

Impact Report

2019-2021



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RISE **STEM**

Impact Report

2019-2021

Letter from the Founder:

Rise In STEM started as a result of my frustrations with my experiences in academia, and today it has blossomed into a community driven by folks passionate about STEM and most importantly, uplifting young people.

For many of us, growing up there were not many representations of the possibilities of what the future can look like, or access to supports and opportunities to explore our interests, and motivations, and build an

understanding of various pathways, beyond what we are traditionally told.

At Rise In STEM, we strive to build a network of support and curate meaningful experiences for Black and underserved youth to tap into their potential. We want to demonstrate ways communal and peer learning can drive success and fill gaps within our community and STEM fields broadly.

Though the pandemic brought its challenges, I am so proud of how our program activities and the team have grown significantly in the past two years. The ongoing support received from our mentors, volunteers, collaborators, funders, and community groups propelled our success and impact for which we are forever grateful.

We are extremely excited and motivated to continue building awareness, support, and growth opportunities with and for youth across the city, and hope to contribute to the advancement of STEM education and representation.

Sincerely,

Irene Duah-Kessie



A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Irene Kessie". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a light grey color.

About Rise in STEM

Our Mission

We are a Toronto-based grassroots organization that aims to level the playing field for Black youth by breaking down barriers to higher education and STEM career pathways.

Our Why?

Recognizing the lack of racial diversity in STEM, we strive to increase the representation of Black youth across STEM fields and promote personal growth within a supportive learning culture as youth navigate education and life.

Traditional pathways are often not communicated in relevant ways that align young people's lifestyles and experiences. We hope to debunk STEM stereotypes, and demonstrate ways STEM is integrated in our daily lives and intersects with our culture of art, music, gaming, sports and beyond.

Values that guide us:



Inclusion: Create a welcoming space where youth are encouraged to be their best selves and build strong connections to enrich our community.



Empower: Provide opportunities for personal and professional growth by centering youth well-being and leadership development.

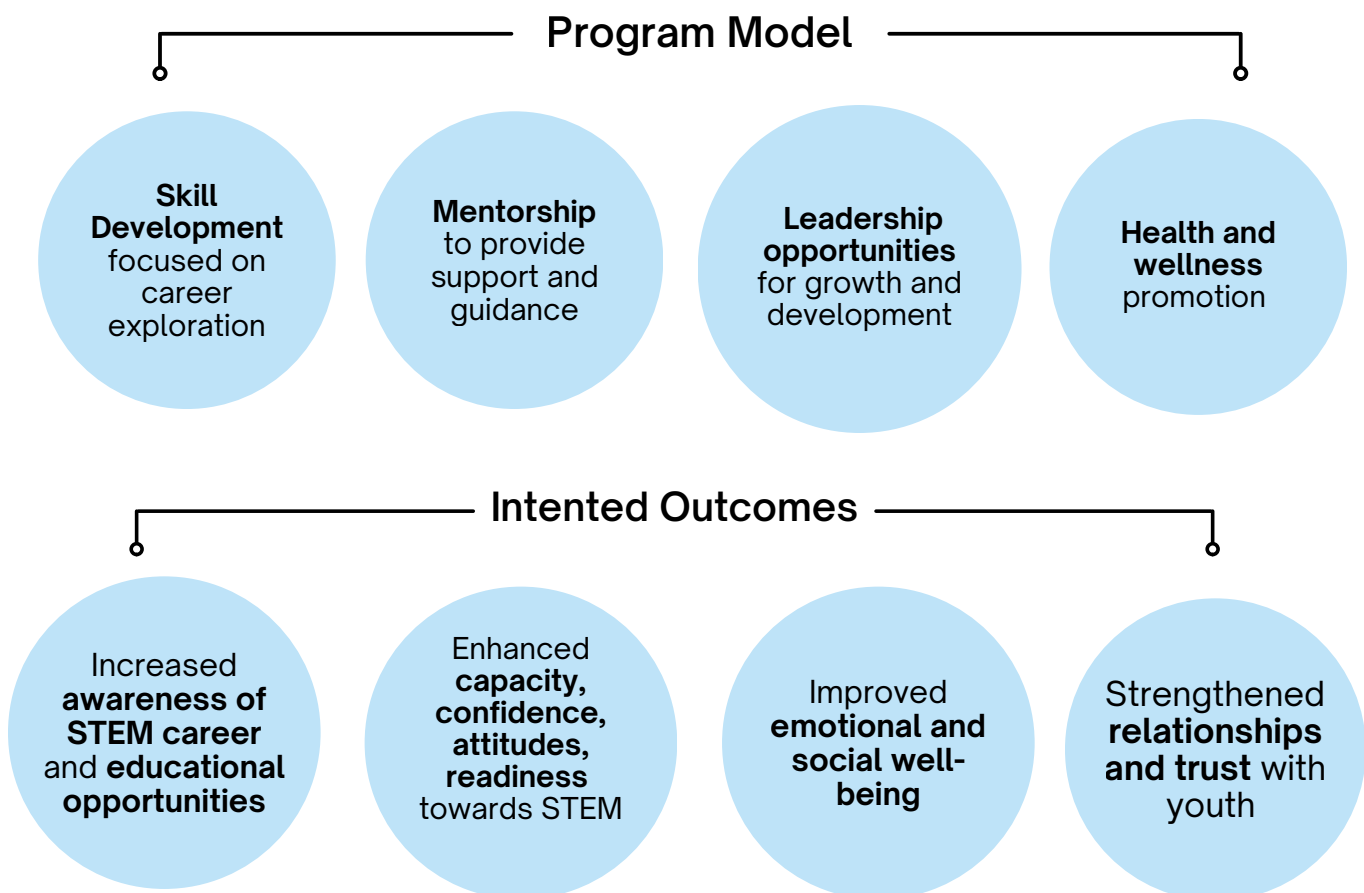


Inclusion: Curate non-traditional learning opportunities to foster knowledge and creativity that challenges the status quo.

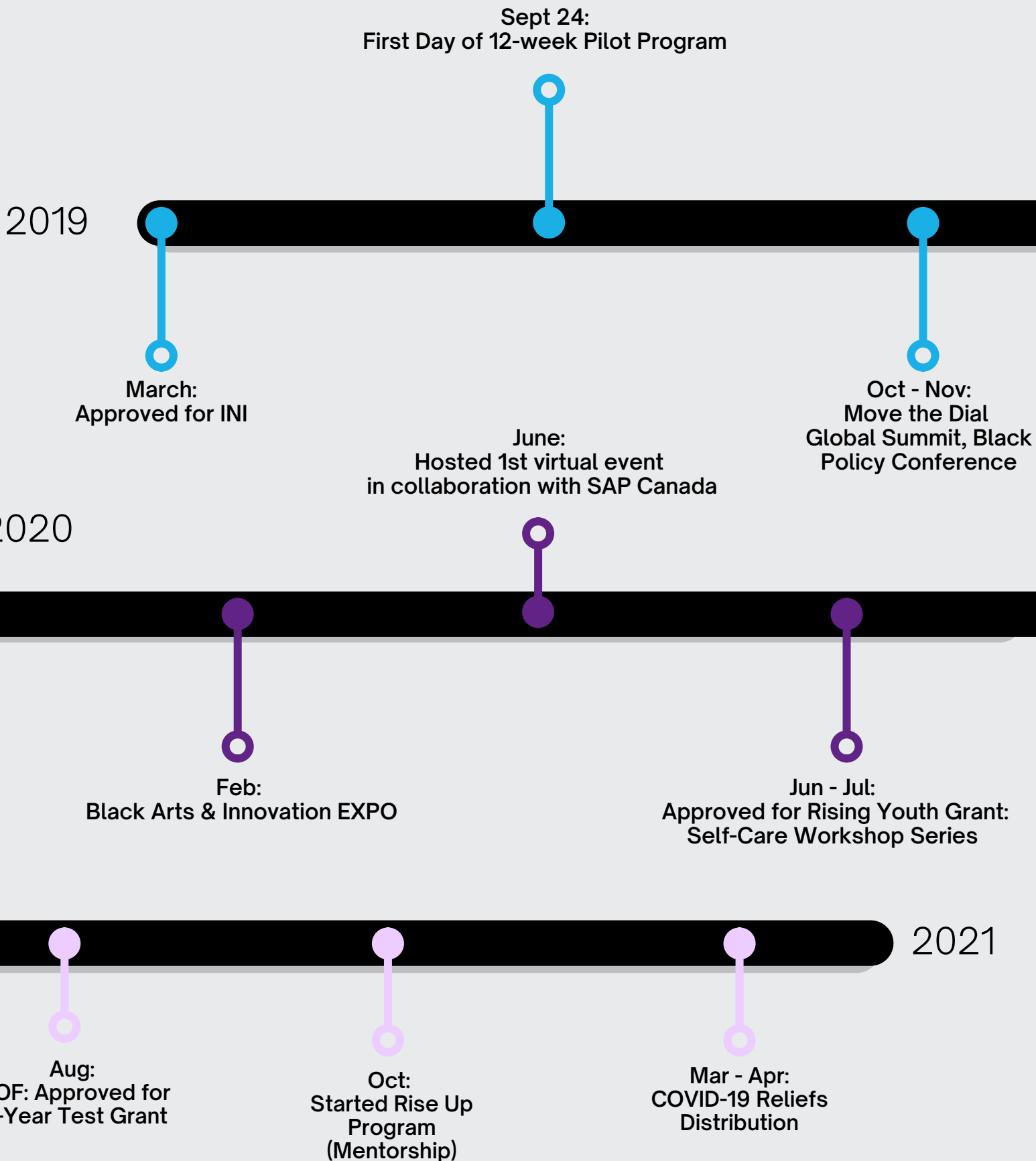
Our Goals and Model

Program Goals

- 1** To introduce new STEM-related concepts and knowledge of the post-secondary programs and career paths in STEM
- 2** To strengthen the capacity of youth by enhancing communication, problem-solving, leadership skills and self-awareness around their educational pathway
- 3** To build relationships among core team members, participants, and community members to foster a stronger and more connected STEM and academic community



Key Milestones



Programs: Year 1

2019-20 PILOT YEAR

Workshops

Fall Program

Our pilot program kicked off on September 24, 2019, at the Etobicoke YMCA. It consisted of a 12-week workshop series and events that introduced youth to activities and professionals across STEM fields, as well as self-care practices.

The workshops focused on gaming, virtual reality, goal setting, hydraulics, yoga, and meditation. Other team building workshops and reflective exercises were woven into these topics to delve into their motivations and learnings throughout the program.



2020 Summer Workshop Series

In light of the pandemic, we hosted a 4-part series that focused on wellness, skincare, confidence, and post-secondary preparation. Youth participants received wellness kits and back-to-school packages.

Programs: Year 1

2019-20 PILOT YEAR

Events

STEM Conferences

Our youth participants furthered their learnings at local STEM-based conferences, where they had the opportunity to build professional, networking skills and exposure to emerging careers and innovations within the sector.



Youth participants attended the #MoveTheDial Global Summit, the Black Arts and Innovation Expo, and the Toronto Black Policy Conference, which focused on diverse career paths and ways that policy shapes the economy and well-being of Black communities. We also collaborated with BrainSTEM Alliance for a National Health Day event.



Youth Innovation Day with SAP Canada

To wrap up our program, we planned a Youth Innovation Day in partnership with SAP Canada focused on applying design thinking concepts to engineering-based challenges.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we pivoted the event virtually, and this was our first online programming. We engaged youths for a day of learning, problem solving and reflection.

Programs: Year 2

2020-21 Rise Up Program

The inaugural **Rise Up Program** was a 16-week virtual program from October 2020 - May 2021. It consisted of workshops, events, and mentoring sessions, which was our first time offering individualized mentorship covering a wide range of topics including:



Goal setting +
career exploration



Digital + Visual
Design



Leadership +
Teamwork



Networking



Conflict
Resolution

As part of the program, some of our youth participated in the Boston Techtogether Hackathon. We also worked on a project for the Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museum to contribute to their exhibits and learn about underrepresented trailblazers in STEM.

COVID-19 Impact and Response

The **pandemic** shifted the nature of our work, which allowed us to engage with youth beyond the Etobicoke community virtually.

As a result of the prompt pivot to online learning, COVID restrictions, and the lack of health and wellness services available to youth, we developed a COVID-response project to better support participation in our programs.

With support from Ontario Trillium Foundation, we distributed laptops, wellness kits, and food vouchers among the youth participants.



Our Impact

2019-20 & 2020-21 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

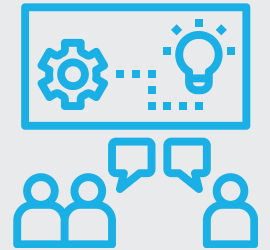
110

Youth Reached



34

STEAM Workshops & Events



20

Mentors Engaged



"This experience has been extremely fulfilling. I have learned a lot about the youth, education system, and many opportunities to reflect on different social issues"

- Mentor, 2020-21

In 2020-21 Rise In STEM Distributed



80

Wellness Kits and School Supply Packages



25

Laptops



270

Food Vouchers

Our Impact

Hear what some of our youth participants had to say!

100 % Participants reported that they felt safe and supported in their involvement in our programs

"My favorite part about the program is having conversations with my mentor and getting to know her"

83 % Participants felt that their communication, networking skills, and confidence has improved

"I've learned from Dr. ABC that boundaries are okay and normal to have with work/school partners and they are needed."

"I learned about time management and I also learned how to be more confident and how to express my opinions"

87 % Participants expressed that they would enjoy a career in STEM

*" For me, I learned to *finally* create personal goals that don't concern my studies in my group. Every week, my mentor would hold us to some goals. And by the next session, we would hopefully have achieved those small goals. It's worked so far! "*

Supporting Partners

We are grateful for the tremendous amount of support we have received from various organizations to grow our programs and work!

Funders

Ontario Trillium Foundation

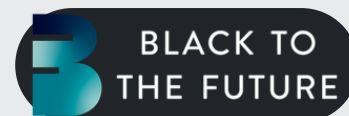


City of Toronto



Black To The Future

Rising Youth



Program Collaborators & Supporters

The Neighborhood Group

Herschel

YMCA Etobicoke

Techsdale

Brown Girls Yoga

Jilissa Brown

SAP Canada

Canada Learning to Code

BrainSTEM Alliance

McMaster University Black Health Science Students Association

Mohawk College

Dr. Andrew B. Campbell

Canadian Multicultural Inventors Museums

Game Changers

University of Toronto's Black Researchers Initiative to Empower

City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit

Financial Position

The financial information below represents the program periods of February 2019 - June 2020 and July 2020 - June 2021.

	2019-20	2020-21
Revenue		
Grants	13,930	81,400
Donations	--	250
COVID-19 Relief	--	20,000
Total Revenue	13,930	101,650
Expenses		
Personnel (staff, speakers & volunteers)	6,420	23,799.45
Program Supplies (food, materials, transportation)	2,471	47,700.13
Capacity Building	1,419.50	2,603.52
Administrative	2,619.4	12,700
Total Expenses	12,929.90	86,803.10
Net Assets		
Total Beginning of the year	7,430	80,400
End of the year	1000	24,846.90

Contact Information



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