project, I took on a varied role that challenged me to grow in many ways. I worked directly on creating, editing, and checking the main reports, making sure that detailed community feedback and equity ideas were easy to read and clear for parents and community leaders. Designing images, organizing page layouts, and carefully checking over every detail taught me the value of accuracy and clear communication. I learned how to turn research into stories that connect with people, a skill that has changed how I view data and community work. I could not have done this without such an amazing team. Working alongside Harman, Malika, and Anjali, I could not have asked for better partners. Their hard work, bright ideas, and support made all the long hours of editing and formatting worth it. This project did not just teach me how to create clean, professional reports; it gave me real confidence as a researcher, writer, and teammate. Knowing that our work will help families and communities clear the path for South Asian women in STEMM is something I will always be proud of.

TEAM TESTIMONIALS



Malika Seth
Knowledge Translation &
Research Analyst
Lotus STEMM

Being part of Lotus STEMM has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Beyond joining a community working to solve a problem that's often invisible yet persistent, this journey has shown me the better side of things. I came in with genuine interest and was given this opportunity with so much faith.

Having worked across diverse organizations, nationally and internationally, I can say with confidence that Lotus STEMM is a safe haven; no toxic environment, no confusion, only support, creative freedom, and the space to express yourself fully. Everyone is treated as an equal, and the passion here is contagious. While working on some of the projects, I found myself relating deeply to the very issues we study around barriers faced by South Asian women in STEMM, and knowing I'm part of such a supportive community made all the difference. Every person I've worked with here is humble, understanding, patient, and kind.

I also want to recognize a few people who inspire me daily. Roopali Chaudhary, senior scientist, business owner, science communicator and founder, shows me what it means to build something meaningful without losing sight of what matters. Anjali, our Senior Coordinator, manages everything with such grace, and I've learned so much about project management just from watching her. Harman Kaur and Jiya Prajapati give their time generously to this cause. And I'm grateful to Gayathri Shukla, engineer and founder of Campfire Kinship, whose editing of The Fires We Lit and Landed reminds me of the real impact women's stories can have. I feel lucky to be surrounded by such inspiring women in STEMM.

TEAM TESTIMONIALS

Working on the Assume We Can project has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my professional journey. It has taught me that good project coordination goes far beyond keeping things on track. At its heart, it is about building trust, understanding different perspectives, creating meaningful connections and being intentional about how we bring people into the work.



Anjali Barak
Senior Program Coordinator
Lotus STEMM

What has stayed with me most is the trust and openness we have experienced from our community partners. Their willingness to share their experiences, ideas and perspectives has made me appreciate the impact and responsibility that comes with doing community-based work. It has reminded me that the way we do the work is just as important as what we ultimately deliver.

I'm especially grateful to Roopali for her leadership and to our team for creating an environment where we can ask questions, learn from one another and approach challenges with curiosity and care. Looking back, I feel that we have built something that extends beyond the project itself - a space for dialogue, learning and collective action.

I feel very fortunate to have contributed to this work and to have witnessed the change taking shape along the way. It has been a journey of learning, reflection and growth and I'm proud to be part of it.

Lotus STEMM thanks Partners & Sponsors 2025-2026

Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Canada Summer Jobs

CAMPFIRE KINSHIP
Storytelling Hearth2Heart

ScienceUpFirst
AN INITIATIVE OF CASC

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE CENTRES
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES CENTRES DE SCIENCES

IMOGEN COE CONSULTING

deschool

CAGIS Lotus STEMM

pchs Serving Diverse Communities

PERIMETER INSTITUTE

GEM Leadership * Mentorship * Empowerment

OSCA
ONTARIO SCHOOLS CRICKET ASSOCIATION
Energize Excite Empower

Indus Space

Building Mineral Literacy Through STEM Education — Mining Matters — EST. 94

WOMEN IN SCIENCE

BP

scientists IN SCHOOL scientifiques À L'ÉCOLE

Allarta Life Science

Aabir Bio-Services FOUNDATION

~5551

Lotus STEMM

Social media followers (1543 X, 1232 Instagram, 193 Facebook, 95 YouTube, 1688 LinkedIN, 800+ direct engagement).