

5 YEARS AS A CHARITY

COMMUNITY



ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020



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The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges for us as an organization as well as exacerbated barriers to access for our communities. As a responsive organization, we conducted assessments to understand the needs of our community and adapted in order to inspire, elevate, and empower youth through this critical time.

This Annual Report showcases the work from September 2019 to August 2020.

WORDS FROM...

OUR BOARD CHAIR

It is a privilege to serve as the Board Chair for Visions of Science. 2020 was truly the year of resilience and innovation as the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges for the charity as well as the communities served.

As a community responsive organization, Visions of Science responded to the new challenges by placing the needs of our youth participants at the forefront. In order to understand how best to continue supporting youth through meaningful STEM education, a community-wide analysis was conducted in collaboration with families. These critical findings set the stage for how to adapt traditionally in-person programs to the online format. In a time of great uncertainty, Visions of Science remains steadfast in its commitment to inspiring, elevating, and empowering youth from low-income communities.

In 2020, Visions of Science also celebrated 5 years of impact as a charity. The organization extended its reach geographically, grew its network of partners and supporters, and responded to

changing community needs by enriching program offerings for youth, adapting programs to the online format, fulfilling youth technology needs and more.

The extraordinary leadership of the staff and Board of Directors in 2019-2020 has been integral in guiding the organization through a time of rapid change. On behalf of the Board, thank you to the incredible funders, partners, and communities that have supported us through this unprecedented time. As we continue to move forward, we are excited to continue empowering future leaders in STEM!



Keddone Dias
Board Chair

OUR CEO

No one could have predicted the events of this past year.

We started off "business as usual" and then were forced to rapidly pivot, adapt, and operate out of a "new normal". During this transition, we listened deeply to our communities, asked questions, and crafted appropriate interventions in response to their needs. We worked with our network to facilitate connections to critical resources, adapted our programs to online, and developed a platform for youth to share their stories in their own words. Overall, we affirmed our position that we are a community-centered organization and that despite the challenges and changes that may come, our [#CommunityIsntCancelled](#).

We also learned many new truths as an organization. We acknowledge that our mission is a direct response to persistent inequities faced by youth in communities. Therefore, building healthy communities demands disrupting cycles of systemic inequities. We also recognize that we have a critical role to play in how we engage with, challenge, and hold these systems accountable. We understand the importance of raising awareness and using our voice in advocacy for the

youth we serve. We don't have it all figured out and we must remain introspective. In this, we will continue to listen to and work with our communities to envision and build new frameworks for transformation.

I am continually encouraged by the radical generosity that we experienced this past year. It has afforded us the opportunity to be adaptable and resilient during challenging times, as well as dream bigger and bolder for the future. As always, the youth that we serve continue to be the driving force behind our work as an organization.

Regardless of what lies ahead, our community is never cancelled.

Onwards and Upwards,



Dr. Eugenia Addy, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter: @EugeniaDuodu

WHO WE ARE

Visions of Science Network for Learning Inc. (VoSNL) exists to advance the educational achievements and positive development of youth from low-income and racialized communities through meaningful engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). We support youth by providing equitable access to experiential STEM programming and consistent environments where youth can be:

-  **CURIOUS**
- +
-  **CONFIDENT**
- +
-  **COMPETENT**
- +
-  **CONNECTED**



We have experienced immense growth as an organization with the most rapid development occurring over the last 5 years as a charity.

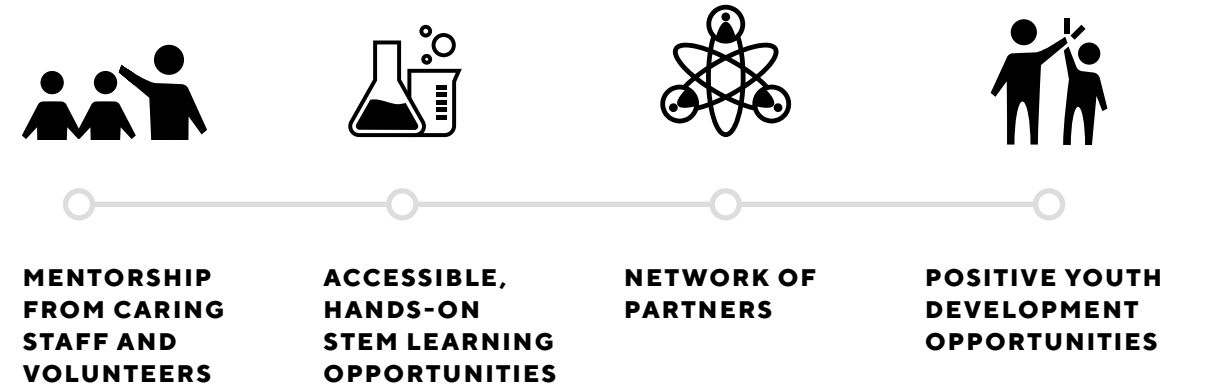
In 2020, we shifted gears to meet the changing needs of our communities and adapted programs to online in order to continue supporting youth and families disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

14,000
YOUTH ENGAGED IN STEM-BASED PROGRAMMING TO DATE.

WHAT WE DO

Our programs and initiatives create an accessible and supportive STEM learning network. This support ensures that our participants are knowledgeable in STEM fields, skilled, and confident as they progress from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood.

PROGRAM MODEL



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

-  **IMPROVED PERCEPTION OF STEM**
-  **IMPROVED SELF-AWARENESS, RELATIONSHIP SKILLS, AND LEADERSHIP**
-  **INCREASED STEM KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**
-  **INCREASED ACADEMIC AND CAREER READINESS**

5 YEARS OF EMPOWERING YOUTH...

THROUGH STEM

Over the past 5 years, our organization has grown exponentially in community impact and capacity.

Until 2016, our programs served children and youth 7 to 14 years old through our flagship STEM Clubs program. In 2017, we responded to the growing needs of our communities by launching the STEM Leaders program targeted towards youth 13 to 18 years old with a focus on engaging them in advanced and immersive STEM learning, career development, and more.

Our rapid growth has enabled **increased impact in communities** and positioned us **as a top-tier STEM organization in Canada.**

2015

5

PART-TIME STAFF

\$65K

YEARLY BUDGET

16

COMMUNITIES SERVED

200

YOUTH SERVED ANNUALLY

1

PROGRAM

2020

46

STAFF (10 FULL-TIME + 36 PART-TIME)

\$1.2M+

YEARLY BUDGET

30+

COMMUNITIES SERVED

1,000+

YOUTH SERVED ANNUALLY

5+

PROGRAMS

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES...

800

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION CALLS MADE TO FAMILIES

THROUGH A PANDEMIC

At Visions of Science, the safety of our community members - including youth participants, volunteers, staff, and partners is our first priority. So when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, we knew what we had to do: **adapt in order to meet the needs of our community.**

We began by conducting a needs assessment with over 700 youth participants and families in order to better understand their experiences. As a result of the findings, we shifted our focus to connecting families to critical resources and developing an online offering of our STEM programs and initiatives.

380

YOUTH ENGAGED IN EMERGENCY VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

We launched the **Community Isn't Cancelled** campaign to share the message that although we are physically distancing, our community is strong and we are committed to inspiring, elevating, and empowering youth. As part of the campaign, youth from across programs developed blog posts and YouTube videos to showcase how they are learning and growing as leaders during this critical time.

"I think Visions of Science handled and responded to the crisis really well. Making the program online and adding multiple roles for the youth facilitators was really good, as it gave us something to do during this pandemic."

YOUTH FACILITATOR

YOUTH PROGRAMS

STEM CLUBS

Our longest running program, STEM Clubs is a weekly, multi-year program that engages youth 8-13 years old in meaningful opportunities to explore inquiry-based STEM learning and develop foundational learning skills. With support from caring mentors, youth are encouraged to ask questions to develop critical thinking and social emotional learning including leadership, confidence, self awareness, and more. We create a "network of learning" and partner with housing providers, post-secondary institutions, and community-based organizations to develop and implement the program directly within their community.

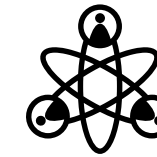
The STEM Clubs program has experienced rapid growth in the last 5 years, **growing from engaging 200 youth in 12 communities in 2015 to 600 youth in 29 communities this year.**

STEM LEADERS

We launched the STEM Leaders program in 2017 in response to growing demand from the community. Targeted towards youth 13 to 18 years old, STEM Leaders aims to build on the learning facilitated in STEM Clubs. The immersive program is directed towards the pursuit of post-secondary education and advanced career aspirations, engaging youth in 4 areas of learning. →



EXPERIENTIAL STEM LEARNING



ACADEMIC AND CAREER-READINESS



LEADERSHIP AND POSITIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



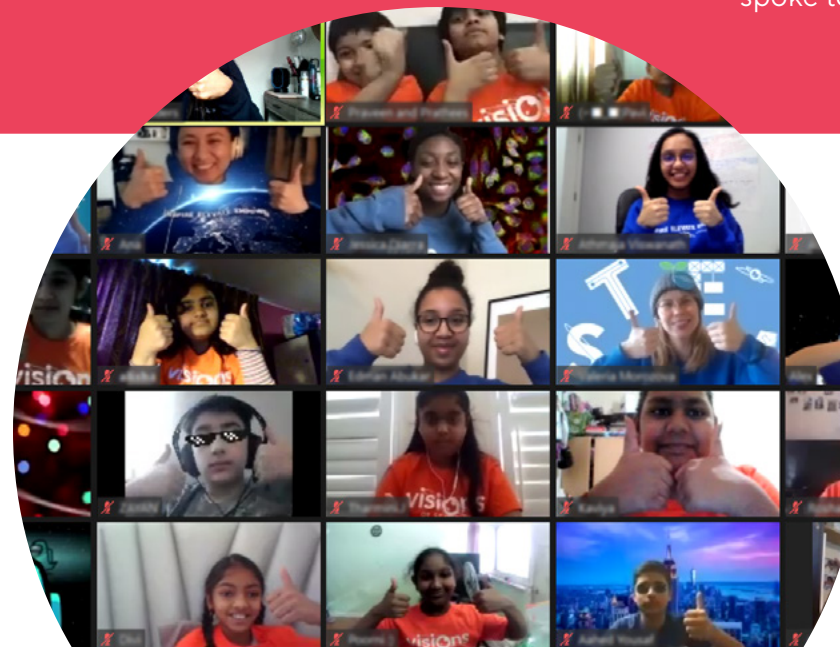
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COVID-19 RESPONSE:

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, we quickly adapted our STEM Clubs to online for the rest of the program year and engaged 274 youth from all 29 communities across the GTA.

In order to continue engaging youth in a safe way, we developed an online offering of the STEM Leaders program with an extended range of opportunities.

- Youth Facilitators joined the online STEM Clubs program to serve as mentors and continue to grow as leaders in their community
 - We recruited STEM professionals from diverse fields to lead Career Exploration Workshops where youth explored different STEM journeys and spoke to industry leaders
 - Youth took on a number of additional virtual opportunities including becoming Peer Tutors, Program Developers, and Content Developers where they developed content for the Visions of Science website and social media platforms
- Through online programming, we held 51 online sessions and engaged 39 youth in 5 unique program streams.**



ALUMNI STORIES



MOHAMED ADAM

Program Facilitator, STEM Clubs
Student, University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine

“Growing up, my perceptions around STEM and scientists were formed by shows like Bill Nye The Science Guy - I couldn’t really see myself fitting in to the science world. It was in Grade 8 that my interest in STEM really took off. I had a Black science teacher who went out of his way to ensure we had an enriched, positive learning experience in his classroom - his lessons featured concepts, lessons of empowerment, mentorship, and more.

Throughout university I was faced with similar barriers. I began my undergraduate degree at a major Canadian university as the only Black student in my Biotech Engineering program and no Black professors. Wanting to connect with individuals who could share and empathize with my cultural experiences, it was on my mind to seek out a

community of support. I joined a number of university groups and co-founded Say Somaali, a grassroots organization providing mentorship to high school and post-secondary students. I felt encouraged knowing I was making an impact and so I continued down my STEM path.

Now that I’m in my first year at the University of Toronto’s School of Medicine, I’m excited to be able to deepen that impact. My goal is to positively contribute to the social determinants of health and improve equity in the healthcare system. I also want to continue working with youth-centered organizations - **it’s important for me to apply the skills I’ve learned in order to widen the path for the next generation of young Black scientists who want to pursue a career in the STEM world.”**

SONIA IGBOANUGO

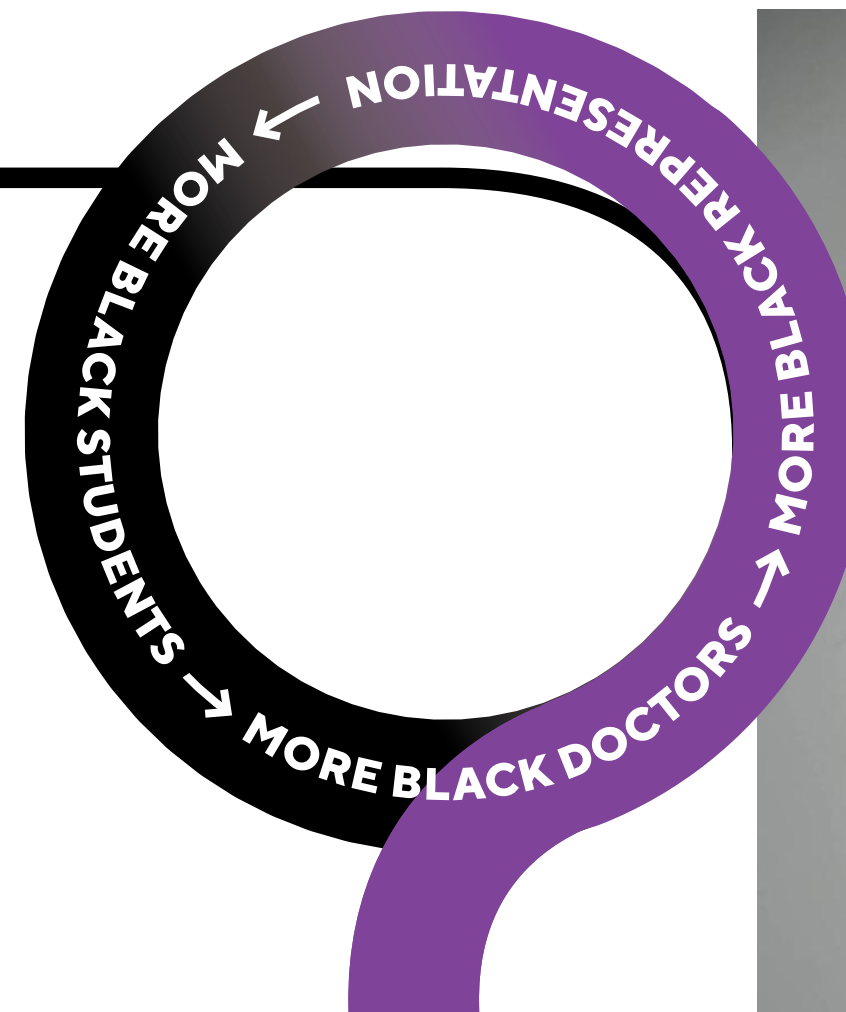
Program Facilitator, STEM Clubs
Student, University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine

“As the only Black woman in my undergraduate program at university, I sought out spaces where black excellence was the norm. I found Black mentors who were sensitive to my cultural experiences and formed a community of people who were rooting for me in my pursuit of excellence.

I joined Visions of Science because of the role they play in young people’s lives. I can wholeheartedly say that I wouldn’t be in medical school without the support of my mentors. I know firsthand the importance of mentors in someone’s career.

By mentoring youth at Visions I want to remove the idea that they don’t belong in STEM and show them they are welcome here.

For me, going to medical school isn’t just about harboring STEM knowledge for myself. My passion for STEM is strengthened by my relationship to my community. I’m constantly thinking about how I can take what I’m learning and apply it to support my community. It’s the idea of “STEM in Service” - leveraging STEM as a vehicle for change in the larger society - that has really moved me to pursue a career in medicine.”



NEW INITIATIVES

PRE-PANDEMIC



AMD LEARNING LAB

We launched our new mobile Computer Learning Lab powered by AMD! Complete with a class set of laptops and new interactive digital tools, this portable learning lab has the potential to engage over 700 youth living in the GTA across the range of our community-based programs. The increased accessibility to this technology not only allows us to deepen the impact of the STEM curricula delivered in communities, but creates an opportunity for youth to explore new areas including Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality.

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERISM:

On March 7 we hosted an “Employee Build Day” at the AMD headquarters in Markham. We partnered with a team of corporate volunteers to prepare the laptops for program launch which included programming and test-driving coding software. This unique experience gave us the opportunity to not only tap into their wealth of skill and knowledge as experts in the technology field but also bring our partners closer to the mission — and see firsthand the impact they make possible!

PROGRAM TAKE-OFF:

Finally, the program launched in the Erin Court community in Mississauga where the very first group of youth had the opportunity to “Code Their Own Adventure”, employing the new set of digital tools and utilizing specialized software to learn the basics of coding, code their own video games, and more!

COVID-19 NOTE:

The shift from in-person to online during the COVID-19 pandemic further reinforces the important role that technology plays in our modern day world. Although our efforts were temporarily paused to ensure the safety of our youth, we are committed to finding innovative ways to continue exploring the newest areas of technology and look forward to re-initiating the AMD Learning Lab experience in the upcoming future.

VISIONARY SUMMIT

This year we hosted our first ever Visionary Summit at the Ontario Science Centre. A gathering of over 60, the event brought together a diverse group of thought-leaders from formal and informal STEM learning communities to work together on a collaborative approach to supporting youth from low-income communities through STEM learning.

THE DAY-LONG FORUM ADDRESSED TOPICS INCLUDING:

- dominant narratives of youth from low-income communities
- barriers to meaningful engagement including prejudice and hostility, tokenism, cultural clash, and more as indicated by Visions of Science youth
- organizational responses to meaningfully support youth

78%

INDICATED THEY WERE ABLE TO LEARN FROM OTHERS WORKING IN THIS SPACE

73%

INDICATED THEY MADE CONNECTIONS THAT WILL IMPACT THEIR ABILITY TO MEANINGFULLY ENGAGE YOUTH FROM LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES



“This [event] has inspired me to encourage my organization to better understand the challenges facing people participating in our programming. I also gained deeper insight into the barriers facing youth in low-income communities, as this is a perspective I am not directly connected to day-to-day.”

VISIONARY SUMMIT ATTENDEE

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

BEYOND THE HASHTAG #BLACKLIVESMATTER

THE VISION

As an organization, our mission is in direct response to the systemic inequities faced by youth in the communities that we serve, communities in which many of us were raised. We believe that building the health of our communities involves disrupting the cycle that these systemic inequities present through STEM learning and positive development. We aim to support and empower youth to be leaders in various sectors and contribute to dismantling systemic barriers for future generations. While the impacts of anti-black racism seek to cast a distracting shadow, we will forever celebrate the black leaders in our communities who contribute to making a change. Leaders like Alomar and Ikran, Micah and Sumaya, Nawaal and Arefa, Tatyana, the list goes on.

Despite recent social isolation resulting from COVID-19- we remain. Our Community Isn't Cancelled. We will continue to curate and elevate the contributions of youth from our communities in the midst of COVID-19 and dispel the negative dominant narratives that persist.

For us at Visions of Science, the work continues.

TO OUR COMMUNITY

To our Visions of Science community. We will continue to work hard for you. We are all part of making our communities better. You are seen and you are valued.

To our long-time and new supporters, know that you are a part of creating change. Thank you for trusting in our leadership and supporting our capacity to do the work that we do. Our commitment is bolstered by your support and we would not be able to exist without it. Change will happen, and we hope that you will continue to partner with us to achieve it.

To the black youth, facilitators, and families in our communities. I know that you might be exhausted, confused, and frustrated. I want you to know that we see you, we hear you, and we are here to advocate for you.

You continue to inspire us and catalyze the change necessary for a brighter future.
Forward Movement!



Dr. Eugenia Addy, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer



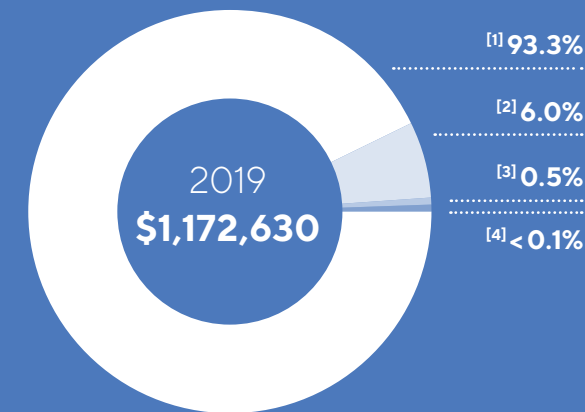
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

All financial data presented is from our 2019 financial statements audited by Pennylegion Chung LLP for the period January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. For a full copy of our 2019 audited financial statements please visit: www.vosnl.org/finance-andtransparency

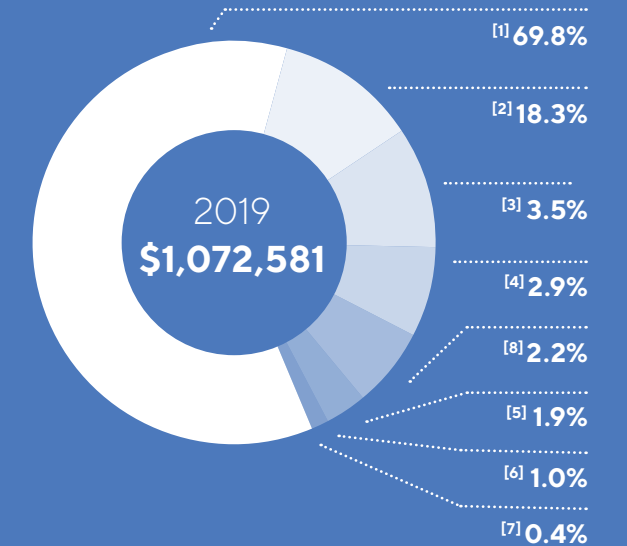
	2019	2018
REVENUE		
^[1] Contributions	\$ 1,094,297	\$ 747,825
^[2] Events	71,217	45,226
^[3] Service fees	5,744	13,825
^[4] Interest	1,372	184
TOTAL	\$ 1,172,630	\$ 807,060
EXPENSES		
^[1] Personnel	\$ 749,733	\$ 530,358
^[2] Program	196,062	115,639
^[3] Fundraising	37,035	30,387
^[4] Occupancy	30,919	22,201
^[5] Professional Fees	20,373	11,909
^[6] Office & General	10,991	5,646
^[7] Insurance	4,103	4,179
^[8] Amortization	23,365	11,683
TOTAL	\$ 1,072,581	\$ 732,002
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	100,049	75,058
Net assets, beginning of year	80,362	5,304
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 180,411	\$ 80,362



REVENUE



EXPENSES



SUPPORTERS

Visions of Science gratefully acknowledges the support of our funders and program partners.

VISIONARY



INNOVATORS



AMBASSADORS

THE GALIN FOUNDATION
E.W BICKLE
BETTER TORONTO COALITION GRANT
CANADAHELPS BLACK SOLIDARITY FUND

BUILDERS

CADILLAC FAIRVIEW
ARTREACH TORONTO
TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL
YOUTH PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE CANADA

We also acknowledge our individual donors and those that give to the organization anonymously.

MAJOR PROGRAM PARTNERS



OUR COMMUNITY

It takes a knowledgeable and dedicated team to drive the impact that we want to see in communities. We would not be able to achieve our impact without the hard-working and motivated team that is representative of our communities and passionate about elevating communities. A special thank you to the incredible team of over 100 volunteers who donate their time to this work. Thank you for bringing our mission to life.

STAFF LIST

- Dr. Eugenia Duodu, Ph.D.** Chief Executive Officer
- Turfah Tabish** Director of Program Operations
- Camilo Garay** Manager of Program Development
- Hamna Awan** Manager of Communications and Marketing
- Dina Al-khooly** Manager of Research and Evaluation
- Yi Lu** Team and Operations Coordinator
- Destiny Shaw** Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator
- Erick Rodriguez** Graphic Design and Marketing Coordinator
- Darren Sam** Program Lead
- Indika Somir** Program Lead
- Sandroll Rodrigues** Program Lead
- Farid Ahmad** Program Lead

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Chair: Keddone Dias** Executive Director (Interim), LAMP Community Health Centre
- Dr. Winston Klass** Mathematician and Vice President, Ipsos Reid (Retired)
- Annelies Groen** STEM Instructional Leader, Toronto District School Board
- Trisha Hosein** Ontario Certified Teacher, Peel District School Board
- Erin Stein** Senior HR Director, RBC Insurance
- Adnan Syed** Manager of Research Programs, Partnerships & Strategic Initiatives, Faculty of Science, Ryerson University

LOOKING AHEAD

We recently participated in a strategic refresh series with the goal of developing our Theory of Change which, featuring a revised mission and organizational priorities will act as a guiding compass for the upcoming years.

As we look ahead to the next 5 years as a charity, we enter with renewed excitement and a refined vision on how to meaningfully inspire, elevate, empower, and connect youth from low-income and racialized communities through STEM education.

We are reinvigorated with our new mission:

**TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES,
SOCIETY, AND THE
PLANET THROUGH
EQUITABLE
ACCESS TO STEM.**





INSPIRE ELEVATE EMPOWER

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