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

We would like to begin by acknowledging the land on which we gather, and on which the Region of Peel operates, is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have inhabited and cared for this land. In particular, we acknowledge the territory of the Anishinabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Ojibway/Chippewa peoples; the land that is home to the Métis; and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who are direct descendants of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land, and by doing so, give our respect to its first inhabitants.

We should continue as settlers living in this land with First Nations and Métis communities, to support stewardship of the land, the water, and the environment as a whole. As we progress into the second year of this global pandemic, we have, as a society had the chance to reflect on how interconnected all of our lives are with the planet, and how viruses can arise due to our mistreatment of resources, plants, and animals. We have also come to understand how important the land and water are, during this pandemic as we continue to wash our hands to maintain good hygiene; and how fortunate are we to have this water at our disposal; but with this disposability comes responsibility, and stewardship. Like the Mississaugas and allied nations, who have been and STILL DO take care of these waters, we too owe the water the same. We are sustained by clean water so let us sustain it as well!

Additionally, we are joined by many people today from across Canada, and the world. We wish to acknowledge the global pan-Indigenous communities on whose territories our international attendees are. We hope our attendees take this opportunity to reflect on their own connection to their respective lands, and the Indigenous communities with whom they share the land with.
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And just like that, another year has come to a close. And what a year it has been! Like any other non-profit navigating during the pandemic, we’ve had our own share of challenges. However, we have also had many wins this year! This community continues to organically grow with new members joining, engaging and networking from within the Peel Region, within Ontario, Canada as a whole, and internationally. Your support, feedback, and comments help us pause, reflect, and improve on what Lotus STEMM brings your way. Growth and change take time, and while we've had immense growth in our 3rd year, the change we would like to implement in our communities will take time. But this does not deter us from our mission.

In this last year, we’ve made great strides in securing funding from multiple levels of government, including the provincial and federal levels. Furthermore, our reach within the local and international communities has brought collaborations with local, national organizations, and international stakeholders. At each level, we’ve been able to create meaningful relationships while having representation at the forefront. I have personally talked with many parents, women and girls who did not realize a community like this was missing but needed. I am honoured and humbled that a seed I sowed a few years ago is now a seedling in “The Pond” we call Lotus STEMM.

Our first aim was to do outreach within the South Asian (SA) community while increasing visibility of SA women in STEMM fields. With this mission in mind, we launched new programs including a collaboration with Canadian Association of Girls in Science (CAGIS) community chapter (pg 10-11), scicomm training workshops called Expanding Horizons (pg 15) and our mental health support group Paksh (pg 16-17). We also have our youth-led program for youth, Teach Me in 5 (pg 12), ready to launch, along with our Family & I Code Together (pg 13) workshops. Our Mentorship Program is currently in its 3rd cycle (pg 14) , and we continue to host science discussion group, The Pond (pg 18).

Furthermore, this year we’ve had the privilege to hire our first few employees under Lotus STEMM. Through the Investment Readiness Program and McMaster University, we’ve had the privilege of hiring a Website Accessibility Developer, to ensure we abide with the requirements for digital accessibility. Through the Canada Summer Jobs fund, we were able to hire 6 Research Students who worked over the summer to push our research projects further (pg 19-21).

The fruit of all of our labour can be seen by the progress we've made strategically and financially. I'm happy to see the financial independence Lotus STEMM has been able to achieve in the last year. Each day I work on and with Lotus STEMM, I grow as an academic, entrepreneur, leader, mentor and person. My heartfelt THANK YOU to each member, participant, stakeholder, funder, volunteer, critic, and every person who has patiently asked, listened, and politely participated. Each of you have helped make Lotus STEMM what it is today.

Our mission does not end here. As long as there are gender disparities, inequities, and biases in STEMM, there will be a need for culturally responsive recommendations.

Roopali Chaudhary, PhD
Chair's statement

As we head into another season living a mostly hyper engaged virtual life, the effects of this pandemic has done little to slow down the pace with which Lotus STEMM has made an impact over the past year. I am proud to share the many milestones that the organization has reached and the impact it continues to have on South Asian women in STEMM.

Several programs have continued to grow and engage the community including Paksh and the mentorship program. We have launched several programs specifically to engage high school girls in exploring STEMM careers and engaging with STEMM professionals throughout the past year. We now host activities for South Asian girls in Canada, and have a dedicated chapter within the wider nation-wide “Canadian Association for Girls in Science”.

With the support of several funding sources, we successfully hosted a pilot workshop “Expanding Horizons” that helped participants tap into their strengths in conducting science communication with a multicultural lens. We were also able to support several student research projects, and hire a digital media expert to improve our website. We are thankful to the federally funded Canada Summer Jobs program, Investment Readiness Program, National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, McMaster University, and the Ontario Trillium Fund for their support.

The upcoming year continues to build off this momentum. More programs are scheduled to engage youth under 18 in STEMM content, and to encourage families to collectively discover the wonders of STEMM. I invite you to continue your support and engage with our members and help expand the mission and vision of Lotus STEMM.

Bhairavi Shankar, PhD
Hello mentees, mentors, volunteers, collaborators, sponsors, board members, and all other stakeholders. I am happy to report that Lotus STEMM has made tremendous strides since our inception in 2018. In the past year, we have secured over $76,000 for current and future programs, including our Teach Me in 5 Workshops, Expanded Horizon’s Workshop and our three research projects.

**Speaking Engagements**

- $250.00 from the Perimeter Institute, used to fund operational costs
- $250.00 from Enable Training and Consulting, used to fund operational costs

**Grants funded this year for current Lotus STEMM programs:**

- $19,995.00 from the NSERC to fund our Expanded Horizons Workshop
- $22,826.00 from Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ), used to pay student researchers involved in three projects investigating postpartum depression in South Asian women, burnout among South Asian engineering students, and the impact of Quebec’s Bill 21 on visibly religious South Asian female physicians.

**Grants funded this year for upcoming Lotus STEMM programs**

- $33,300.00 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) will be used to fund the Teach Me in 5 Program. Funding will be used to cover costs of STEM kits and hiring a part-time science communicator and marketing strategist.
  - Some money from OTF has also been used to pay for an accountant.

Lotus STEMM’s continued growth required us to hire additional support! Our greatest expenses over the last year was the cost of paying our student researchers and workers for their invaluable contribution to developing our website, our ongoing research projects, and our workshops such as the Expanded Horizon’s Workshop. We even secured funding for upcoming projects such as the Teach Me in 5 programs, which will be offered in collaboration with the Peel District School Board.

I’m incredibly proud of the growth over the last year and I am certain the next year will be just as productive!

Sincerely,

Shaiya Robinson, Ph.D.
From the Treasurer:

Please note that Lotus STEMM has secured additional funding since the statement of operations was prepared in March 2021. However, all grants awarded to Lotus STEMM are used to support ongoing and future programs.

Sincerely,

Shaiya Robinson, Ph.D.
Statements of Operations and Financial Position Prepared by: Zahra Qureshi, CPA, CMA

LOTUS STEMM
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
(Unaudited)

For the year ended March 31, 2021 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs and speaking engagement revenue</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>13,790</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of products</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership dues</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue</strong></td>
<td>14,835</td>
<td>2,722</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program expenses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subcontractors</td>
<td>(11,852)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker honorarium</td>
<td>(330)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and communications</td>
<td>(217)</td>
<td>(28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program supplies and stationery</td>
<td>(215)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising and promotion</td>
<td>(215)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of products sold</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total program expenses</strong></td>
<td>(12,829)</td>
<td>(151)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other operating expenses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal and professional fees</td>
<td>(961)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office expenses</td>
<td>(189)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total other operating expenses</strong></td>
<td>(1,150)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excess of revenues over expenses 856 2,571
Programs Offered

1. Outreach
   - LS-CAGIS community chapter
   - Degrees of Success conference (families, teacher, students)
   - Teach me in 5 - Youth Led for Youth (STEM clubs at school)
   - Family & I code together workshops

2. Networking
   - STEMM Mentorship Program (16+)
   - Expanding Horizons Workshops
   - Paksh - A mental health initiative for academics
   - The Pond - A discussion group for all things science

3. Research
   - 3 social science research projects (women’s health, career impacts)
   - Develop skills in research and scientific methodology
   - Conference presentations
Lotus STEMM is proud to partner up with the Canadian Association of Girls in Science (CAGIS) to start the first CAGIS chapter for South Asian girls across Canada. We will work on increasing visibility of South Asian scientists and engineers, specifically women and non-binary people, while introducing girls to hands-on STEM activities.

In 2020, LS-CAGIS chapter partnered with 2 other local chapters to bring 8 events from Oct 2020 - Jun 2021. LS-CAGIS chapter has 4 members, and combined with the other chapters, we had 8-10 members joining in each event.

We also had 2 high school co-op students work with us to help develop a workshop on "Prosthetic Arm", while learning to network with other professionals.

Volunteers are welcome to sign up on the [https://girlsinscience.ca/](https://girlsinscience.ca/)

Parents can sign up their daughters on the [https://girlsinscience.ca/](https://girlsinscience.ca/) and choose Lotus STEMM as the chapter.
Program co-ordinator: Goppikka Natkunam

Sessions:

- **October**: Making a Model Lung
  - Human Body focusing on how lungs work!
- **December**: Optical Illusions & Vision Science
  - Optical Illusions & Physics where we focus on how the interaction of the eye with illusions are directly related to one another
- **January**: Science & Exercise of Movement
  - Exercise Science/Kinesiology
- **February**: Immunology & Women in Science with Dr. Yanet Valdez Tejeira!
  - Immunology & how our immune system works within our body
- **March**: Plastic in my Watershed
  - Ecosystems & how we understand how we affect the environment by our actions. Also the event touched on the importance of Reduce, Reuse & Recycle
- **April**: Analyze your Fingerprints
  - Forensic Science & Criminology
- **May**: Magic with Math!
  - Mathematics where the event focused on how a circular disc/coaster fits into a slit created in a paper without damaging the slit/paper.
- **June**: Prosthetic Power! (LS co-op students)
  - Biomedical Engineering focusing on the prevalence/importance of prosthetics & how this relates to engineering

Target Audience

**Target audience**: 7-16 yrs old, South Asian girls across Canada.

**Number of sessions**: ~2 hours/month

**Technical requirements**: Anyone who has access to a laptop/tablet/personal computer and internet can register for this program.

**Instruction Medium**: Zoom

---

**Co-op Student Feedback**

Throughout my co-op term with Lotus STEMM, I learned many new things about myself. Also by getting a chance to plan, promote, and host our very own event, and learned many new skills which has helped me in my personal growth and development. I was able to learn and improve the following skills during my time as a co-op student with your organization:...
Lotus STEMM is pleased to introduce a new program **for youth by youth**. Workshops are developed and decided by 2 leading young women with an aim to encourage and build confidence in others. Teach Me in 5 will launch on **November 1st, 2021**.

This program will help train high school and undergraduate university students with skills in exploration, critical thinking, presentation and public speaking using various STEMM topics. The students will then train middle school students on the topics discussed.

**TEACH ME IN 5**

**Program Leads: Yashashwani Chauhan and Meshva Desai**

- **Phase 1: Exploration**
  - **Duration**: 4-6 weeks
  - **What**: Students will gain exposure to a variety topics in STEM through guided explorations/modules.
  - **How**: Prepared lessons on topic areas with teaching materials will be provided to club leaders. Goal is for in-person lessons.

- **Phase 2: Presentation**
  - **Duration**: 4-6 weeks
  - **What**: Students will learn the anatomy of an effective presentation. Sessions will focus on script writing, slide design and public speaking skills.
  - **How**: Workshop style skill building, including diverse guest speakers, activities and exercises to improve presentation skills. Also intended for in-person lessons.

This program is funded by Ontario Trillium Fund - Resilient Community Fund.
Lotus STEMM’s main agenda is to empower women and girls and enable their financial independence.

By introducing coding skills to children and their families, we intend to challenge them to learn skills that would polish their minds and have a new expertise (or revive old ones).

This program is also meant for elderlies who would want to spend their time more productively but exploring a new skill and creating something for their own pleasure.

**Target Audience**

*Age*: 8+; is interested in learning how to code.

*Groupings*: Anyone you consider family!

*Background*: South Asian girls and women.

*Academic requirements*: None!

*Technical requirements*: Anyone who has access to a laptop/tablet/personal computer and internet can register for this program.

**Instruction Medium**: Zoom

**Duration of course**: 5 weeks

**Hours per week**: 3 hours

**Completion criteria**: Ability to finish a project at the end of 5 weeks.

**Estimated Start date**: Oct/Nov, 2021

Participants will learn about basic programming concepts including decision-making, conditional operators, and loops. Participants will also learn how to make computer objects communicate and cooperate with each other. Simple multimedia content will also be covered.
The mentorship program started in late-January 2020. The mentors and mentees connect on slack for their individual sessions. Furthermore, LS Mentorship Team holds monthly virtual networking sessions for mentors and mentees to meet others in the program. These networking sessions are used to provide feedback, and also exchange ideas on successful mentorship.

Mentors and mentees learn to create SMART goals for their tenure of 6 months in the program. 3-month and 6-month feedback forms provide us insights into how many mentor-mentee pairs complete their SMART goals.

**Target audience:** South Asian Women ages 16+

**Number of cycles:** 3

The mentorship program started in late-January 2020. The mentors and mentees connect on slack for their individual sessions. Furthermore, LS Mentorship Team holds monthly virtual networking sessions for mentors and mentees to meet others in the program. These networking sessions are used to provide feedback, and also exchange ideas on successful mentorship.

Mentors and mentees learn to create SMART goals for their tenure of 6 months in the program. 3-month and 6-month feedback forms provide us insights into how many mentor-mentee pairs complete their SMART goals.

---

*I was a mentee last year in this program. My mentor was super helpful and kind. She helped me at every stage of the grad school application. I was able to make into a fully funded masters program.*

- Mentee testimonial
While “know your audience” is the golden rule of public engagement, cultural identity and language are often overlooked in science communication (SciComm) practices. With ~20% Canadians speaking a non-French/English language, this workshop series will promote the diversifying of SciComm, while expanding beyond the primary use of English or Eurocentric perspectives. There are few SciComm training programs in Canada, let alone blueprints for multilingual and/or multicultural SciComm. Now, Lotus STEMM is excited to bring you this NSERC-funded project, expanding SciComm and embracing the diverse languages, cultures and ways of knowing.

I really appreciate the skills I learned through your workshops. From storytelling, to evaluation, to culture, and more, your workshops were a fun part of this summer!

- Participant testimonial

This program was funded by NSERC Science Communication Training Pilot Grant in partnership with the Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum
Paksh

Program Lead: Jaishree Subrahmaniam, PhD

Paksh is an online platform that connects academics in a safe space to discuss their journeys through life in academia. This is a closed program with admissions through applications only. We conduct meet every two weeks by online calls (through Google Meet) with all the members for a four month period. Each meeting is scheduled for 1-1.5 hour for us to share experiences, stories and struggles of being in academia, curated by LS volunteers, led by Dr. Jaishree Subrahmaniam.

Focus of these meetings are centred around mental well-being and sharing coping strategies as an academic. Sharing experiences helps others realize they are not alone, and you practice courage & empowerment. We understand how uneasy it can be to admit to others your moments of struggles, failures and weaknesses. To open up in that way to others about your life requires courage, which requires practice. And you never know, you may find a friend to lean on, on the other side of the world!
Graph shows number of participants and their engagement with each session.

No of participants who completed the application for the cycle : 6

No. of unique active participants: 5

No of sessions held: 3

Topics covered:

Session 1: Everyone has mental health (Importance of talking about MH issues in academia)

Session 2: Being marginalized in academia (as a consequence of being a minority)

Session 3: Quantity over quality? Long-hours and publish or perish culture in academia, is it worth it?

Participants’ Feedback

“I loved how supporting and kind everyone was and an inclusive safe space was created for heartfelt discussions.”

“Very inclusive and on point feedbacks”

“How everyone was included and made me feel less alone.”

“Plan B is an option, something that would give us almost equal happiness going forward with.”

“Time ran out too fast”
The pond is an online discussion sessions similar to a movie/ book club where interested individuals discuss about a pre-fixed topic pertaining to women in STEMM. The session is one hour long. It is held once a month and is hosted on Google hangouts.

**Target audience:** Women in STEMM research and Education, Male allies

**Number of unique participants:** 5 participants per session

**Number of sessions held:** 7
- The contributions of Indian women in science during the Covid19 pandemic Feat. The Life of science team
- Lilavati’s daughters
- Inclusion in Scicomm Feat. Vanshika Singh, Contributor at the Science Policy forum

**Impact:**
The 3rd session on ‘Inclusion in Scicomm’ of ‘The Pond’ was extremely well received. The discussion was sparked two policy memos. There were two policy memos/open letters submitted to Science policy forum for ‘The Science Technology and Innovation Policy 2020’ on the topic of Disability in STEM after the session.

**Session topics (cont’d) –**
- Gender parity in Pakistan’s tech ecosystem Feat. Faiza Yousuf
- Being Visibly Impaired in STEMM Feat. Vidya Y Co-founder of Vision Empower
- Accessibility on Academic Science Journals Feat. Notes on the Academy
- Science Poetry Recital

“I really enjoyed all the different perspectives that everyone brought. I also liked the way it was moderated. I’m learning something new every session!”

“I loved hearing all the ladies’ perspective on their struggles in the field of science and knowing that we can support each other universally was a great take away”
The experiences of female healthcare professionals who wear religious head coverings after Quebec’s Bill 21

Project Lead: Suffia Malik
Team: Tiffany Chen & Zahra Abdallah

On June 16, 2019, Bill 21 (An Act respecting the laicity of the State) was passed in Quebec’s National Assembly. The bill prohibits professions with “coercive, authoritative power” including teachers, judges, police officers and government employees from wearing religious symbols. These symbols include religious head coverings such as the hijab, turban, and kippah. Interestingly, medical professionals are not prohibited under this bill from wearing religious symbols, despite being in positions of power. In this project, we are interested in the indirect effects of Quebec’s Bill 21 on female physicians and nurses who wear religious head-coverings practicing in Quebec as determined by surveying their experiences of perceived discrimination and the effects on their abilities to practice. Physicians and nurses were selected because they are professionals who regularly interact with the public and are seen to have decision-making power. The study will consist of online surveys and follow-up semi-structured interviews of female physicians and nurses who wear religious head-coverings practicing in Quebec since at least January 2018. The surveys and interviews will be conducted in both English and French. From this research, we aim to determine the indirect impact of a political environment that targets women who represent religious minority faiths. We aim to determine the bill’s effects on the healthcare workplace and women’s health in Quebec.

This program is funded by Ontario Trillium Fund - Resilient Community Fund.
POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD) IN SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN CANADA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Project Lead: Hafsa Omer

Purpose/Objective: This study intends to highlight the current initiatives and interventions set in place for PPD on a global scale, where the goal will be to identify the specific gaps which exist for South Asian women from a sociocultural perspective when seeking treatment. In doing so, we will be looking at factors such as language and culture acknowledgement, as well as obstacles women face such as the lack of recognition of PPD, family issues, etc. This project is meant to acknowledge and detect the challenges these women face, so that future interventions can be developed with sociocultural accountability in mind.

Methods: Our research will be centered around conducting a literature review, with an inclusion and exclusion criteria that concentrates on PPD, maternal health, South Asian women, current interventions, and the gaps therein. Currently, efforts are underway in establishing an inclusion and exclusion criteria. A comprehensive literature search will follow the establishment of the inclusion/exclusion criteria, in which papers will be organized based on criteria including but not limited to whether they contribute to research done on PPD interventions for other minority groups/demographics, if they identify certain gaps in current interventions, if they discuss the clinical manifestations of PPD, if they discuss Canadian PPD interventions, and if they emphasize any barriers that South Asian-identifying women face when seeking treatment for PPD.

Outcomes: This project is meant to further the discussion(s) on the importance of culturally responsive postpartum depression research and understanding. We anticipate our findings to highlight some of the challenges and current barriers South Asian women face in seeking treatment or interventions for the onset of PPD.

This program is funded by Ontario Trillium Fund - Resilient Community Fund.

Canada Summer Jobs

Government of Canada
INVESTIGATING CULTURAL CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC BURNOUT IN SOUTH ASIAN UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Project Lead: Sowmithree Ragothaman
Team: Zeba Rizvi

Burnout is a multidimensional construct that refers to a state of poor physical, mental and emotional well-being as a result of occupational stressors. Previous research has identified undergraduate students as a population that is prone to burnout due to repeated exposure to various socioeconomic, relational and professional stressors. Engineering undergraduate students are a subpopulation that can be considered particularly prone to burnout as a result of difficult workloads and high academic rigour. However, little research has been done with regard to placing these findings in a larger cultural context; namely how an individual's cultural background may influence their experiences of, and responses to, burnout. This study focuses specifically on engineering undergraduates who self-identify as being of South Asian descent (which includes the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). The goal of this study is to determine the perceived impact of parental and cultural expectations of high academic success on burnout of South Asian engineering students. In particular, the weight of prestige and social reputation factors associated with completing engineering “successfully” in contributing to burnout will be explored. This information will be gathered using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory for Students (OLBI-S) to assess burnout, followed by semi-structured qualitative interviews revolving around the topics of program choice, definition of success, mental well-being and coping mechanisms. Questions specifically regarding parental involvement and expectations in all of the above will be used to gauge the level of cultural pressure faced by individuals. Thematic analyses will then be conducted to identify recurring motifs in students’ experiences, their needs and help make culturally-sensitive recommendations to assist students, parents and engineering departments in addressing academic burnout.
Lotus STEMM has been featured on a number of conferences and panel discussions.

#EnableHer:
• Celebrating International Women’s Day with Enable Training and Consulting Inc. (Enable Education)

The Addictive Brain:
• Interview with a Scientist: Dr. Roopali Chaudhary. Episode 8
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLnF5BnELAU

Venture Lab
• 5 Toronto organizations connecting girls and women to STEM across the city

FESI Conference
• Vendor at the York University Faculty of Education Summer Institute (FESI) 2021 Online Conference

ARIS/RIC Conference
• Presenter at Advancing Research Impact in Society (ARIS)/ Research Impact Canada (RIC) Virtual Summit
• Presented on Expanding Horizons workshops and need of multilingual & multicultural scicomm

STAN Conference
• Panelist at Science & Technology Awareness Network (STAN) 2021 Online Conference

Perimeter Institute
• Speaker at the International Women’s Day Conference

Lotus STEMM thanks Partners & Sponsors 2021