



## Turning Closed Doors Into An Opportunity for Transformation

It's the fear of any small-business owner: closing the doors on their business. This was the position entrepreneur, Anu Bidani, found herself in last year. As the founder and CEO of STEM Minds, a social enterprise that offers cutting-edge STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) programs to children ages 4-18, Anu was leading a thriving headquarters facility in Aurora and planning expansion into other in-person locations.

In early 2020, STEM Minds launched a joint venture with St. Matthew Catholic Elementary School in Markham, ON to convert excess classroom space into an innovation hub. This was an exciting partnership and one that would have no doubt made headlines. Unfortunately, the timing of this initiative coincided with the onset of COVID-19 and due to provincial and local public health requirements, the program had to be suspended.

While this experience would discourage any entrepreneur, Anu is the type of person who sees closed doors, not as endings, but as redirections. Very soon after the pandemic forced the closure of all in-person facilities, Anu began to work on accelerating STEM Minds' virtual programs.



“COVID was unexpected for all of us” Anu says. “But instead of seeing it as an obstacle, I saw it as an opportunity to take STEM Minds global. By going virtual, we were able to expand our reach beyond York Region, with programs now being offered across Canada as well as in the U.S. and Asia.”

To continue this global expansion for STEM Minds, Anu is currently preparing for an investor raise. She was proud to be accepted into the Tech Undivided program offered by York Region-based ventureLAB where she has been given access to a support ecosystem of resources, networking opportunities, and expert advice. She is excited about what's on the horizon for STEM Minds and credits the strength of partnerships as one of the keys to her success during this pivot.

“We've worked with a lot of small businesses to rise to the challenges presented by COVID” she says. “A local company even helped us make shields and masks for our staff and students. There is power in community.” We are also working with other local businesses like Hub Climbing to explore programs to offer in the community.

With the World Economic Forum stating that the jobs of tomorrow will rely heavily on a good grasp of STEM subjects, it is clear that Anu's mission to build future-ready kids and provide them with a world-class STEM education, is right on target. From bustling cities in Canada to remote villages in India, STEM Minds is breaking down barriers and transforming the future of education.

More at <https://www.stemminds.com>