

NEW BEGINNINGS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PROGRAM CREATION

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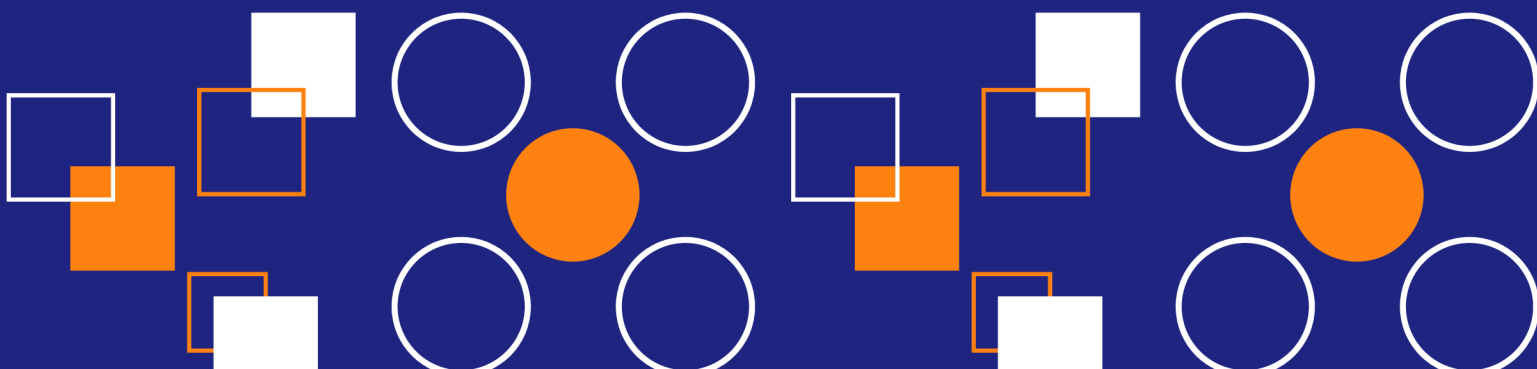
About AIR Project

A.I.R. Project, which A.I.R. stands for Abuse Is Real, provides abuse and violence prevention education through social and emotional learning, expressive arts, and providing positive quality of life experiences to youth and families in underserved communities.

We are humanitarian advocates helping and educating victims and those at risk of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, bullying, and other forms of abuse and violence and mental health in communities of color.

Our mission is to create stronger communities by fostering resilience, creativity, and life skills for future generations; today and tomorrow.

At A.I.R. Project, we are driven by a deep-seated purpose born from personal experiences of abuse, violence, and the subsequent mental trauma that too often affects historical marginalized communities. Our nonprofit organization was founded on the recognition of a pressing need: to break the generational cycles of suffering that impact our communities.



From Awareness to Action

In working within communities of color, I observed a critical gap in understanding the full spectrum of generational wealth. Often in communities of color, topics of how to save money and making investments are mostly discussed, however, generational wealth is so much more than that and way too many have failed these communities. Generational wealth also includes components—such as entrepreneurship, land and property ownership, intellectual property, knowledge transfer, and environmental justice—which are rarely broken down or made accessible in practical terms for emerging generations.

Recognizing this gap, I created the Generational Empowerment Project as a hands-on, culturally responsive initiative designed to educate, equip, and empower youth and young adults within depth tools, knowledge and importance of generational wealth. The project introduced participants to the building blocks of generational wealth, not just as abstract ideas but as actionable strategies that can be applied in real life.

This guide outlines the step-by-step process I used to develop and implement the program which includes the following:

- Determining targeted demographics
- Designing the curriculum/program layout
- Marketing and Advertisement
- Delivering engaging sessions
- Measuring impact

Whether you're an educator, community leader, or aspiring changemaker, this how-to guide will help you replicate or adapt the model to fit your own community's unique needs.

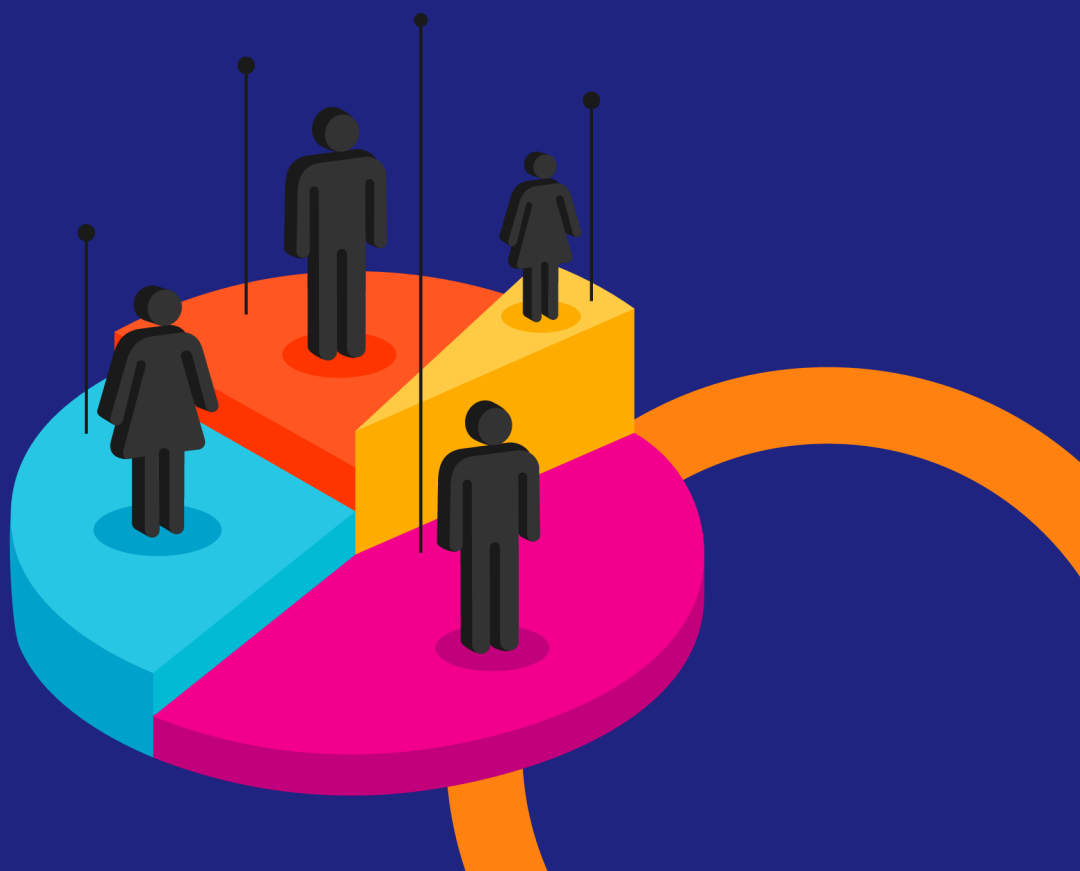


Determining Demographics

Determining the appropriate demographic for the Generational Empowerment Project was both a strategic and intentional process rooted in our mission: to close the racial wealth gap and foster long-term economic empowerment within Black and Indigenous communities.

We began by analyzing where the greatest opportunity for long-term impact could be made. Data and research consistently show that early exposure to financial literacy, entrepreneurship, property ownership, and economic systems can significantly influence life outcomes—especially when introduced before major life decisions are made.

Recognizing this, we focused our attention on high school-aged youth and undergraduate college students—a critical age range where foundational beliefs about money, ownership, and opportunity are still forming. These groups are at a pivotal stage where access to culturally relevant knowledge and tools can directly influence future decisions around education, entrepreneurship, investing, and civic engagement.



Designing Curriculum

Designing a meaningful curriculum requires time, intentionality, and attention to detail. When developing the curriculum for the Generational Empowerment Project, we prioritized making the content both age-appropriate and culturally relevant for high school and undergraduate students from Black and Indigenous communities.

To build a well-rounded and impactful experience, we focused on five key components:

Identifying Community Partners, Partnerships, and Collaborations:


We explored partnerships with local organizations, educators, and entrepreneurs who could serve as mentors, guest speakers, or resource providers. These partnerships ensured the program was rooted in real-world relevance and reflected the strengths already present within the community.

Outlining Engaging Activities and Project-Based Learning Opportunities:

Activities were designed to be interactive, hands-on, and directly tied to generational wealth concepts—such as discussing the importance of owning and maintaining property, owning rights to intellectual property, establishing trusts and estate planning, or building the community through entrepreneurship. Projects also encouraged critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration among participants.

Selecting the Most Effective Delivery Methods:

We considered in-person, virtual, and hybrid delivery models based on accessibility, engagement levels, and participant needs. The delivery approach emphasized dialogue, storytelling, and culturally affirming teaching methods to support deeper connection and understanding.



Designing Curriculum (cont)

Establishing Meaningful Incentives and Recognition for Participation:

Incentives such as gift cards, technological rewards, friendly competition, and program celebration and recognition opportunities were built in to motivate participants and recognize their growth and contributions.

Defining the Overall Program Length and Structure:

We carefully determined the ideal duration to balance depth of learning with participant availability. The structure included clear milestones, session themes, and progression that allowed for reflection, feedback, and adaptation as needed.

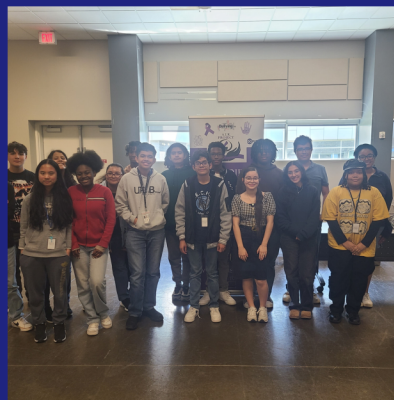
This holistic approach ensured that the curriculum not only delivered knowledge, but also inspired confidence, leadership, and action among young participants committed to reshaping generational wealth in their communities.



Designing Outreach for Community Engagement

For any program to succeed, it's essential to design a thoughtful plan for engaging the community and earning youth participation and buy-in.

To encourage participation in the Generational Empowerment Program, we implemented a multi-channel outreach strategy that included designing eye-catching flyers, partnering with neighborhood libraries and schools, engaging community members directly, posting on social media platforms, and distributing program information through newsletters.



Adversity & Resilience

Resilience in the face of adversity is essential—especially when unforeseen circumstances require you to pivot and adapt to meet the evolving needs of your program and community.

During the development of the Generational Empowerment Program, we encountered several challenges, including difficulty securing physical locations for in-person engagement, limited communication from school-based contacts due to administrative turnover, and lower-than-expected participation in the early stages of the program.

Despite these obstacles, we remained vigilant, persistent, and deeply committed to bringing this program to life. We knew the need was urgent—and that empowering the next generation with the knowledge and tools to build and sustain generational wealth was not just valuable, but imperative. There were moments of frustration and discouragement, but for us, giving up was never an option. Our communities deserve access, opportunity, and legacy—and we are determined to deliver on that promise.

Stay the course. Challenges will come, and progress may feel slow—but remember, the impact you're working toward is generational. What you're building today may take root tomorrow in ways you can't yet see. Stay committed, stay grounded in your purpose, and trust that your persistence is planting seeds of lasting change. Giving up is not an option when legacy is the goal.

"We are the fruits of our ancestors' seeds. We must keep planting".



The Power of Youth Voice, Support, and Experience

Youth voice, presence, and lived experience are not just valuable—they are essential. They can be the difference between a program's success or its unraveling. When we give young people space to lead, participate, and influence, we witness growth that impacts not only them, but the entire community. Below are three success stories from our Generational Empowerment Program (GEP) that reflect the power of youth engagement in action.

Donovan: Inclusion Builds Confidence

During our Winter Holiday event—one of our kickoff activities to introduce the Generational Empowerment Program—we welcomed Donovan and his siblings. The event featured mental health awareness, trivia, and team-building games, grounded in the belief that strong mental well-being is a form of generational wealth.

At check-in, Donovan's mother shared that he is autistic and may not feel comfortable participating. Wanting to ensure he felt safe and included, I asked a few questions to better understand his needs and preferences—committed to making sure he was not isolated or singled out.

To everyone's joy, Donovan not only participated—he thrived. He fully engaged in the activities and even entered the money machine, a loud and stimulating experience with flying paper money enclosed in a chamber. He exited with a prize and a huge smile. His mother, moved with emotion, expressed how rare it was for Donovan to enjoy such high-sensory environments. This moment proved the importance of creating welcoming spaces where every young person—regardless of ability—can feel empowered and celebrated.



The Power of Youth Voice, Support, and Experience

Megan: Advocacy in Action

Megan, a brilliant and vocal GEP participant, brought energy and insight to our discussions. She often challenged ideas, introduced new perspectives, and even taught our team historical facts that sparked deeper dialogue around activism and wealth-building in Black and Indigenous communities.

When we held a challenge for youth to recruit attendees for our annual Youth Leadership Conference, Megan took the initiative seriously. She recruited over five new participants—people who not only showed up but engaged meaningfully in the experience. This action showed Megan's belief in the value of our program and her ability to mobilize others around it. Her efforts earned her a surprise prize: a hoverboard.

This moment reinforced a key lesson—when offering rewards or incentives, it's essential to know your participants well enough to gauge whether anticipation or clarity will inspire them to act. In Megan's case, the unknown added to the excitement, and her trust in the program made all the difference.





The Power of Youth Voice, Support, and Experience

Arianna: Leadership Behind the Scenes

Arianna has been part of our organization for many years, demonstrating consistent commitment. Though she wasn't able to fully participate in the GEP this year, her support came at a critical time. As we neared the end of the program and needed to meet key grant requirements, we struggled to secure school partnerships.

One of the schools we had contacted—without success—was Arianna's new campus. On a hopeful note, we sent her a message explaining the situation. Within hours, we received a call from the school's principal. Arianna had delivered our message directly to the decision-maker, resulting in a successful partnership.

Because of her initiative, we didn't just meet our target—we exceeded it by over 50%. Arianna's long-standing relationship with our organization translated into real action and real outcomes. Her quiet leadership reminded us that even behind-the-scenes advocacy can change the course of a program.



The TYAN Difference: Creating Space for Youth Voice

These stories exemplify the tools, values, and strategies we've gained as a community partner with the Texas Youth Action Network (TYAN)—an organization that reinforces the importance of uplifting youth voice, leadership, and engagement. Through our partnership, we've been reminded that all journeys may not look the same, but each holds potential. It's the way we nurture these experiences and plant seeds of empowerment that determines the legacy we leave behind.

Youth don't just benefit from programs—they shape them. And when we make room for their voice, insight, and leadership, we create movements that last.

Measuring Impact Through Feedback

We implemented surveys and knowledge checks throughout the Generational Empowerment Program (GEP) to gather ongoing feedback and assess participant learning. Consistently collecting insights during a program is essential—it helps ensure that your goals, content, and delivery stay aligned with your mission and that participants are engaging with the material as intended.

Our evaluations revealed strong outcomes:

- 100% of participants reported learning something new by the end of each session.
- When asked, “How would you rate your overall experience in the GEP?”, 87% responded “Excellent” and 23% responded “Good.”
- In response to “Were the activities engaging and interesting?”, 100% said yes.
- On the question “Did you learn something new?”, 100% again responded yes.

We also asked for suggestions on how to improve the program. Participants shared thoughtful feedback, including:

- Encouraging even more active participation
- Offering the program during the summer for increased in-person interaction
- Including more games and small-group projects

This feedback is invaluable as we continue to enhance the GEP and design future initiatives. Centering participant voice not only strengthens impact—it fosters a culture of growth, responsiveness, and innovation.





Closing Reflections:

Planting Seeds, Building Legacy

The Generational Empowerment Program (GEP) was born from a deep understanding of the urgent need to bridge the wealth gap and uplift communities of color—particularly Black and Indigenous youth. Recognizing that generational wealth goes far beyond finances, we built a curriculum rooted in entrepreneurship, land and property ownership, investing, intellectual property, knowledge-building, and environmental justice.

From the beginning stages—identifying community needs and developing culturally and age-appropriate curriculum—to navigating unexpected challenges, this program has been a journey of resilience, intention, and faith. We faced real barriers: difficulty securing in-person spaces, communication breakdowns, and slow early engagement. But with commitment, adaptability, and community support, we moved forward—because the mission was greater than the moment.

Throughout this journey, we saw first-hand how powerful youth voice and participation can be. Stories like Donovan's, Megan's, and Arianna's remind us that when we create safe, inclusive spaces and allow young people to lead, extraordinary things happen. Whether it was building confidence, spreading awareness, or taking initiative behind the scenes, their contributions shaped the heart of this program.

Feedback collected from participants confirmed the value of this work. Across the board, 100% of youth reported learning something new. The majority rated their experience as excellent, and they offered suggestions that will help us continue to refine and elevate future programming. Their input is not just appreciated—it is central to how we evolve.

This program is more than a project—it's a movement toward generational healing, empowerment, and sustainable change. As we move forward, we remain committed to creating spaces where youth are not just present but heard, valued, and equipped to build the legacy they deserve.

We are not just planting seeds. We are cultivating a future.



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