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## BioBuilder Founder and Executive Director Featured as 2020 MWM Trailblazer Award Winner



**CAMBRIDGE, MA -- December 04, 2020** – Dr. Natalie Kuldell, Founder and Executive Director of BioBuilder, is being featured by Million Women Mentors, an initiative of STEMconnector, the nation’s largest professional services organization dedicated to developing a diverse, STEM-ready workforce. In October 2020, Dr. Kuldell was named as one of the 26 winners for the Million Women Mentors (MWM) Trailblazer Awards, celebrating women in STEM who are well-accomplished leaders in their field and demonstrate excellence in the field of mentoring.

Dr. Kuldell is a winner in the **STEM Trailblazer 2020** category; this award is for an individual who has made a significant contribution in a STEM field in 2020. She is joined by Kristy Salmon (BP), Lateefah Stanford (BP), Tonya Peeples (Penn State University), Heidi Gold-Dworkin (Little Scientists), Carlotta Arthur (Henry Luce Foundation), Linda Kekelis (STEM Next Opportunity Fund), Ronda Hamm (Corteva) and Kimberly Wright (Discovery Education).

Throughout this year, Dr. Kuldell has led BioBuilder’s response to the changes in educational models due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in March 2020 with the closure of the Learning Lab at LabCentral



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to outside visitors, BioBuilder transitioned its curriculum to from in-lab and in-person instruction and interactions to provide one-of-a-kind online instruction in synthetic biology.

The pilot program, the [Idea Accelerator](#), relied on the existing BioBuilder textbook and online resources, as well as BioBuilder's BioDesign framework to teach students life science and how to apply that science with an engineer's mindset. Over the course of three weeks, students asynchronously learned from Dr. Kuldell through online lectures about synbio and project design, and synchronously work with a team of peers to brainstorm, design, and present their own ideas to solve problems with novel biotechnologies.

With these adaptations, BioBuilder has been able to support hundreds of students and their teachers with novel content, meaningful social interactions, teamwork experiences, problem-based learning, and professional skill-building. Their online programming has grown to include multiple cohorts of the Idea Accelerator, the [Project Development Studio](#), allowing teams to bring their biodesign projects and further pursue them with the help of an industry mentor, and [BioBuilders 6-7-8](#), a program aimed at fostering interest and engagement of middle school students through interactive lectures and team biodesign projects, as well as free teacher professional development engagements throughout the fall.

#### **About STEMconnector**

Founded in 2011, STEMconnector is the leading organization working across all aspects of the STEM community from K-12 to global corporations. A research-driven professional services organization, STEMconnector provides corporate, postsecondary, K-12, nonprofit, and government members with enterprise-wide support to meaningfully develop, execute, and scale their STEM talent strategies. Learn more at [www.stemconnector.com](http://www.stemconnector.com).

#### **About BioBuilder**

Created by an award-winning team at MIT, BioBuilder offers new ways to teach, learn, and explore cutting-edge science and engineering. BioBuilder provides students the chance to integrate biology and engineering through practical, hands-on lessons, club activities, and school-to-work experiences. Teachers learn new methods of teaching that engage and inspire the young scientists in their classrooms. Visit [www.biobuilder.org](http://www.biobuilder.org) or reach out to [info@biobuilder.org](mailto:info@biobuilder.org) for more information.

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