Be Alive!

Building The Capacity & Playlist for an Irresistible Revolution

Doctorate of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D)

Capstone

Submitted by

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To the Harvard Graduate School of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education Leadership

May 2022
Dedication

You can do anything you put your mind to.

— “Never Would Have Made It,” by Marvin Sapp

My dad passed during the course of this program, but I’m here because he instilled in me that whatever I dreamed could be my reality.

If there’s any one person in my life who gave their all to me, my mom is the reason I live. I’m extremely grateful for all her past and continued sacrifices to ensure my success. I love her more than she will ever know!

Kelli Morgan Kemp is the wind beneath my wings. When I feel weary, she holds me to my highest self! She is my whole heart, and I am super grateful for her!
Acknowledgements

I AM Because We Are

My Village, Cynthia (Mom), all my siblings, Victoria, Caroline, Jackie, Chrystina, Mason, Marley, Madden, Yaminco, Kamille, and Deanna. This list can go on!

Irvin
Liz
Emily
DJS
C10
Bora
Donah

Entire GEM Team
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Abstract

You will not be able to stay home, brother
You will not be able to plug in, turn on, and cop out
You will not be able to lose yourself on skag
And skip out for beer during commercials, because
The revolution will not be televised|...The revolution will be live.

“The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” – Gil Scott-Heron

Have you ever wondered what is the process for building a revolution? I can tell you step
I is having an intentionally strategically crafted playlist like you would need on a long road trip
because “The Marathon Continues.” This capstone is the story of my journey of working to and
through Rwanda, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Lebanon, and Jamaica as I sought to build a new
entrepreneurial revolution for refugees globally alongside two refugee bachelor’s graduates. This
capstone summarizes my work with Southern New Hampshire University’s Global Education
Movement, and our program the Innovation Creation Studio. This is a story of what it means to
attempt co-construction and building the foundations of an irresistible global movement,
including the successes and challenges encountered on the journey. Two critical frameworks
utilized as a foundation for the work are Emergent Strategies and Equity Meets Design. These
two frameworks provide guidance for how to begin to first see the flaws in the design of the
system and reimagine a new system that does not replicate the brokenness of the current
education system. The most critical lesson through this journey is how one travels through The
Marathon defines one’s success, in other words, the process is the product. The process within
the project is largely defined by how one builds sustainable liberatory learning spaces. How do
you include the voice of learners, and community members in designing structures that support
development and growth defined by and for the community? Through this capstone one will
come to understand that consistent and strategically chosen tunes, learner feedback loops, and multiple opportunities for differentiated stakeholder engagement are all critical ingredients needed to support the creation of a powerful revolution.
A Note On Music For Reader

Note for the Reader: Donny Hathaway says, “And if my words don't come together, listen to the melody because my love is in hiding.” I believe music is the universal language of the soul, and when our words fail to complete the picture, the beat serves as a pair of glasses that clarify the vision. From my lens one of the largest challenges with the academy and the education system is the limited lens that requires individuals to use the written word as a mandatory tool for sharing and exchanging knowledge. In a Harvard course with Esperanza Spalding on Music & Mockumentary, I was introduced to the incredible musicologist Hazrat Khan. In his book, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*, he captures the essence of my lived experience when he writes:

> Therefore, whatever means be chosen to bring the different minds of people together, there cannot be a better means of harmonizing them than music. It would be no exaggeration if I said that music alone can be the means by which the souls of races, nations and families, which are today so apart, may one day be united. The musician’s lesson in life is therefore a great one. Music is not expressed through language, but through the beauty of rhythm and tone which reach far beyond language. The more the musician is conscious of his mission in life, the greater service he can render to humanity. As to the law of music which exists in different nations, there are of course different
methods, but in the conception of beauty there is no difference. The differences come when the music is man-made; there is no difference in the soul-made music.

(Khan, 1991, p. 30)

Universal Design for Learning is a tool that reimagines how the education system can support the humanity of learners with different academic needs. Since I am conveying my most authentic experiences and lessons learned, music will be a key aspect of this capstone. One of the strongest gifts I have as a leader is my ability to create playlists that capture the essence of the learning experience. Thus, the soundtrack of this capstone will be a critical tool for connecting with the process taken and the lessons learned in this project. This paper contains a master soundtrack and an additional micro-playlist to guide the reader’s learning experience.

Currently, there is a global disparity in the availability of music education within the inequitably designed education system. This fact is heightened when viewed through the lens of social-economic demographics. According to one U.S.-based study done by Kenneth Elpus, “The availability of music courses was significantly linked to the percentage of students in a school eligible for FRL [free or reduced lunches]. Free or reduced lunch status is tied to the income level of the family. When a family is in poverty their learners will receive free or reduced lunch. Schools with no students eligible for FRL had a .90 probability of offering music for credit…Schools where 100% of students were eligible for FRL had only a .58 probability of offering credit bearing courses in music” (Elpus, p.27). Though academic research supports the fact that music is a universal tool that can be used to enrich learning experiences, students in underserved communities have limited access to music-oriented or other artistic learning experiences. A Stanford University School of Medicine Study co-authored by Menon, Levitin,
and Chafe found that “music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying attention, making predictions and updating the event in memory” (Baker, 2007, p.1). Pantev (2003) makes the case for the power of music in the learning process by examining ways music impacts cortical plasticity:

The differences between musicians and nonmusicians observed in our studies contribute to the growing literature on differences in processing between musicians and nonmusicians and suggests that musical training affects a whole network of brain areas, from those involved in stimulus encoding, to those involved in cross-modal integration, to those involved in deviance detection in extended melodies. Furthermore, our training studies indicate that at least some plastic changes in the auditory cortex can occur over the short term with specific laboratory training. We conclude that the brain is constantly changing in response to relevant auditory information in the environment. (Pantev et al., p.13)

Learning happens through connection. When I select songs for the learning experience, the lyrics and themes convey what Pantev refers to as “relevant auditory information”—tools that help create direct neural pathways, connections to the subject being studied. Additionally, understanding my audience and their music preferences informs the song selection process. Thus, as I build the playlist for this capstone, and also many of the playlists for the learning experiences in the innovation creation studio, I do so with an extreme level of intentionality to induce the brain into connection, so that the materials we design reverberate. One of the ways you can cue the brain to make a transition is through sound. Many of the transitions in this paper are songs that reflect and amplify the messaging within the paper. Music is a universal language
we can use to guide our work internationally, and what better way to demonstrate this than by channeling the international music sensation, Kanye West.
Introduction

“Jesus Walks” - Kanye West
“We at war| We at war with terrorism, racism| But most of all we at war with ourselves”

“All Falls Down” - Kanye West
“Oh, when it all, it all falls down And when it falls down, who you gon' call now? I'm tellin' you all, it all falls down”

The Challenge

“At the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced globally—the highest number on record...There are 30 countries facing the highest levels of ecological threat, home to 1.26 billion people. They have both low socio-economic resilience and medium, high or extremely high catastrophic ecological threats” (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2021, p. 4–5). The global number of forced migrants and refugees has increased exponentially due to a myriad of factors, including environmental disasters stemming from climate crisis, conflict, famine, and other circumstances requiring international protection (UNHCR, 2016). Refugees are one of the world's most vulnerable populations with more than 70% living in countries with restricted rights to work (UNHCR, 2020). It is critical that solutions be developed to support the educational pursuits and post-education livelihoods of migrants and refugees as we know these are key social determinants for escaping poverty.

The Site

Considered the "Fastest Growing College In America," Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution that serves more than 3,000 on-campus students and over 175,000 online students. The Global Education Movement (GEM) is a
program housed within SNHU that seeks to close college and career opportunity gaps for refugees worldwide. Established in 2017, GEM is the first large-scale blended (in-person and online instruction) learning initiative for refugees. With a mission to transform its participants’ lives, GEM “partners with in-country organizations to deliver high-quality, low-cost education tailored to meet the needs of displaced learners” (Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement, 2021). Collaborating and partnering with ten different global sites across five countries, GEM serves more than 1,500 students. GEM utilizes a blended learning program in each location with in-person support offered by local partners and online instruction and overarching support provided by the GEM team at SNHU. The core of GEM is its four-year BA degree model. “This model is made up of three essential components: (1) teaching and learning; (2) wraparound/holistic support provided through partnering with local organizations in the camps and urban areas where GEM serves students; (3) and workforce readiness” (Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement, 2021).

GEM started with seed money and was green lit by SNHU’s president, for a partnering pilot project in Rwanda. Although SNHU is considered a leading innovator with serving underserved, marginalized populations, several projects it has piloted have been abandoned or eliminated within the past five years, including Stride and SNHU Dreamers/Resettled Refugees program.

GEM has navigated its bureaucratic challenges through the political savvy of its program leadership. For example, GEM’s executive director and senior vice president, secured $10,000,000 in grants from The Audacious Project within the first two years of GEM’s
existence. This grant allowed the program to scale and expand from Rwanda to four other
countries and demonstrate that competency-based models work.

Table 1: The GEM HUB significantly reduced the cost of SNHU degree programs.

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<th>Table 1: The GEM HUB significantly reduced the cost of SNHU degree programs.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average 4-year graduation rate for GEM Students</td>
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<td>Average 4-year graduation rate for US public universities</td>
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<td>Average 4-year graduation rate for US private universities</td>
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<td>Average global MOC completion rate</td>
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<tr>
<th>Cost Per Student Per Year</th>
<th>GEM's Average Cost</th>
<th>US Public In-State Average Cost</th>
<th>US Public Out-of-State Average Cost</th>
<th>US Private Average Cost</th>
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<td><strong>$5,682</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,678</strong></td>
<td><strong>$21,184</strong></td>
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Through its initial expansion, GEM developed the Global Education Movement HUB, an
assessment center that evaluates students’ competency-based projects and provides its learners
with tech support. Services provided by the GEM HUB significantly reduce the cost of SNHU
degree programs by bringing in business and revenue from external organizations, such as
Oxford University. Before the GEM Hub was created, the program outsourced evaluation of
projects to US-based assessment centers. The Hub is staffed by approximately 40 employees,
roughly half of whom are alumni of the GEM program. Unfortunately, after three years, funds
from The Audacious Project and other sources have dried out. The official grant was not
renewed or scaled and there have been only a few grants to support the work over the past two
years. As philanthropy evolves and shifts focus constantly, SNHU recently assumed most of the
cost of the GEM Hub. With the shift of financial responsibility moving from the philanthropic
sector to SNHU, university leadership has mandated the program not to scale or increase its cost. The GEM Hub has recently entered financial audit and review.

“Everybody Mad” - O.T. Genasis

“I be gettin' to the money Everybody mad I think I'm gettin' too much money Everybody mad…”

Since its inception, GEM has presented business model challenges for the University, which struggles to articulate clear financial models for its programs. GEM’s leadership has presented multiple financial models to explain the true cost and operational structure of the program. One major focus that has aligned with SNHU is growing the revenue generation capacity of the Hub. There is tension between the University and the Program as the annual cost of GEM is estimated at $3 to $7 million. The program is completely free to all refugee learners. Non-refugee learners in Rwanda pay a $1,000 per annum income-share agreement upon graduation and employment through Chancen, a social enterprise that reduces financial barriers to education by providing educational funding. The payment agreement for non-refugee learners goes to Kepler, the partner organization, not SNHU. Given this tension and the need to both maintain the current quality of programming and keep the program nearly free for all learners, GEM’s priority is to ensure that any new programming is self-sustaining. The focus of my strategic project is to build a self-sustaining entrepreneurship program that serves as a feasible career pathway for learners, but especially for our most vulnerable, those in restricted right-to-work settings.
“Freedom” -Beyonce

Problem of Practice

My project has been to develop a self-sustaining entrepreneurship program that can equip GEM learners with holistic, 21st-century entrepreneurship skills that they can leverage to help them further their careers. By developing an entrepreneurship program called the Innovation Creation Studio, GEM has increased our capacity to build sustainable employment opportunities for the ultra-poor.

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Freire, 2000, p. 34)

The critical question I sought to answer through this project was: How do we create a social entrepreneurship program that, although it does not fit into the traditional focus of the University's main priorities, is still viewed as an essential element for student success and a worthwhile pathway for both students and university investment and focus? SNHU has been extremely focused on measuring success by the breadth of impact on degrees attained. For GEM, success means operating as a transformative force for learners using metrics focused on the depth of impact, including post-graduate employment and community impact. Ensuring that the GEM team and the University view success similarly is a significant challenge. Much of the work highlighted in this capstone was the process of working to align and design a program that all local and global stakeholders value. Global stakeholders include our global learning partners, community
members, foundations, and businesses. Some of these stakeholders are viewed as potential future funding sources. This focus is further fueled by GEM's current situation in the organization as a cost center. Besides securing university support, it is critical to look elsewhere to find sustainable revenue models to fund programming.

“Rock With You” - Michael Jackson

The learning is in the reflection. As you rock with me through this paper you will find many lessons learned throughout.

A huge aspirational goal of this project was to build a model that can be sustained by the host university and leveraged to support other local universities and organizations that address the rapidly multiplying needs of refugees and forced migrants impacted by multiple international conflicts and crises. We believe that there is potential for the lessons learned in this project to help transform learning across the globe, not only for refugee and forced migrant populations, but also for those in similarly underserved and marginalized communities within the U.S. education system. I hope that within this capstone you will find a few tracks that will support you as you design your own playlist for your liberatory education space.
"Let's Go" - Calvin Harris & Ne yo

"Let's go! | Make no excuses now | I'm talking here and now | I'm talking here and now | Let's go! | Your time is running out | I'm talking here and now | I'm talking here and now | It's not about what you've done | It's about what you doing | It's all about where you going | No matter where you've been | Let's go!"

**Review of Knowledge for Action**

Reviewing knowledge for action (RKA) is similar to searching for songs to put on your mixtape that are going to inspire a movement. You have to listen to what is currently on the charts, what has been played before, what matches the vibe you want to create, and most importantly, what will have the greatest impact on your listeners as you seek to design a powerful transformative experience. In other words, what information is most critical to understanding the context within which you are operating and finding the knowledge that will inform the action steps you are taking to support the community.

"Home" – Stephanie Mills

When I think of home, I think of a place
Where's there's love overflowing
I wish I was home, I wish I was back there
With the things I've been knowing

* Tabula rasa is the concept that when individuals are born, they are blank slates. We know from the field of genetics and ancestry that this is not true. At the beginning of my Harvard Graduate School journey, I remember a colleague posed a question to Dr. Scott who answered that walking into Harvard did not create in us a tabula rasa. Instead, we have a rich store of
experiences and knowledge accumulated over time that informs our lens as practitioners and students. My set of lived experiences includes but is not limited to being a black woman in America; navigating multiple cultural and learning contexts, including teaching middle school math for five years in underserved New York City communities; obtaining my MBA with a focus on social entrepreneurship from a top-30 business school; working for five years with a large Los Angeles–based charter school district in different capacities supporting marginalized communities; and founding a radical nonprofit called Change The Tune, which is focused on developing liberatory learning models. My lived experience has allowed me to develop a powerful set of knowledge and tools that inform how I approach my work.

The reason I came to Harvard was to learn and grow my nonprofit Change The Tune. Change The Tune is the beacon that guides the work that I do inside residency; the curriculum and structure I use informs the curriculum and structure of the Innovation Creation Studio. At Change The Tune, we have designed a curriculum that utilizes love, justice, entrepreneurship, holistic wellness, social-political awareness, cultural competence, the learning process, and more to empower and equip youth in the process of becoming transformational community leaders. A signature activity for our youth in our summer program is designing social justice business models that can revolutionize their communities. Over the past five years since our inception, we have served more than 600 learners, won Harvard’s Presidential Innovation Challenge, successfully led four summer camps and multiple afterschool programs, and raised more than $400,000 in investments. Most recently, I was selected to be a part of two highly selective programs, including the Social Innovation Change Initiative at Harvard's Kennedy School of Public Policy, a program that takes only seventeen learners’ campus-wide and works to cultivate
and build capacity within global social change leaders. A similar program that operates
nationally called Fund for New Leadership selected me as a member of a small cohort of 14
Social Changemakers this past year and provided an investment pledge of $225,000 to Change
The Tune over the next three years, plus a host of additional services and support. Building
Change The Tune and participating in multiple fellowships has informed my perspective on
building holistic transformational learning experiences for entrepreneurial leaders. From my
perspective, there are three critical areas that must be developed before I can approach the work:

- **Part 1.** How do we truly understand the inequities and challenges in our current system in
  order not to perpetuate broken structures?
- **Part 2.** What are the connections, impact, and shortfalls of entrepreneurship as a process
  for growth?
- **Part 3.** What is necessary for designing a liberatory process that supports the development
  of an adaptive innovative liberatory system?

Through working to answer these questions and understanding the literature in the space, I am
able to build a theory of action that can support the co-construction of the Innovation Creation
Studio.

**Part 1. Inequities and Challenges In Our Current System**

“I Get Out” – Lauryn Hill

“I get out, I'll get out of all your boxes| I get out, you can't hold me in these chains I'll get out|
Father free me from this bondage| Knowin' my condition| Is the reason I must change| Your
stinkin' resolution| Is no type of solution| Preventin' me from freedom Maintainin' your pollution
I won't support your lie no more| I won't even try no more|If I have to die, oh Lord| That's how I
choose to live I won't be compromised no more”
This Review for Knowledge & Analysis playlist starts with Lauryn Hill because the system has been designed to produce the results that we have, and the system is adaptive! Audre Lorde says, “The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house” (Lorde, 2018). Thus, we have to get completely out of the traditional modus operandi. In order to do so, we need to leverage an untraditional framework to support our actions. “Emergent Strategies” by adrienne maree brown (2017) brings a fresh perspective to approaching age-old problems with powerful solutions derived from the most powerful force: nature. brown leverages biomimicry to furnish a toolkit that allows us to understand how we approach the work: building a revolutionary program that does not mimic the brokenness of the current system but instead opens up a new pathway for communities into entrepreneurship.

Developing a transformative career pathway for the “ultra-poor” is an age-old challenge; to address this challenge, a powerful tool to guide and inform the crafting of a new, effective structure is needed. The big goal is co-designing a model that produces a new reality for the communities being served. To clarify the basis of the framework, here is the definition of biomimicry:

Biomimicry is basically taking a design challenge and then finding an ecosystem that has already solved that challenge, and literally trying to emulate what you learn. There are three types of biomimicry—one is copying form and shape, another is copying a process, like photosynthesis in a leaf, and the third is mimicking at an ecosystem’s level, like building a nature-inspired city. (Benyus as cited in Brown, 2017, p. 49)

The entire process of working on a project and addressing a challenge in residency and
composing the capstone can be viewed as a biomimicking process. By leveraging the critical biomimicry principles that are a part of emergent strategies, we can support the development of adaptive organic solutions nimble enough to support solutions in multiple settings for marginalized communities. For example, one thing we frequently do well is run pilot programs in education settings before we actually roll out programs to larger groups of learners. Oftentimes, much is lost in scaling micro-programs to create the same effect for larger groups. If we can better understand the actual fractal phenomenon of the relationship between small and large in nature, how they both translate, mirror and reflect each other, then hopefully as this micro-program is built, we can find ways of scaling and mirroring the small successful structure in a larger high-impact framework.

There are many ways the framework below from *Emergent Strategies* can be utilized as a guide for adapting to multiple complex learning environments. By observing the various elements and their nature, we can illuminate more possibilities for change within different settings.
I have developed the following interpretations for each natural element based on my reading of brown:

**Fractals:** Whatever I can accomplish at the small scale can be mirrored at a larger scale. This applies to positive and negative structures.

**Adaptive:** Understanding the constraints and design of the system and working to evolve as needed.

**Interdependence and Decentralization:** We are all connected and together we impact each other. There is no center, but instead an interweaving of the collective. In order to push things forward, we must leverage our interconnectedness.

**Non-Linear and Iterative:** The path of change is not direct. It can spiral and take on different forms. It is ongoing and frequently requires multiple iterations.

**Resilience and Transformative Justice:** Great harm has been done to many in our world. Being able to experience growth after hurt, and to build new revolutionary models that are rooted in justice, is critical.
Creating More Possibilities:

There are infinite possibilities in nature, life, and the future. Understanding this critical concept and operating from a space of abundant possibility is critical when looking to the future. While the Emergent Strategies framework is most essential in setting the tone for understanding how to begin researching and taking action, there is one more solution that could be a bridge over troubled water, it is the equityXdesign framework.

“Bridge Over Troubled Water” - Aretha Franklin

I'll take your part| Oh when darkness comes| And pain is all, is all around| Just like a bridge over troubled water| I will lay me down|(Like a bridge)| Just like a bridge|(Over troubled) over troubled water| I will lay me down.

The majority of the refugees our program serves are in Africa, where the workforce will exceed a billion people by 2035 (IDEO / Swaniker, 2020, p. 37). What happens to those who are not allowed to work because of their refugee status within this future of rapid exponential growth? We don’t need a reinscription of the same old system, but a new framework that allows us to see the system and create new strategies, one that designs for a future that we cannot yet imagine. The equityXdesign Framework, designed by Christine Ortiz Guzman, Michelle Molitor, and Caroline Hill, is a radical framework that can be leveraged as a powerful design tool. According to Ortiz Guzman, et al,

equityXdesign intentionally convenes people across differences and builds a common language for system-wide change. It is a framework that reimagines all of us as designers, adjusts for our implicit biases, and minimizes the scale and amplification of a dominant identity throughout. It creates guardrails and checkpoints that nudge design teams to
identify problems through a lens of equity, brainstorm transformative possibilities, and
prototype and test these possibilities in low-cost, low-resolution, inclusive, and
participatory environments. (Ortiz et al., 2016)

We need an adaptive tool to imagine a new system, one that uses the voices of the most
marginalized to lay an inclusive foundation and structure for development and growth for all.
The equityXdesign framework, which fulfills these criteria, is an excellent resource for guiding a
revolutionary design process. (Ortiz et al., 2017, p. 46)

*Figure 3: equity X design framework*

There is a great overlap between the emergent principles and equity strategies
frameworks. One of the most critical lessons to be taken starts with the “Historical Context
(See)” process; this is connected to the learning of ”Emergent Strategies” principles of “Fractals
(Understanding relationships between small and large)” and “Interdependence &
Decentralization (Who we are and how we share).” Biomimicry itself is a process of seeing and
observing and then mimicking. All of these elements require a level of study and research to be
able to clearly “see” the context which the project is operating within, what work has happened before, and which work is happening presently. These elements push designers to answer the question of how we take lessons from history to design new systems that do not mimic the same broken outcomes.

“Caged Birds” - Tobe Nwigwe

“We come from where most don't break free
We had to learn why caged birds sing
But we fly even though they poisoned the sky
We don't cry, we gon’ take our piece of the pie”

Part of the “seeing” prescribed by the frameworks is examining and understanding the settings we are operating within. While many global educational settings may look alike in terms of resources, supplies, and classroom structure, it is clear that systemic structures within the refugee space pose a unique set of challenges; one might say the sky is poisoned for learners. In Chrystina and Nina Weaver’s (2019) article “Going Global to Meet the Needs of Refugee and Displaced Learners,” the authors share the following:

[T]he delivery of higher education to vulnerable learners in resource-deprived settings is notoriously challenging. In particular, initiatives that seek to reach refugee and displaced learners must contend with technical and operational challenges in resource-deprived and insecure environments, which can prevent even the best-intentioned projects from achieving key outcomes. Yet we believe that competency-based higher education can help to overcome the common technology-related barriers and challenges for learners affected by displacement and conflict in the Global South (p. 22).
From this passage we gather that there are significant challenges with traditional learning strategies in ultra-poor learner settings. We also see potential for new strategies that may mitigate the different issues learners face in educational endeavors. According to ID Insight, a global research firm, the holistic GEM program structure has a powerfully effective model with “[g]raduates having better labor market and academic outcomes over a comparison group. GEM graduates are twice as likely to be employed immediately after graduating; they secure jobs with higher salaries, longer hours, and written contracts” (ID insight, 2019). Dryden-Peterson (2016) describes the “poisoning of the sky” for learners, or the systemic barriers that inhibit career and thus life success:

As noncitizens, refugees are without permanence or possible pathways to the rights that enable post education work and civil and political participation. The lack of alignment between normative aspirations and doctrine external to the nation-state and mechanisms and institutions of enforcement within the nation-state presents a paradox for the refugee children and young people who seek education within these precarious spaces (p. 30).

Dryden-Peterson, an expert in the field of refugee learning, illuminates the complex multidimensional challenges refugees face outside the educational setting in work and life. The research points to the need for alternative employment pathways, such as entrepreneurship, to circumvent the structural barriers in place. Entrepreneurship allows learners who are in restricted right-to-work settings to circumvent the system but does not allow them to pursue traditional livelihoods by working within the local and global employment ecosystem. If learners are undocumented, they cannot go through the regular processes one normally would in order to obtain a job. For example, forced migrants may lack adequate identification, which in turn
prevents them from opening a bank account or applying for most jobs that require such essentials. Pursuing an entrepreneurial pathway in many ways bypasses the broken governmental employment structure and allows learners to develop as creative leaders who chart their own path. Entrepreneurship also allows for learners to design new socially just systems and businesses that solve issues for those most like them within their communities.

Connecting the element “Making the Invisible Visible” from the equityXdesign Framework and the Emergent Strategy principle of using the “Relationship Between Small and Large” is helpful when examining the challenges faced by the refugee learning population. We must go beyond surface-level detail—what may appear at times as a set of smaller technical and operational challenges, such as lack of consistent WIFI service—and identify connections with larger, systemic challenges to the learning setting of refugee populations. Multiple sources point to moving beyond what is “seen” and discovering the structures and higher-order causes of observed inequities (Roy et al., 2013). In her TED Talk, Ananya Roy makes a call to action: “To unknow poverty is to make a shift from asking how we can help the poor, to asking how poverty is produced, to asking how wealth, power and privilege are maintained.” (Roy et al., 2013) These are critical questions that must be considered when working to design new equitable systems and processes.
The equityXdesign principle “Radical Inclusion (Be Seen)” and Emergent Strategy Principles’ “How We Change,” “Interdependence & Decentralization,” and “Non-Linear and Interactive,” all help to analyze and also guide systems change. Through these different frames, each of these call for an analysis of what has happened historically in our education and capitalist systems. The principles ask about the connections, the players involved, what roles and ways do they operate? Collectively, there are several ecosystems (multidimensional groups of organizations) at play, including entrepreneurship and business; education and learning; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). *The Art of Systems Change* lays down a set of principles that guide the change process (Fuller Transformation Collaborative, 2019). One of the principles apparent in several other sources is that change cannot be effected in a vacuum; it must come about through co-construction, whereby beneficiaries of the change are active designers and a part of the process (Jackson et al., 2020). Margaret Wheatley (1998) most eloquently captures the importance of this methodology:

First, when thinking about strategies for organizational change, we need to remember: Participation is not a choice. We have no choice but to invite people into the process of rethinking, redesigning, restructuring the organization. We ignore people's need to participate at our own peril. If they're involved, they will create a future that already has them in it. We won't have to engage in the impossible and exhausting tasks of "selling" them the solution, getting them "to enroll," or figuring out the incentives that might bribe them into compliant behaviors. For the past fifty years a great bit of wisdom has
circulated in the field of organizational behavior: People support what they create. In observing how life organizes, we would restate this maxim as: People only support what they create. Life insists on its freedom to participate and can never be sold on or bossed into accepting someone else's plans. (p. 5)

What we find is that, historically, people often seek to create, design and reimagine systems while excluding the voices of the most important constituency: those for whom the change is being designed. Voices are often silenced; the prevailing system of management values a hierarchical structure that promotes a homogenous worldview belonging to a privileged class. In Peter Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of a Learning Organization* (2006), there are eight elements that describe the rationale behind maintaining the status quo in a management structure. Among these elements are a prioritization of “Compliance-based cultures, uniformity, fragmentation, and excessive competitiveness and distrust” (p. 10). These elements appear throughout the existing management and leadership structure in the education system which helps explain why the brokenness of the education system is perpetuated.

**Part 2. Connections, impact, and shortfalls of entrepreneurship as a process for growth**

Why look to entrepreneurship as a systemic lever for change? A study by Furlough Morris (2017) found that “a significant inverse relationship between poverty and entrepreneurship was identified. As new business registrations increased, poverty declined...Trends in the data were identified that supported economic development as an element in poverty reduction. This study may promote positive social change by supporting economic development and market-based solutions” (Furlough Morris, 2017). This study is not alone in
pointing out the potential positive impact of entrepreneurship. A UNHCR report entitled *How We Can Use Business Incubators for Refugee Integration* shares a critical finding about a program in Ecuador for refugees to create their own businesses. The report states:

After four years of interventions, the main lesson to be drawn is that humanitarian aid can be directed towards the construction of small business development, not only creating wealth for individuals, but also delivering social goods and promoting the local integration of thousands of refugees. This experience has shown that even in an economically deprived region it is possible to find ways to generate economic development opportunities for refugees and the local population. Directing humanitarian assistance at creating economic growth through small enterprise development generates economic development and also increases the capacity of the local community to continue to receive refugees. Taking into account that economic factors are often the biggest variables in the integration of refugees, it makes sense to invest more in programs that support the economic viability of refugees. (2017, p.3)

Based on the research, establishing an entrepreneurial pathway for refugees worldwide has the potential to create incredible opportunities for those in impoverished refugee communities. These documents support the development of entrepreneurial programming that can equip and empower learners with the necessary tools for becoming entrepreneurs.

Although entrepreneurship can be a useful and transformative tool, leveraging entrepreneurship within marginalized communities for social impact can have its challenges. If the entrepreneurial ventures that are being created by the underserved are still replicating broken
structures that perpetuate systems of oppression and inhibit social mobility, thus relegating those working within this system to a state of poverty, they are not revolutionary, they can also be structures of oppression. According to Morgan Simon, “Impact Investment is Taking the “Easy Wins”—Celebrating Incremental Change Rather Than Restructuring Economic Systems” (2017, p. 53). Simply funding a new business and teaching antiquated business practices cannot actually alleviate the true inequities of the system. One of the challenges identified by Simon in her book *Real Impact* is that leaders of new businesses, entrepreneurs in particular, are not equipped with organizing and community-building skills that can truly allow them to delve deep into the challenges in their communities. Once they have these skills, they can not only build solutions that are a few degrees better, but actually reimagine ways a new future becomes possible. (Simon, 2017)

One frequently cited example: when individuals are able to create businesses that hire and employ others, many times they do not provide adequate compensation to their ultra-poor employees. Inequitable and unjust hiring practices can actually be created within spaces that are supposed to be innovative and impactful.

**Part 3. Designing a liberatory process that supports the development of an adaptive innovative liberatory system**

“Impagine” - Common

I been dreaming of a paradise| Somewhere a little Paris-like where I wanna be| Let's travel to the greener side| A lovely place inside my mind, don't you want to see?”
How do we imagine a new system? The interconnected principles from the equityXdesign Framework and the Emergent Strategies framework, “Process as Product (Forsee),” “Resilience and Transformative Justice,” and “Creating more possibilities,” help us understand how to pave a way. These principles speak to the notion of imagining a new set of interdependent systems that create new opportunities and outcomes for the most marginalized.

To kickstart the visioning process behind the action steps enumerated in this project, I examined some critical texts. These texts elucidate strategies for creating a new system, one that does not perpetuate the current structures of oppression.

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1968) has influenced generations of people, teaching them how to break the insidious systemic barriers that continuously plague us. To truly understand the work that we seek to carry out by our actions, Freire states,

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (p. 34).

When thinking about the programming being developed, salient questions arise: how do I support and facilitate the creation of a learning space that is grounded in a practice of freedom? What does it look like to equip and empower learners to transform their world? bell hooks, influenced by Freire, is considered the godmother of liberational education thinking. bell hooks has written a number of texts essential to understanding what it looks like to develop a process
and a practice that can support liberation and be sustained over time. *Teaching to Transgress* teaches transformational leaders many lessons. hooks suggests that Freire’s work falls short in addressing the holistic needs of the learner and reconceiving the “ as a healer. hooks explains:

> Whereas Freire was primarily concerned with the mind, Thich Nhat Hanh offered a new way of thinking about pedagogy which emphasized wholeness, a union of mind, body, and spirit. His focus on a holistic approach to learning and spiritual practice enabled me to overcome years of socialization that had taught me to believe a classroom was diminished if students and professors regarded one another as “whole” human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world.

(1994, p.25)

This message is critical for curriculum and teaching methodologies in entrepreneurship as it suggests that our focus must not be singular or narrow as we seek to support our learners. We have to understand the interconnectedness of our world and the complexity of our learners in order to support the holistic needs of our learners. We must ask ourselves new questions: Are learners physically well? Spiritually well? Mentally well? Although we may have an academic or cognitive goal in mind, if there are other areas in which the learner is struggling, it will be nearly impossible to truly support their development and growth.

The “Emergent Strategy” framework of fractals is incredibly important when thinking about the learning system (Brown, 2017). The small mirrors the big. If teachers are not holistically well, then how can we expect learners to be? If the system is siloed, won’t the products be, too? hooks, in *Teaching to Transgress*, explains that the facilitator must do the self-
work and development to support the process for learners. Furthermore, part of the work has to
involve building a “decolonizing political process” for the self and the learning community. We
have to understand our own political perspectives and biases, what worldviews we have, where
they come from, what others' lived experiences are, and what a world where we can constantly
learn and grow from our different perspectives looks like.

One theory popular among many First Nations is the Medicine Wheel Holistic model. This model identifies the necessary ingredients for ensuring the well-being and safety of a child. The framework includes four key ingredients: cognitive, spiritual, physical, and emotional. No one element is prioritized according to the framework. The child's needs in each of these areas must be met with an integrated and collective approach to ensure the holistic wellness of the child. One might venture that this framework is necessary not only for the well-being of children, but of adults as well. When developing a learning community and environment, the interconnectedness of these factors can be leveraged to assess, holistically, the needs of those being served, and as a starting point for facilitating adequate growth and development.

(Blackstock, 2011)
Figure 4: Cross Worldview Principles framework demonstrates multidimensional holistic learning model.

In teaching entrepreneurship through a decolonized lens, we must look for ways to develop entrepreneurs who have the capacity to make critical decisions that lead to new systems, paradigms, and economies. In Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire (2020), author Rebecca Henderson examines the harmful effects of our current profit-driven economy. She explains that the business community’s disregard for the earth and our human population has led us to a dangerous pass: if we don’t rapidly transform and build new conscientious and impact-driven systems, we will experience huge ramifications from the continuous harm produced by the profit-driven economy (Henderson, 2020, pp. 1-29). The book is not just about analyzing the broken system, it also includes critical lessons and case studies for businesses and individuals to effect change from their standpoint. A critical takeaway for the Innovation Creation Studio is the “Six Steps To Making A Difference: 1. Discover your own purpose; 2. Do something now; 3. Bring your values to work; 4. Work in Government 5; Get Political; 6. Take care of yourself and remember to find joy” (Henderson, 2020, pp. 258-263). Each of these elements helps individuals to see the system and its challenges and to effect change from their perspective.
In our quest for an arsenal of structures and strategies to develop new models that do not replicate the current broken structures, we return to *Real Impact: The New Economics of Social Change* by Morgan Simon. In this book, Simon does a great job of pointing out systemic challenges. Principles include: “1. Engage communities in design, governance, and ownership. 2. Add more value than you extract. 3. Fairly balance risk and return between investors, entrepreneurs, and communities” (Simon, 2017, p. 98). These principles are not solutions, but guides in posing questions that drive new ways of thinking, acting, and doing.

“*Rolling In the Deep*” - Adele

“There's a fire starting in my heart| Reaching a fever pitch and it's bringing me out the dark| Finally, I can see you crystal clear| Go ahead and sell me out and I'll lay your ship bare| See how I'll leave with every piece of you| Don't underestimate the things that I will do| There's a fire starting in my heart| Reaching a fever pitch and it's bring me out the dark|...I can't help feeling| We could have had it all|...Rolling in the deep|... Rolling in the deep)”

“The questions which one asks oneself begin, at last, to illuminate the world, and become one's key to the experience of others. One can only face in others what one can face in oneself. On this confrontation depends on the measure of our wisdom and compassion. This energy is all that one finds in the rubble of vanished civilizations, and the only hope for ours”(Baldwin, p.4).

A central theme across many of the readings on the equityXdesign Framework and the Emergent Strategies framework is: What questions are you asking? Questions allow for you to go “rolling in the deep.” Questions allow us to make critical connections. Questions allow us to see the past, present and future more clearly. The Emergent Strategies framework starts with six critical questions. The equityXdesign framework calls us to see different parts of our world. In
particular, it asks us to dig deep, figure out how to see the invisible, discover the possible, and provide a structure for building an open process.

How do we make the revolution irresistible? In researching the strategic project, I found a plethora of songs/readings to choose from. Since it was clear that I wanted to create a new sound/system, I was able to select some strategic readings that left me with powerful lessons. To recap this review of knowledge, I examined and analyzed current and historic knowledge on:

1. Inequities and challenges in our current systems
2. Connections, impact, and shortfalls of entrepreneurship as a process for growth
3. What is necessary for designing a liberatory process that supports the development of an adaptive innovative liberatory system.

Between this review of the knowledge for action and the work that I completed before the residency, I laid a strong foundation for the program our team is currently developing.
“I Can” - Chronixx

Theory of Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We build a collective team of stakeholders and graduates from the Global Education Movement and other community organizations to co-construct the structure of our program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And</td>
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<tr>
<td>If the team of stakeholders can design and develop equitable learning experiences that are centered around using education as a practice of freedom, including leveraging music as a tool for connection.</td>
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<td>And</td>
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<tr>
<td>If we can align with local partners to build a network of funding and entrepreneurial development opportunities, including speakers, mentors, and other learning opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And</td>
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<tr>
<td>If we can acquire the funds to continue the program and provide learners with the seed funds to start or grow their business.</td>
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<th>Then...</th>
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<tr>
<td>A sustainable new career pathway program will be developed that provides additional career opportunities for learners in the Global Education Movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learners will have the opportunity to develop adaptive entrepreneurial leadership skills to navigate the multidimensional challenging context in which they will need to operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners will develop the capacity to strategically utilize themselves, their gifts, strengths, history, capacity, and growth areas as leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners will create transformational community businesses.</td>
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<th>In Turn...</th>
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<tr>
<td>GEM learners will become resilient creators and producers of a transformed reality that is inclusive, radical, revolutionary, and more just.</td>
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Description of Strategic Project

“Get To Know Ya” – Maxwell

“When you find the time, how can I get to know ya?... | Know your name, number, game| Tell me anything, anything | I gotta get to know ya”

Partner Organization Additional Context:

GEM’s mission is to provide high-quality learning experiences and career pathways for displaced learners in our global community. GEM, developed in 2013 in Rwanda with expansion launching in 2017, is blazing a trail as the first large-scale blended learning program for refugees, partnering with in-country organizations to deliver high-quality, low-cost education tailored to meet the needs of displaced learners. GEM’s goal is to ensure refugee and forced migrant learners are equipped with the skills to positively transform their lives. Partnering with twelve different global sites across five countries, GEM serves more than 1,500 students.

The results of this model are clear: GEM graduates outperform matched comparison group peers across all tested academic performance metrics. For example, in Rwanda, where the GEM model was developed, GEM graduates were employed at a rate of 88% and earned more than double the monthly income of graduates from local universities.
Moreover, across all sites, the 4-year graduation rate for GEM students is triple the average of college students in the United States. (SNHU, 2021) GEM’s position is unique. Located within Southern New Hampshire University, it is considered relatively small—there are just 1,500 students in it, compared with the larger community of 180,000 students. In the United Nation’s context, however, GEM is huge, as it is the biggest humanitarian project of its kind. The age of GEM learners ranges from 18 to 67 with 49% of its learners identifying as female. More than 20 nationalities are represented in the programs with more than 20 languages spoken. Lastly, approximately 60% of learners work either part-time or full-time while earning a degree. (SNHU 2022)

GEM serves learners from refugee camps, large cities, and rural areas. Thus, the employment outcomes cited above vary according to restrictions on the right to work in each of our locations. Given the breadth of the communities we serve, a range of barriers to learning must be considered when designing programs to meet learner needs. For example, learners frequently complain that some refugee camps have a lot in common with jails. This comment gives us insight into how refugee camps are run in a highly regulated way for their community members. In many refugee camps, occupants are greatly discouraged from leaving the camp and entering other parts of the country, thus limiting their freedom as a prison would. The politically stifling policies are often designed without an equity lens. One example is in Kakuma Refugee Camp, where there is a 6:00 p.m. curfew. This inconsistently enforced curfew does not exist for reasons of safety, but based on community members’ experience, it has been designed as a money-making tool whereby refugees are required to pay a fine when stopped for being out past curfew.
On top of that, in rural and economically disadvantaged places like Lebanon and Malawi, our learners frequently have less than three hours of power and internet a day. However, with the great help of our on-the-ground partners, learners have found a way to successfully navigate their limited resources and settings and earn their degree. (For more about GEM partners, see Appendix.)
“Freedom” - Beyoncé

**Problem of Practice**

[T]he academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. (hooks, 1993, p. 207)

How do we create a program that breaks with the university’s main priorities but is still viewed as an essential element for student success, and a worthwhile pathway for both student and university investment and focus? SNHU, like most universities, is largely focused on measuring success by the breadth of impact on degrees attained. Success as defined by GEM is distinct from the larger university’s definition, operating instead as a liberating force that uses metrics to examine the evidence of depth of impact, including post-graduate employment and community impact. Ensuring the GEM team’s view of success aligns with the larger university's perspective is a major challenge. GEM’s goal is to equip learners with the tools and skills to become agents of change who work to elevate and transform their communities into healthy, positive, joyful, and safe environments. One-way SNHU’s recently formed Social Impact Collective Division looks at success is by examining the breadth of the communities it impacts.

The Social Impact Collective is still honing its definition of success and identifying what programs to prioritize through funding and resources. GEM continues to deepen its impact with learners and to measure outcomes through its graduation and employment rates. SNHU does not
measure employment as a metric of success, which can create friction between the university and our program, as the university prioritizes degrees. With my project, much of my work was to align and design a program that all local and global stakeholders valued. This goal was driven by GEM's precarious status as a cost center. Absent a commitment to prioritize the program model and funding needs, there was a constant push to find sustainable revenue models to fund its programming. The leadership team has recently put program operations on a spending freeze and has hinted they may make significant budget cuts in the current fiscal year.

GEM measures impact by graduates on track to graduate in four years, employment outcomes, and academic outcomes against a match control group (English, critical thinking, tech skills). Additionally, their success was measured by five “proof points” set by The Audacious Project funders with a seed grant, which include:

- Continue successful outcomes in Rwanda
- Prove the model can be successful in other camps and urban refugee environments in Africa
- Prove the model can work outside of Africa and under different leadership
- Offer evidence that the degree delivery cost can be lowered
- Offer GEM applicants alternative pathways to high-school credentials
“Imagine” -Common

I been dreaming of a paradise| Somewhere a little Paris-like where I wanna be| Let's travel to the greener side| A lovely place inside my mind, don't you want to see?”
I been dreaming of a paradise| Somewhere a little Paris-like where I wanna be| Let's travel to the greener side| A lovely place inside my mind, don't you want to see?”

Project Description:

The Roadmap

This project was completed over a ten-month period and took the following steps.

1. Build out a critical team of stakeholders
2. Build a micro-entrepreneurial career pathway program called “Innovation Creation Studio”
3. Build and implement a sustainable fundraising plan
4. Design a succession plan in conjunction with stakeholders
5. Develop a micro entrepreneurial ecosystem of supports
6. Design and implement a deliberately developmental learning system

Since GEM serves a refugee and forced migrant population living in countries that restrict their right to work, there is a strong need for learners to develop an entrepreneurial skill set. Additionally, in participatory action research studies completed by learners about their experience, they have requested programming that will equip them with entrepreneurship skills. Learners have on many occasions, through multiple modalities in our program, expressed a strong interest in learning how to start and run a successful business. Before I joined the organization and this project was developed, there was a strong demonstrated need for entrepreneurship training.
In order to equip learners with 21st-century skills that they can leverage to further their careers, I sought to build a program that paved an entrepreneurial path for GEM learners. By making an entrepreneurial career option, I increased our organization’s capacity to build sustainable employment opportunities. Additionally, the program was designed for maximum impact with the hope that businesses generated or grown would create future internship and job opportunities for other learners in the GEM program.

The Innovation Creation Studio is a program that I designed and ran with a team of interns. The program has offered many learning opportunities for building transformational leadership skills for learners in GEM. The program includes an incubator, accelerator, speaker series, and mentor support. Additionally, while building out the program, my team and I attempted to fundraise and build a sustainable funding model to allow the program to continue and support more GEM learners. In designing the program, one goal was to work with local partners to build an entrepreneurship ecosystem that provided learners with a host of developmental and resource opportunities. Lastly, as I designed the program, I simultaneously worked to create a succession plan for the interns to take over and lead in the summer of 2022. To learn more, check out the program outline deck that I developed.
“Feeling Good” -Nina Simone & Lauren Hill
"Birds flying high, you know how I feel| Sun in the sky, you know how I feel| Breeze driftin' on by, you know how I feel| It's a new dawn| It's a new day| It's a new life for me, yeah| It's a new dawn| It's a new day| It's a new life for me, ooh| And I'm feeling good."

Goals and Outcomes:

The executive director/supervisor and I laid out the following goals for residency:

1) Respond to learner requests for support in opening or operating businesses
2) Continue to develop and offer livelihood opportunities, especially in countries where the right to work for refugees is limited or nonexistent (Lebanon, Malawi, Kenya)

When designing and co-constructing the goals, I wanted to address the supervisor’s needs. Specifically, I wanted to build a program that liberates GEM learners’ thinking about what is possible for their futures and equip them with the skills to launch and grow their ventures. There are a few main objectives needed to be able to achieve this significant goal:

1. Build Innovation Creation Studio that biannually runs an incubator (a program designed for brand-new social entrepreneurs to learn how to launch and start a business), accelerator (a program designed for existing entrepreneurs to learn how to grow and scale their business in a way that positively impacts community), and a set of experiential supplemental programs that equip and empower learners in partnership with local stakeholders and communities.

2. Develop a fundraising toolkit and secure funding to sustain the program model for at least the next 3–5 years.

3. Develop a succession plan that includes hiring and developing program graduates as leaders of the Innovation Creation Studio who will grow and build the program.
4. Collaborate and build an entrepreneurial ecosystem with local partners whereby resources can be shared across multiple organizations.

5. Develop an evidence collection system that analyzes success and developmental areas for programs. Integrate an iterative model that continuously tracks and shares learner success and supports targeted growth areas.

The What and How

“Successful” - Drake, Trey Songz, & Lil Wayne
I just wanna be, I just wanna be successful| I just wanna be, I just wanna be successful| I just wanna be, I just wanna be…

When I chose to work with SNHU for residency, I knew that I needed a radical space that would allow me to take my learnings from Change The Tune and collaboratively extend its impact. One of the signature pieces of the Change The Tune learning model is creating multidisciplinary holistic learning experiences with an emphasis on using social entrepreneurship, project-based learning to cultivate the leadership capacity of our learners. I believed that we could leverage successful strategies from our model to support the career and entrepreneurial development of the learners at GEM, across the larger university, and, even more aspirationally, across the continent of Africa.
Goals and Outcomes:

“Over” -Drake
What am I doing?| What am I doing?| Oh yeah, that's right, I'm doin' me, I'm doin' me
I'm living life right now, man, and this what I'mma do 'til it's over| Til it's over
But it's far from over

My MBA equipped me with a special lens and a special set of skills to tackle this large task. One crucial lesson I learned in business school is to help people help you. People need to see the vision. Thus, my first order of business was creating a deck that outlined our program, goals and vision. I spent the first week in meetings with my supervisor, Senior Vice President and Executive Director of GEM, and a few of my GEM program teammates. My team had been working with GEM for 1–8 years and provided me with context for the work through conversations. I examined some general documents about our program that explained GEM’s structure as well as outlining some larger grant goals, including the basics of building a new micro-series of innovative career pathway programs. With these conversations, research and vision in mind, I began to design a plan. On June 8, I created the first draft of our program outline. One of the key elements of this deck is the timeline. I knew that I was taking a month off in July to run Change The Tune’s summer camp, so I created a clear plan to guide the work while I was gone.
Once this plan was developed, my first order of business was hiring two interns for a trial period to help co-lead the work. The goal was to find two graduates of GEM to help co-construct our program, who one day would be able to take over and completely run the program once my residency was over. I was very clear from day one that I planned to run Change The Tune full-time once I graduated, so hiring interns who could operate as co-leads was part of the initial vision. We had interviews with at least ten different alumni. I happily landed on two pilot interns. One was a Rwandan refugee female student who was a recent graduate from our South African Scalabrini Site. Another male alum based in Rwanda, was an entrepreneur with a tourism business. I was pleased to have two alumni located in Rwanda and South Africa, respectively, whose different experiences would inform how we would co-construct our program.
After about two months, I decided not to renew the entrepreneur’s pilot internship based on misalignment with our long-term work, so I transitioned him off the team. Approximately four weeks later, I hired Donatha, who was also a recent graduate, a Rwandan refugee currently living in South Africa. Throughout the rest of the program, Bora and Donatha co-led and co-constructed the program with me. Bora was an intern serving as chief of staff while Donatha served as chief program officer.

The project outline above guided our operational plan. I asked for feedback about the length and size of the program from GEM program team members and our interns. Team members mostly directed me to gather student data to inform final decisions. Following our initial “visioning” sessions, the interns spent the remainder of June and July conducting research and answering the following questions:

- Who had large entrepreneurship programs in the space that we might consider partnering with?
- Who are entrepreneurs in the space that might make great panelists and whom we could reach out to?
- What are some funding opportunities to make our program sustainable?

Before executing our plan of action, we wanted to understand what learners really wanted from an entrepreneurship program. What skills did they want to develop in the program? What experiences were they looking for?

A prime focus of aspiring entrepreneurs in the learning community was the funding opportunity for their business ventures offered as a part of our program. Many learners felt their
most significant need in starting a business was capital. They also mentioned having very few skills with business planning and development. In assessing how our program was co-constructed, it should be noted that a significant portion of the research occurred in July while I was focused on Change The Tune’s summer camp. Our small team would meet one to two times a week for me to give the interns guidance and then they executed over the course of the week.

We held a few more focus groups with learners in South Africa, Rwanda, and Malawi and we talked to a few more curriculum/program partners. We also collected survey responses from more than 135 students with responses from learners from across all eleven of our sites located in South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, and Lebanon. We used this data to think through the structure and planning of our program. Upon reflection, we found that, because of internet and logistical challenges for learners to access our survey and focus group sessions, the group we gathered feedback from may not have been completely representative of our entire learner population. Having traveled to the sites after the construction of our program and gotten a much more in-depth level of feedback through in-person conversations, I have realized that the initial design scope was constrained by our initial virtual-only capacity.

**Designing Our Program and Curriculum**

Next, we had to choose and refine our entrepreneurship curriculum. Because GEM had a strong partnership with the African Entrepreneurship Collective (also known as Inkomoko or AEC), and because they offered the most reasonable programming/curriculum package, we decided to partner with them. We observed their current sessions, and they were very facilitator heavy. The entrepreneurship lessons were predominantly lecture-style. Leveraging the Change
The Tune model, we believed in decentering the facilitator. We believed in engaging learners in leading themselves. Thus, we proposed to AEC that they allow us to collaborate with their facilitators and on their curriculum, and they gave us a significant discount to collaboratively run the program with us.

Figure 7: Each week began with clear schedules for our program (See Appendix for full schedule).

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<tr>
<th>Incubator Dates (T)</th>
<th>Incubator Topics</th>
<th>Technology Topic</th>
<th>Holistic Wellness</th>
<th>Accelerator Dates (TH)</th>
<th>Accelerator Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 25,2021</td>
<td>Understanding The Landscape (competitors, demand, projections, mapping the system, legal)</td>
<td>Google Suite Part 3. Powerpoints</td>
<td>Understanding Reactions to Stress + Strategies</td>
<td>October 28, 2021</td>
<td>Understanding The Landscape (competitors, demand, projections, mapping the system, legal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 9,2021</td>
<td>Lean Business Model Canvas</td>
<td>Google Suite Part 5. Excel/ Sheets</td>
<td>Stretching/Yoga</td>
<td>November 11, 2021</td>
<td>KYC &amp; Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16,2021</td>
<td>KYC &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>Digital Marketing (Search Engine Optimization)</td>
<td>Stretching Yoga</td>
<td>November 18, 2021</td>
<td>Unit Economics &amp; Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 23,2021</td>
<td>Unit Economics &amp; Finance</td>
<td>Social Media Marketing</td>
<td>Water Goals</td>
<td>November 25, 2021</td>
<td>Cash Flow &amp; Inventory Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30,2021</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>Wellness for the Culture</td>
<td>December 2, 2021</td>
<td>Fundraising/ Networking/ Inves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 7,2021</td>
<td>Pitching</td>
<td>Wellness Goals</td>
<td>December 9, 2021</td>
<td>Pitching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the plan for curriculum in place, we worked to build out our complementary program supports. With the interns leveraging the survey and focus group data, along with AEC offerings, we built out the schedule for our program. Each of the peach boxes in the spreadsheet above indicate where we asked AEC to join us for six out of our nine sessions. We also asked them to help us build our slate of potential panelists. Because we were covering varied topics, AEC had different instructors work with us over the course of our programs. Our main goal was to equip our learners with the skills to successfully pitch their businesses in our pitch.
competition. Also, we wanted them to be able to launch once they were done with the program. We also built out the application process with a rubric and set strategic goals for our program. We had 22 discrete goals overall, but through a process of collaboration and finding the ways our goals were interrelated, we synthesized the goals for our program into these four large goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals for Innovation Creation Studio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners will create transformational community businesses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners will have the opportunity to develop the capacity to strategically utilize themselves, their gifts, strengths, and history to build their adaptive entrepreneurial leadership skills. These skills will equip learners to navigate the multidimensional challenging context in which they will need to lead in their global community.

Learners will develop the technical skills needed to support the launch and management of a successful business operation. The skills include: business planning, financial planning, marketing, selling, showcasing products/services, ideation, bookkeeping, design thinking, Google Suite skills, and more.

Learners will understand how to research and become familiar with their market and community needs, to drive success with their business. Research and benchmarking skills will include learning how to: network and build bridges with other entrepreneurs, discover, and connect with potential customers, examine data and evidence of need for business solutions in the marketplace, and understand the legal and financial landscape.

I brought our program’s pitch deck, goals, and application rubric to the internal GEM team. This team was made up of about eleven leaders who had worked at various sites and with various students in multiple capacities, including building internship programs, building our degree program, running the assessment center, fundraising, and implementing the program. I presented the full plan to the team and created a spreadsheet where I received feedback on our vision, processes, and suggestions for enhancing our program for learners.
Key elements we incorporated into the program were our holistic wellness components, music, and also attention to the social impact that the business would make. In particular, we introduced the sustainable development goals to learners asking them to connect their business and work to the goals. Music was used as a grounding tool to start our lessons and also as a cultural engagement tool to connect with and highlight certain concepts we covered.

In total, we received 132 applications. We had a first and second round whereby we accepted a total of 37 learners to our incubator (designed to support new entrepreneurs launching businesses), and 22 to our accelerator (designed to support existing entrepreneurs growing and scaling their existing businesses). We started off having the incubator meet for three hours and the accelerator for two hours. We quickly ascertained three hours was way too long for the incubator. Also, many learners expressed two hours was too long, too. In our initial survey, we asked learners how much time they would be able to devote to the work, and 67% of learners indicated that they would be willing to spend 4+ hours on their business. GEM has a competency-based model and learners were used to doing work asynchronously, and we ultimately pivoted to a live online workshop model. However, this shift posed a challenge because of the participants’ limited access to consistent internet. After about two weeks, we asked learners if they needed internet support; 27 learners in the program made a request for support. It took us a couple of weeks to figure out the process, so about halfway through, we gave all learners who requested data a small stipend to buy internet.

We ran one incubator and one accelerator session for nine weeks. Each session was designed to facilitate conversation among learners around cultural competency and new entrepreneurship concepts and to provide learners opportunities to give one another feedback on
the different components of their business plans. All sessions were recorded in case learners missed them or had internet challenges. The sessions were uploaded onto our website www.innovationcreationstudio.org along with that day’s deck. Below is a sample agenda. I designed the initial lesson template in partnership with my team. Also, on the days that we had the AEC, we co-designed our lessons. By week five, I delegated the responsibility of creating a new weekly deck and foundation for lessons to our interns. It must be noted that neither one was a business major, so they were learning how to design business curriculum on the job.

Figure 8: Each agenda provided clear action items for meetings.

![Agenda]

After nine weeks, we concluded our program with a large virtual pitch competition. In partnership with the AEC, we invited business leaders from across the continent to pitch us. We also invited potential funders, the GEM team, and many other SNHU employees to join us in our celebratory event. We recognized that learners may have internet challenges, so we required them to upload a video and PowerPoint deck explaining their business 48 hours in advance. We had an attendance requirement whereby learners had to have attended 7/9 sessions and two office
hours over the course of the nine weeks. Throughout the course of our program, we had some students drop out, and several students missed several lessons. By submission time, we had a total of 23 learners from both programs submit, 18 of whom were eligible with completed submission forms to pitch. I built out a deck (see Appendix) highlighting each learner, and the learner’s business video and deck. In their competition rooms, the room facilitator showed their slides and then video. After the videos, judges asked a few questions, and the participants were scored. We sprinkled in music throughout the event to keep the audience engaged during the deliberation portions. Overall, the event was a success; learners were able to demonstrate their learning and get real-time feedback on their business. Also, we had seven of our learners walk away with cash prizes.
Evidence of Progress in Strategic Project

Part V. Evidence Collection System

“How Will I know” - Whitney Houston

How will I know? (How will I know?) | How will I know? | How will I know? (I say a prayer) | How will I know?

Whitney Houston captures the most essential question behind our evidence collection system. With the goal of co-constructing this program with learners in mind, we have used several tools to develop our evidence collection system, a system that allows us to build continuous loops of improvement.

Below is a table that shares the various components of our system, including who reviews each component and when:

Figure 9: Winners of the Innovation Creation Studio Malawi Live Pitch Competition display Change The Tune prize t-shirts.
Table 2: A feedback loop provided invaluable tools for stronger execution of programming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Evidence Collected</th>
<th>Lead Reviewers &amp; Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Focus Group Survey            | Several questions with qualitative and quantitative measures that allow us to understand learners’ most pressing needs for entrepreneurship programming.                                                             | Chief of Programs/Intern (Donatha)  
Chief of Staff / Intern (Bora)  
Program Director/ Resident (Charli)  
GEM Program Team/leaders  
Utilized annually to support the design of programs.                                                                                                   |
| Application With Rubric       | A tool to gauge learners’ strong interest and capacity to be successful within our program.                                                                                                                      | Chief of Programs  
Chief of Staff  
Program Director  
Utilized bi-annually to understand current learners’ initial capacity and select participants for the program.                                           |
| Program Intro Survey          | A tool to understand selected learners’ leadership goals and entrepreneurship skill capacity.                                                                                                                  | Chief of Programs  
Chief of Staff  
Program Director  
Utilized bi-annually to understand current learners’ initial skill capacity.                                                                                       |
| Daily Exit Surveys            | A tool to gauge progress of program towards stated goals for learners and program.                                                                                                                               | Chief of Programs  
Chief of Staff  
Program Director (Intermittently GEM Team)  
Utilized weekly to understand concepts absorbed, and how to enhance learner experiences.                                                                           |
| Program Exit Surveys          | A tool to gauge progress of learners towards stated goals throughout the program. Also leveraged as a general tool to measure the overall experience of learners.                                                        | Chief of Programs  
Chief of Staff  
Program Director  
GEM Team  
SNHU Social Impact Collective  
Utilized Biannually to                                                                                                                                       |
| Pitch Competition with Judging Rubric | An experience used to measure the business leadership capacity of participants. | Chief of Programs  
Chief of Staff  
Program Director  
GEM Team  
SNHU Social Impact Collective  
Community Partners  
Community Members  
Utilized learners’ business skill capacity and growth over course of program. |

“It’s Go” -Neyo

It's not about what you've done| It's about what you doing| It's all about where you going| No matter where you've been| Let's go!] Let's go!] Let's go!] Let's go!

When I began my project with my strategic project memo, I built out a theory of action, which laid out an initial series of action items and laid out a corresponding set of goals as proof that I had made significant progress with my project and leadership. These goals were developed in partnership with my manager. The goals and actions were interconnected and aligned as follows:
Table 3: Charting Impact: It was vital that we lay out a series of action items and a corresponding set of goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I. Build Out Program</th>
<th>Initial Actions from Theory of Action</th>
<th>January 14, 2022</th>
<th>April 15, 2022 (In Progress)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build a collective team of stakeholders and graduates from the Global Education Movement and other community organizations to co-construct the structure of our program.</td>
<td>Pilot of programs run, and second iterations designed</td>
<td>Second iteration of program run, and model codified for future years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Part II. Fundraising Toolkit and Funds Raised. | Team acquires the funds to continue the program and provide learners with the seed funds to start or grow their business. | Toolkit built and $35,000 raised | Additional $65,000 raised, and strategic plan for acquisition of future funding developed. |

| Part III. Succession Plan | Part I. Build a collective team of stakeholders and graduates from the Global Education Movement and other community organizations to co-construct the structure of our program. Part II. Team of stakeholders design and develop equitable learning experiences that are centered around using education as a practice of freedom, including leveraging music as a tool for connection. | Interns hired, vision for program future co-constructed | Design for future roles planned and codified, with offers given to interns. |

| Part IV. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem | Team aligns with local partners to build a network of funding and entrepreneurial development opportunities, including speakers, mentors, and other learning opportunities. | Website built that makes reference to partner sites. | Partners selected, agreements developed and codified that outline plans for future collaboration. |

| Part V. Evidence Collection System | Build a collective team of stakeholders and graduates from the Global Education Movement and other community organizations to co-construct the structure of our program. | Learner data collection model built, first set of data analyzed and iterated upon. Data is shared with the social impact collective for feedback. | Data collection and a deliberately developmental process put in place to continuously improve the program. |
Part I. Build Out Program

This fall, with interns, Bora and Donatha, I ran a nine-week incubator and accelerator program with an additional set of supports, such as office hours and possibility panels. Between both programs, we accepted a total of 59 learners; we had 23 submissions total for our final pitch competition, 18 of which were eligible to pitch. After our pitch competition, we had 30 exit survey submissions between both programs; ten responses were from accelerator participants and the remaining 20 were from incubator participants. We asked learners, “On a scale of 1 to 10, rate what is your overall experience during this program?” with 1 being low and 10 being high. The overall average of our 30 responses was 8.59; disaggregated it was 8.4 for accelerator participants, and 8.65 for incubator participants. See below for the distribution of all scores.

*Table 4: Incubator participants rate their overall experience in the GEM HUB.*

What do these numbers mean in terms of impact? One way they can be interpreted is through a commonly used customer satisfaction measurement called Net Promoter Score, created by Bain & Company. The net promoter score is calculated by taking the percentage of respondents who ranked their experience a 9 or 10 (promoters), viewing those who rated their
experience a 7 or 8 as neutral and subtracting those who scored their experience a 6 or less (detractors). The range of scores can be from -100 to +100. A score of 20+ is considered “favorable,” 50+ is excellent, and an 80+ is world class. We scored a 50.1.

To further illustrate our impact, we asked learners, “Would you say you managed to achieve your leadership goals that you had for yourself when you began our program? Yes/No and why?” Out of 30 learners, 26 said yes. One learner wrote, “Yes, because I learned how to work well in groups and also during our breakout sessions. I was also matched with a fellow entrepreneur that pointed me in the direction of a Software company that I could try. This whole opportunity has really helped me a great deal.”

The survey has several questions that examine pre- and post-perception around skill capacity (e.g., communication, technology, and collaboration, etc.). On average, we saw positive growth on most indicators from pre- to post survey. In examining the 25+ indicators on both the pre- and post-survey, it is clear that we met the goal of building a successful pilot. We recognized that the model we designed and delivered was different from the highly asynchronous academic learning model of GEM. This posed a challenge for retention as some learners were not prepared to take on a synchronous load of work. In order to continue growing our impact on learners, we designed a new pilot over winter break and launched it the week of January 31. This new model relies on a 50% asynchronous learning process and includes a new coaching component whereby learners receive regular feedback through small group coaching sessions.
When working to measure our four big goals, which we set internally for our incubator and accelerator, we created an opportunity for learners to rank their skills on the pre- and post self-assessment.

Table 5: Learners ranked their skills on the pre- and post self-assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Survey (45 responses)</th>
<th>Post Survey (30 Responses)</th>
<th>Growth Difference Between Post &amp; Pre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how good is your ability to build a business plan?</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how good is your ability to build a financial plan or finance model?</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how good is your ability to build a marketing plan for a business?</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how good is your ability to build a sales plan for a business?</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how good is your ability to use equity and design thinking?</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your communication skills?</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your collaboration skills?</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your creativity skills?</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your problem-solving skills?</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your technology skills?</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10 rate your ability to be able to accomplish whatever goal you set?</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It must be noted that we received 45 responses between the pre-surveys for the incubator and accelerator. With the post survey, we received 30 responses between both programs. This was more than the 22 participants who submitted for the pitch competition. We told learners that, if they completed the attendance requirement and they wanted a certificate, they would need to provide us with a final round of feedback. On average, for every indicator, the group grew in their capacity. There was huge growth in the technical skills of building a business plan. It must be noted that growth in creativity and problem-solving skills was significant for many learners, which advances the goal of equipping learners with a greater capacity to address multidimensional challenging settings.

Part II. Fundraising Toolkit & Funds Raised

“About The Money” -T.I

If it ain't about the money| Ain't no use in you ringin' my line, stop wastin' my time| If it ain't about the money| Nah I can't even hear what you say…

As of this writing, I have drafted the beginning of our fundraising toolkit. I tapped one of my team members, Nina, who specializes in writing grants, for this task. She collaborated with me to draft a letter of intent to shop around to funders. Before contacting funders, we solicited feedback from our development lead, and my supervisor. The letter laid the foundation for our fundraising toolkit (see Appendix). Our “About Us” deck is a supplemental resource we used when having conversations with potential funders about our vision. Within the “About Us” deck,
we have slides that include short videos of learners pitching and videos that demonstrate our impact on learners.

I also partnered with our development lead, and another colleague, to submit a grant proposal; our program would receive $23,000 if awarded. This amount would be enough to fund the full-time salary of our two interns for an additional year. Our ultimate goal is to build a toolkit that allows for a raise of $60,000; although some progress has been made, we have not reached the goal yet.

Part IV. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

“Let’s Stay Together” - Al Green
Let's, let's stay together| Loving you whether, whether| Times are good or bad, happy or sad

Figure 12: Image of Website Home Page where we housed all program resources
I am pleased to report that we have built a website for our learners. The website has a host of resources drawn from different organizations within the ecosystem. The website also shares content with our participants that we co-created with our partner, AEC. In our updated model that ran this spring, we included new partner coaches. We brought on five new entrepreneurs who will be coaches for our learners this semester. Also, we included postings and advertisements for all of our events with our possibility panelist. Check out a bit of our website data from its inception.

Table 6: Program participants managed daily updates for our program website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry page</th>
<th>Page views</th>
<th>Site sessions</th>
<th>Unique visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ (Homepage)</td>
<td>1,476</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/projects-3</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/team</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/about</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/copy-of-incubator-resources</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/copy-of-intro-to-entrepreneurshi...</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ics-services</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ics-upcoming-events</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/book-online</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are two outputs that are directly connected to one outcome in my theory of action. I am unclear of our impact and where we stand with meeting these.

Outputs:

- Learners will develop the capacity to strategically utilize themselves, their gifts, strengths, history, capacity, and growth areas as leaders. As I examine the following outputs and outcomes, I have to reflect on the timing of our project.
- Learners will create transformational community businesses.
Outcome:
- GEM learners will become resilient creators and producers of a transformed reality that is inclusive, radical, revolutionary, and more just.

Figure 13: Lokendo’s Presentation, Grand Prize Winner of Incubator Program in First Iteration (click link to watch video)

When I began this project and I spoke with the AEC, they mentioned that people are usually into entrepreneurship as a means for survival or because of their passion. Realizing that we are in a multilayered contextual world, it can be a combination of these and other reasons. From the inception of our program, I have understood that entrepreneurship for many of our learners is a matter of survival and creating a livelihood that allows for them to transcend their current economic and social circumstances. My bias from the start has been to sway learners to make choices and businesses that go beyond business for the sake of business but for
transformation.

Again, starting with myself and also tapping into the equityXdesign principles, including “Make the Invisible Visible” and “Speak to the Future,” my goal was to build a world where the most vulnerable build radical businesses that reimagine our entire capitalist system and infrastructure for the most underserved. From the beginning, I have had to realize that I could not grow a full garden in 10 months, but instead till the soil, plant the seeds, water, and, hopefully, by the end of our program, we would see some sprouts. We recently redeveloped the innovation creation studio and have launched our spring program.

Our model has a new coaching and asynchronous component based on feedback and results from our learners. Many of our exit slips and post surveys suggested that we reduce the time of our in-person sessions. In our first possibility panel, we had all of the winners from our first project come back and speak. Since December, many of the learners have made significant progress with their businesses. One learner was able to purchase land and hire team members to start an agricultural business. Another learner was able to purchase livestock and start the scaling of his business. Another learner talked about the impact on his personal and professional capacity. I was able to see “sprouts” as our possibility panel—filled with program alumni—shared their successes. It was
transformational to see past learners hire others onto their business programs. Another sign of success was seeing past learners set themselves up to purchase property that they could then use to generate income.
Strategic Project Analysis

“Okay” - Adekunle

Okay okay e| We go dey okay

How my Journey Started:

“Free My Mind” - Tems

I really need, I really need time now| I really need, I need a free mind now| I really need, I really need mine now| I really need, I need to free my mind now| I really need, I really need time now| I really need, I need a free mind now| I really need, I really need my mind now, oh yeah…

My journey with residency started way before the placement process. My supervisor, Chrystina, and I had known each other for ten years. Chrystina was my principal at the last school where I taught. She wrote my letter of recommendation for business school and offered me a job coming out of business school. She is the epitome of a sponsor as she has always worked to create platforms for me to pursue my career aspirations. More than a sponsor, she has been a friend, and she is family.

In residency, I wanted to grow my own nonprofit organization, Change The Tune. I was told that I needed to go work for an organization, that I needed to navigate a large system. To me, my nonprofit organization would have entailed navigating a large system. In meeting the requirements of our program, I thought, where could I be safe inside of a system? I recognize, as a Black woman who is radical, the system was not designed for me. So, I asked, who could protect me from a system and give me the freedom at the same time to operate in a liberated environment?

Figure 15: Chrystina and I often created downtime to bond with students and interns.
way? Chrystina! I knew there was a need for entrepreneurship programming, and I also knew, with her generous spirit, she would allow me to bring Change The Tune’s work into what I was doing. I knew that I would have the flexibility I needed with GEM.

“Who you Are” - Jessie J.
I stare at my reflection in the mirror. Why am I doing this to myself? Losing my mind on a tiny error? I nearly left the real me on the shelf. No, no, no, no, no. Don't lose who you are. In the blur of the stars, seeing is deceiving. Dreaming is believing. It's okay not to be okay. Sometimes it's hard. To follow your heart; Tears don't mean you're losing. Everybody's bruising. Just be true to who you are.

“The Heart of the Matter” - India Arie
The more I know, the less I understand. And all the things I thought I'd figured out, I have to learn again. I'm tryin' to get down to the heart of the matter.

What forces might explain why the project developed in the ways that it did?

In order to understand why my project has unfolded the way it has; I’d like to invoke a favorite quotation of mine by Edwards Deming: “Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.” Thus, the answer for why the project unfolded the way it did lies in the design of the project. Previously, in the Review for Knowledge & Analysis, we discussed the importance of the Equity Meets Design framework for ensuring that our work does not duplicate current broken systems, but instead operates in a revolutionary future space. It must be noted that the goals for my strategic project were aligned to my Theory of Action. There are three critical components: input actions, outputs, and outcome.
Building Our Team of Stakeholders

Input 1 was to “build a collective team of stakeholders and graduates from GEM and other community organizations to co-construct the structure of our program.” The equityXdesign Framework has three core beliefs closely tied to this input: Historical Context (See), Radical Inclusion (Be Seen) and Process as Product (Foresee). Understanding the process and way our collective team was built illuminates the design process for our program outcomes.

Seeing requires one to recognize that:

[W]e inherit the traits and characteristics of legacies of privilege and oppression. We must see both who we were (our historical selves) and who we are (our current selves). To understand the present time and space we occupy, we must understand the inherited legacy surrounding the thing we are designing, the place we are designing in, and the community we are designing with.” (Ortiz et. al., p.9, 2016)
As a Black woman growing up in an underserved community, I am frequently considered to fall into the “marginalized” or “oppressed” category. Working in an international context with refugees places me in a very powerful and privileged position. My Americanness taps into a lineage of privilege. Reinforcing this is the Harvard doctoral program I am in. While I was able to see some of my privilege, there were many areas in which I was blind. As for what it means to be a forced migrant or refugee, it was not until I was about 3–4 months in that I got a true glimpse of the reality our learners face. I asked one of my interns a question about her family one day, which sparked a conversation that led me to learn about her experience and the challenges she faced as a refugee living in a different country. In our program, we assembled focus groups before starting the program, and we asked many questions about what learners wanted, but we did not ask as many questions about their context, their journeys, and their history. Not all refugees are refugees for the same reason. Countries treat refugees differently based on the historical context. While I had some conversations with the learners and did a bit of research, upon reflection it is clear that there was a deeper need to work further to understand the multilayered historical context I was working within.

Taking a trip to South Africa, Malawi, and Kenya heightened the realization of just how many blind spots I have had in this journey. Having dinner at my interns’ homes in townships with their families and visiting learners and their places of business has been transformational better understand both mine and the interns’ powerful context and differentiated lived experiences. When I got to South Africa, my interns joked that they could not wait for me to experience “load shedding,” which is when the internet and power goes out for some time. As soon as I landed, much of Cape Town was experiencing load shedding and there was very little I
could do technology wise. Seeing their creativity and resilience at work while designing the program for others was tremendously powerful. Furthermore, I reflected on my own journey and on how the Eurocentric context in which I am situated influences the business development process. I realized that better understanding the historical context would elevate my ability to co-construct our initial inputs for our program.

The second core belief in the equityXdesign framework is “Be Seen” (Radical Inclusion). “Radical inclusion requires going further — identifying barriers that exclude and eliminate them; welcoming different people, stories, and experiences to the innovation conversation; creating spaces where everyone can bring their full selves and be equally valued” (Ortiz et. al., 2019, p.10). Running the program virtually was very exciting and powerful, yet there was a huge group of people who were unable to sustain a virtual connection and thus complete the program. Forced migrants and refugees face unique challenges based on their historical context. Both of our interns/program leaders are Rwandan and currently live in South Africa as refugees. While their context and experience were valuable as we worked to construct the program, they too had a limited lens and a certain level of privilege. Wealth varies in the different communities we serve; many of our learners live in refugee camps that have more restricted and vulnerable settings. I have come to learn that one of the most challenging places our learners reside is Kakuma camp, one of the largest refugee camps, with more than 200,000 refugees. We received some initial input and some participation from Kakuma learners; however, they were not a large part of the design process. Also, the experience of our learners in Lebanon is quite different, where there are issues, such as limited access to power. While we conducted focus groups, including learners from our different sites, as well as surveys, those actions are a far cry from actually co-hosting
planning sessions and co-constructing our program.

Co-construction and inclusion exist on a very wide spectrum. This leads into the equityXdesign core belief “Foresee”: “Process as product: Inclusive design practices raise the voices of the marginalized, strengthen relationships across differences, shift positions (Ortiz et. al., 2019, p. 10). I completed the initial overarching program based on my work with Change The Tune. Since Change The Tune teaches underserved learners in the Black and Brown K–12 American context how to develop social enterprise business pitches, I initially believed the work done in the summer setting could be relayed to this context. This allowed me to create an initial overarching program deck. I worked with my interns to get the vision out and to get large levels of input and feedback from a variety of community stakeholders. Thinking about the input goal of “aligning with local partners,” understanding I was new to the space, and not wanting to completely dominate, I worked with my team of interns to decide on a partner to support the facilitation and design of the program curriculum. Our organization had done a significant amount of work with the AEC. After shopping around and checking out other entrepreneurship curriculum providers, we decided to leverage GEM’s current partner, African Entrepreneurship Collective. When we first examined them, we found they heavily relied on a lecture-based learning model. I wanted to create an experiential learning model for our learners. When thinking about what we know works best in the space, and my own personal learning experience, I felt it was critical that learners not be talked at, but that they participate in the process of learning. As a result, we made a plan to work with AEC to make it more engaging. The partnership was supportive for learners; we brought in many different entrepreneurs from the space to speak to
learners about their experience. Blending Change The Tune’s experiential learning strategies with AEC’s content provided a positive learning experience for learners.

I built the program’s input options without co-planning/co-constructing sessions. Upon reflection, this decision was the result of a few considerations, including time, ease, and arrogance. Designing and making space for inputs can be significantly more efficient; besides, I felt that by operating with my small team of interns and looking to them for the voice of context and experience, there was a level of co-construction within the space. Because I have done entrepreneurship programming before, I was working with a level of arrogance. I did not truly take into account how important it would be to sit down with multiple people and reimagine what the learning experience could be. Also, operating on Zoom, a platform that posed constraints for international community members, and also having Zoom fatigue led me to choose the path of least resistance by leading sessions with my interns. Operating within the virtual Zoom space was a double-edged sword. In the virtual space where we all exist in somewhat similar boxes, I felt a false assurance that context was pretty consistent across the board and that I did not need to create additional processes to build out the program. As far as timing, taking the month off for summer camp and working to transition back into the residency, create connections, and build the program left me feeling behind and anxious to kickstart the project. Lastly, entrepreneurship is iterative, and the hope within building the first program was that I would learn significantly from the first iteration on how to improve and make adjustments for our learners.
The Learning Design

One major goal of equityXdesign is to speak to the future. When speaking to the future, a space must be reserved for “Equitable Learning Experiences” that factor in the use of language. Bell Hooks in Teaching To Transgress cites Adrienne Rich’s (1968) poem “The Burning of Paper Instead of Children” makes a point about the catch-22 relationship of language to the learning experience. Rich writes, “This is the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you” (1994, p.227). Considering how language is used in spaces, the weight it carries and the history and context of words, is critical to understanding how to engage with learners. Understanding the history and colonization that has occurred with the English language and the degradation of BIPOC community members is critical when building new liberatory worlds. To look forward and create new possibilities, there has to be a space to invite other languages, other vernaculars, other cultures into the space to connect. Leaders need a space to leverage language in cultivating and building their vision.

Although many of our learners were in AA, BA, or graduate programs, they displayed a range in ability to clearly articulate themselves according to standard English grammatical constructs, which greatly impacted their ability to write and articulate their business vision. Considering how language is used in spaces, especially business settings, understanding the weight that language carries and the history and context of the written and spoken word is critical to engaging with learners. In my initial review for knowledge and analysis, I acknowledged the importance of making space to invite other languages, other vernaculars, and other cultures into the space to connect. I asserted that there needs to be a space to leverage the language in the way leaders need to cultivate and build their vision. When thinking about the equityXdesign
framework, this connects with the need to speak to the future. On the one hand, we want a world that values various dialects, languages, and communication styles; on the other hand, as I was preparing learners to navigate our current context, I needed to convey to them the current hidden and explicit curriculum of the business world and how to present oneself in it. One resource that helped us toggle back and forth and look at things from multiple perspectives was the Culture Map by Erin Meyer (2014), a tool to help learners understand that context matters, that it’s normal for perspectives to be different, and that the goal is to come to a common understanding. Music also allowed for a variety of languages and dialects; leveraging learner selections allowed for a global sound to be present in the space. Lastly, there is a Nigerian version of Shark Tank called KCB Lions’ Den. The show was amazing in its variety of African entrepreneurs and their various approaches to pitching and running a business. Through these creative methods, we were able to support learners and equip them with the skills and capacity to navigate multidimensional challenging contexts.

The Impact of Time On Designing for Equitable Learning Experiences

Time is a social construct and the most precious resource. Understanding from learners how to best meet their needs with timing structures was a challenge. GEM is a competency-based degree program, which means much of the learning is done asynchronously. More than 60% of our learners worked during their learning experience. When I designed the program, we asked questions like, “How much time would learners be able to dedicate to the program?” The average was between 4–5 hours per week. A bias of mine from the grammar of schooling and my own learning experience is that the entrepreneurial model should be taught in person and as part of a cohort. I did not ask learners if the time they could dedicate would be in-person. I made an
assumption based on my set of experiences that we should have a large chunk of time for a live learning model. In thinking about inclusion and how to make space for learners, their experiences and their voices, I should have realized that a live commitment could be challenging for many of our learners—work schedules, family commitments, internet, and discretionary time vary significantly across the multiple sites and diverse student population with whom we were working. In one of our initial meetings, Liz City called out this lack of alignment through our models. I was so focused on the vision “I” created from my experience that I failed to ask our community members what the best structure might be based on their set of experiences. One outstanding question is what timing structures would drive the best program persistence rates. There are pros and cons to our live model. There were many benefits from learners hearing from each other. Also, having a set time created a structure for learners to dedicate themselves to working on their model. Most of our learners who dropped the program said they did not have enough time to dedicate to our project.

Creating Sustainability

As far as the desired output of building a new pathway for learners, there have been some successes and some challenges. To me, sustainability is multipronged. One significant component of sustainability is building a program structure whereby we get others to own and move the work forward; a second piece is building a set of community members who support the work that is being created; the final piece securing financial resources that allow the program’s monetary needs to be sustained over time, including program growth. One of the biggest challenges I have faced is acquiring the funds to continue our programming. The equityXdesign
framework requires us to start with ourselves by “raising our awareness of our own identities and how bias impacts our thoughts, choices, conclusions, and assumptions to truly co-create with others (Ortiz et al., 2019, p. 11). One goal in my work was to support the development of my interns as future leaders of the program. From the inception of my strategic project, the goal was to create a succession plan whereby our interns would run the program. Upon reflection, my goal was to have Donah and Bora, interns who were refugees and program alumni, co-construct the model. While we have worked closely together, there has been room for me to provide the interns with more autonomy to design programmatic elements. Frequently in our sessions, I would generate many of our ideas and listen to their perspectives on how we should proceed. For example, if we wanted to change our attendance policy, I might offer my thoughts on what the new policy should be. I would then ask and listen to their ideas and then would work to merge all of our ideas together in a new policy. The way we built policies and program elements largely proceeded in this fashion, and I think at times I would have preferred learning more of their ideas.

Neither intern had been in business before. One project that I assigned them after we ran the first iteration of our program was to develop their own business plan. By leveraging our previous lessons and their experience, they have both begun to develop a business model that they may implement in the near future. My role in the space has been significantly more directive than I like. The interns have been hesitant to fully take on a co-leadership role. However, if I am honest, I believe that I have harnessed and held onto significant amounts of control. For example, I have not been super transparent with the interns about the way our grant process has been set up. I had hoped we would be able to acquire some university funding;
however, I did not clue the interns in on this conversation. Working to shoulder too much of the work significantly impacted our ability to earn grants. I have engaged a few of my Global Education Team members to draft an initial letter of intent. However, I did not finalize or share the letter with any institutions. The equityXdesign model requires that I cede power: “Equitable design demands that practices change and evolve — that we redefine roles, revalue ways of knowing, and reassess the ways we reach a decision.” We have applied for two resource opportunities within the last year. One grant funder turned us down. The second opportunity we have just received. We have been accepted into Autodesk Technology Centers where we will receive access to a large and powerful entrepreneurship community and a host of technological resources for our learning community. One area where I have not made the desired level of progress is fundraising. With the support of my team members and an Auto Desk leader, I secured a resource grant for the Innovation Creation Studio. Perhaps engaging the team as I had done in many other areas would spur progress on funding. Before closing out the project, my supervisor pledged to support me on the funding journey for our program. I have also recently shared our work with the Social Impact Collective Team. We brainstormed many ideas for pursuing funding sustainability at the university, including potentially partnering with a professor for a research grant. Our hope is to secure enough funding to, at minimum, cover the interns’ salary for one year by the end of April 2022.

I believe I held on to much of the control for a few reasons. First, I am a controller, and control makes me feel safe. When I am entering a new setting, harnessing the power lets me feel as if I am responsible for and can mitigate risk by controlling the workspace. Control allows me to stay in my comfort zone. In my past experiences working as a Black woman in larger
corporate settings, educational systems have not felt like safe spaces.

Being my authentic creative self has not always been valued in my work settings. A safety strategy for me is to control the structure and work as much as possible. This can be quite detrimental to the process and goal of creating liberatory learning spaces. The second reason I acted controlling was strategic—I knew I had a significantly greater context and experience in business and teaching. There were many pieces of what we were designing that the learners were less familiar with as they did not work in business and had never created any sort of educational program before. Also, both of the interns’ bachelor’s degrees were in health care management. As a result, some of the suggestions floated by the interns were not practicable based on my knowledge and experience. Lastly, one element I was not conscious of at the time but felt in my subconscious and later realized when I visited South Africa, was that both of my interns were anomalies. They completed their BA’s in under a year. They were superstar students in their program, where many struggled and were unable to work as diligently or as quickly. I realized that this was in part due to their highly supportive family and community structures. Many people in their competency-based degree program dropped out or moved at a significantly slower pace. How did this translate into our work? They sometimes had high expectations that did not always take into consideration the differentiated needs of other learners. Basically, we were the A students from different contexts designing a program for everybody. This is a bit challenging upon reflection because, as you want to co-construct a program with a community, you need multiple voices with different perspectives so that the design of the system fosters success for all. This reminds me of the fractal: a small group designs for a large group and thus has a significant challenge ensuring success for all.
One of my favorite musicians was Nipsey Hussle. Nipsey was an entrepreneur, and his slogan was the marathon continues. Life is a marathon, change is a marathon, entrepreneurship is a marathon. There are several legs in each marathon, and different legs can be transformative for different people. When I set the vision for our learners to grow and revolutionize their reality, I did not equate this journey of growth with a marathon. As I reflect on our performance, I think we definitely helped our learners start the marathon and gave them a better understanding of what it takes to successfully run it. When preparing to run a marathon, one learns of the need for more resources, and that is a learning journey. Reflecting on our overall strategic project time, along with additional programmatic support, will tell how truly impactful our programs were.
Implications for Sector
With vulnerable transient learners, the best model for learning is a flexible model that allows time to be divorced from the learning process. We have yet to close out our second iteration, but early evidence from learner performance thus far, recent in-person pitch events, and daily feedback suggest that the idea is a blended model of in-person workshops and virtual learning opportunities, with at least 50–70% of the learning model remaining asynchronous.

More than 60% of our learners in GEM work while trying to earn their degree. Creating space for learners to decide when and how they can learn best can be revolutionary, providing learning opportunities for those in the most underserved and economically disadvantaged spaces. After seeing the learner experience in person, I believe our program may be best suited to those who are either not in school, have graduated, or are only in school part-time. School, along with work and family responsibilities, is extremely time-consuming and important for our learners. In order to build a successful transformational business, the learner has to have a large capacity for the level of research, planning, and action it takes to start, launch, and grow a business. Thus, full-time students may not be the best participants for programs like this, as their ability to manage other aspects of their life may be significantly limited.

One of the beauties of the pandemic is that it allowed for people to collaborate and connect across countries and continents in ways they had not before. The Innovation Creation Studio has served learners across five countries and two continents and is poised to reach more with a virtual model. Creating ways for entrepreneurs to work together transnationally can be transformative for our global business space. As a global community, we can share and build upon a lot of synergy and resources. Developing more programming that creates these
opportunities can also help us to build better solutions that serve a wider global audience. Many of our learners are interested in agriculture. With the level of food insecurity facing ultra-poor communities, it is strongly recommended that specialized agriculture and entrepreneurship programming be developed.

“Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.”

– Edwards Deming

I know, it’s my favorite quotation. Worldwide, our current education system, from K–12 to the university, is failing those in the most disenfranchised and underserved communities. The system has been designed this way on purpose. We have a false sense of meritocracy that leads us to believe if people just go to school, then they can get a degree, and all will be well. With nearly 56 million people unable to work currently due to forced displacement, and this number expected to increase to more than 700 million in the next 30 years if climate change does not improve (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2021, pp. 4–5), we must figure out new systems and supports to ensure that our global community members can build livelihoods for themselves. We must create opportunities through entrepreneurial and innovation programs to build new systems and structures, to innovate and design systems that are able to support everyone. These programs must take a holistic approach to designing new impact-focused organizations that do not put us in the same situations that business entities have historically put us in. The lessons learned in the most vulnerable communities with the Innovation Creation Studio can definitely be applied to the U.S. K–12 space and other global ultra-poor communities.
**Implications for Sector & Site (SNHU and GEM)**

As I have had the opportunity to reflect on the many ways the Innovation Creation Studio was successful, and also ways in which we needed improvement, I have found some critical lessons that can be applied to both Site & Sector:

**Flexible Learning Models Are Essential:**

We have a grammar of schooling that prescribes how learning should be done in a very formal, formulaic time-based way. It is critical to learn how to divorce time from learning. Each learner learns differently. Being able to create flexibility in the learning process is essential to being able to ensure that All learners can be successful. This also speaks to the importance of Universal Design for Learning. Creating multiple methodologies for learners to be able to experience and grow are essential to being able to meet the different needs of learners. Videos, music, written content, art, and more are all tools that can be utilized in building liberatory learning experiences.

**There must be a holistic approach to social entrepreneurship:**

When designing entrepreneurship programs, it is critical to not design just for a singular focus of equipping the learner to have the skills to make money, but instead a Holistic Approach to Entrepreneurship must be leveraged where equip entrepreneurs with the capacity to take better care of themselves and their communities. If we place a focus on entrepreneurs to take better care of themselves then I believe we will in turn see entrepreneurs take better care of their employees, their communities, in the spaces and places that we're able to create. It is really
critical when we're thinking about building entrepreneurship programs, the focus is not “How much money did you make? or What is your profit margins? The questions we must focus on should be: what are the impacts on people? What is the difference? What is the feeling? Who's able to eat now because of your business? Who's able to actually create their own livelihood? Whose quality of life has been improved because of your creation?

**Proximity and co-construction are essential:**

As I journeyed to South Africa to host an event with my interns, both of them said they could not wait until I arrived. While they were excited to see me, they also said that they wanted me to experience load shedding. This is when the power and internet go out for an extended period of time. Many of our learners in the different countries we serve frequently do not have power or internet. Prior to coming to South Africa, I was firm with my learners that they find a way to plan around the system so that they could be online. As soon as I landed in South Africa, there was load shedding for multiple hours. I was literally powerless. It was only at this moment that I could truly understand what my interns wanted me to see, feel, and experience. I was able to build a much deeper level of empathy. The essential element of being able to go and experience what the community you serve experiences is transformative for the process of designing for the community. It is imperative that when designing and implementing co-construction with those who have the experience of the population being served, and the leader working to be as proximate as possible is essential to derive maximum impact for a program.
Implications for Site (SNHU and GEM)

The Global Education Movement has been placed on a freeze during the spring semester. The university is going through a zero-based budgeting process where many different programs are being evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness. After talking to a few campus employees who are on the university leadership team, I learned that, because Covid-19 prompted many of the university’s programs to go virtual, SNHU has experienced a high level of competition, which has created a significant concern. Our projections for financial profit are significantly down. Additionally, the university has a large persistence problem: many of the learners are not finishing their degrees, which exacerbates the future financial solvency of the university. The university notoriously begins and ends programs as quickly as they are started. As an ancillary program that is not core to SNHU’s business model, GEM is one of the longest-running social impact programs of the past several years.

As the university considers the future of our larger program, it is imperative that there be ongoing support for an entrepreneurial career pathway for learners. With more than 70% of refugees and forced migrants residing in places with restrictive worker settings, there is a critical need for an entrepreneurial career pathway. Entrepreneurship comes in many different forms; there

Figure 17: Accelerator participant, Junior, pictured here with his son and wife, provided a giving tour of his social impact business.
is the gig economy, agriculture, tech innovations, and more. Many opportunities for learners should be provided in conjunction with the degree program.

**Ensuring Espoused Values Are Enacted Values**

When I started working for Southern New Hampshire University, I was advised to talk to the first and only previous resident of Southern New Hampshire University. When I spoke with this previous resident, he explained that after only two months of residency, the brand-new program that his residency project was designed around to serve Dreamers had been canceled without little rhyme or reason. Since I've been at southern New Hampshire University, I've learned about four other programs that have served black and brown learners that have gotten canceled with very little notice and very little regard for the impact or implications for learners and their community. My current program has been frozen for the last 2 months. And there are large signals that it will very soon be canceled as well. When you visit the website of SNHU the university espouses that it greatly cares about diversity and inclusion and wants to impact learners. It says on its website specifically “At SNHU inclusion is more than something we strive for. It’s our mission” (SNHU, 2022). When reflecting on the multiple closures of programs with little regard for the impacts to diverse and some of the most vulnerable populations, one finds a gap between espoused and enacted values. I strongly recommend University Leadership to take some time to reflect on its intentions and its current impact on the vulnerable underserved communities where they are rapidly closing programs. When designing programs, it is imperative that leadership is not simply focused on the moment, but on the longevity, and the long-term implications of opening and potentially closing a program. Additionally, when making
financial considerations, as the recommendation was given for a holistic approach to entrepreneurship, the same recommendation stands in terms of the capitalistic approach to program evaluation based solely on numbers. When the decision is made to close or downsize a program because of challenges that are insurmountable, this must be done thoughtfully and with a laser focus on preserving the humanity and dignity of all involved, but especially the underserved community being impacted.

Cross University Collaboration To Support The Work

I had an opportunity to present our work to the Social Impact Collective Team. One of our goals was to build bridges across SNHU’s Entrepreneurship Ecosystem. There were approximately 48 people on the call who work on a variety of social impact initiatives across the university. I asked the team a series of questions to better understand who does what in the university space, so that we could begin to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem for learners across the university. Participants had the opportunity to connect over questions in small groups, and we collected responses via Jamboard.

*Figure 18: Jamboard Outline for University Social Impact Team Discussion.*
Critical takeaways from this large group conversation that I strongly support, and that I am working to implement where action is required, are the following:

- There should definitely be a connection between the university campus and our learners. Specifically, The Chandler Center at SNHU is the hub for civic engagement and social impact. To increase learning opportunities in multiple areas, the Chandler Center should partner with the Innovation Creation Studio to establish service-learning opportunities and service projects. A significant experiential project could, for instance, be developed between those in business programs on the main campus and our learners. In addition to the Chandler Center and the program connecting over entrepreneurship programming, the two should work together to find synergy at least quarterly.

- Multiple people suggested on multiple occasions that a platform for students across the university be developed to connect, exchange resources, allow learners to mentor one another, and more. Currently, the Harvard Innovation Lab, which was an influence on our work, has a Slack channel for all participants. There are several useful tabs, for resources, social impact–focused individuals, and more. One other connection point could be an entrepreneurial Slack developed for learners to tap in and connect with one another in an organic way. It could serve as a clearinghouse for announcements about external fundraising opportunities, fostering connections to others with different industry expertise.
and helping people explore internship opportunities with startups. Within this Slack structure, there could be channels organized by geographical filters.

Regarding sustainable funding for our program, several people recommended grants. One specific recommendation was finding a professor who has a research grant who would like to support the work and exploring a research opportunity. Another was examining other university resources and organizations in the space who would be interested in supporting the work.

In South Africa, I presented to and connected with Scalabrini, an on-the-ground partner of GEM. When I shared in person about our program, they said that, although we had met and shared previously about the program, they had a much greater level of clarity after the in-person presentation. Additionally, running a live workshop with a small pitch event shed light on future programming possibilities. The Scalabrini Center became much more invested in our work and offered to let us use the space for free in-person workshops for learners. Our intern, who also works with the Scalabrini Center, would allow learners to come in and use the computer labs and internet. The university at large must understand the importance of the learners' context and the necessity of continuously working to remove barriers to the learning process.

**The Power of Proximity**

The power of in-person connection and the capacity to get much more done in an efficient way leads me to strongly recommend, at minimum, bi-annual retreats where the leadership team of GEM and SNHU are able to get together and facilitate co-constructing experiential learning retreats. I visited Malawi for five days, and in those five days worked with
GEM team members and Supervisor to design, recruit for, and host a “planning a pitch” event/workshop for 18 learners. Before coming to Malawi, I had no way of knowing where or how to begin to plan these events. I had the opportunity to walk alongside one of our learners and truly, deeply understand the nuances of his business, including how it varied by season, and the amazing impact he was making by supporting the launch of other women entrepreneurs. It is essential that the Southern New Hampshire University SNHU leadership team spend time physically on site.

Building & Running Unconventional Innovative Programs Like GEM

Southern New Hampshire University is a large traditional education system. The Global Education Movement is the furthest thing from this. Going to visit our sites in person allowed me to see that navigating and running programs in these spaces don't always fit into the confines of a traditional university system. If SNHU wants to invest and create these revolutionary innovation programs, they must truly think about what is entailed to run a program that cannot fit into the operational confines of a traditional university structure. Questions must be answered of what it looks like to build a program that may not be compliant for all university policies and procedures based on the different structures in existence of underserved communities. The question must be constantly asked: how a program and a process can be created where you are continuously renewing and understanding the impact of the program developed.

I recommend SNHU contracts someone external to their system, so that this system can actually see the system from a balcony perspective. This consultant should take a look at the programs that they have developed, how they've operated. In the process of analyzing and
working to evaluate they should speak with a variety of participants. The goal in speaking with
learners is to understand what is working, and what is not working, what is the experience of the
learner, how can the program be designed to make a more positive impact? From the research
and analysis done, decisions can be made on how to proceed cautiously forward if they choose to
make or grow programs like GEM. Serving Refugee learners can be tremendously powerful and
have very large impacts not only for the learner but also for the communities the program
operates within. With this powerful potential also comes the alternative side for when support is
removed or withdrawn. Closing a program of this magnitude for an extremely vulnerable
population can be traumatizing and also have greater impacts for the larger community being
served. It is recommended that the University recognize it is never too late to restore and remedy
the harm that has been done when making decisions. People must always be prioritized over
profits.
**Implications for Self**

I have to mention that, going into residency, it had not quite been a year since my dad passed. One coping strategy of mine is being somewhat myopic and burying myself in my work. I took a full load of courses and operated as a Teaching Fellow for a full load of courses, participated in a large fellowship, fundraised about $300,000, and planned a hybrid summer camp that ran in three locations in my second year at Harvard. Initially, my plan was to grow Change The Tune while doing residency. I have been clear from the start that my Harvard journey has been designed to grow and scale the impact of Change The Tune. Upon reflection, what I wanted entering Harvard and residency was power. Queue…

> “Money, Power, and Respect” -The Lox  Lil Kim, DMX

What's the key to life? Money, power, and respect| What you need in life?| Money, power, and respect| You'll be eatin' right| Money, power, and respect| You can sleep at night| You'll see the light| What's the key to life?| Money, power, and respect| What you need in life?| Money, power, and respect….

My purpose is to revolutionize the education space. In order to do so, I need power. Why do I want power? Toni Morrison, the Nobel laureate author, said, “If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else” (Battilana, Casciaro, p. 8, 2021). One issue for me is that I frequently conflate power with control. Queue Janet Jackson’s “Control.”

> “Control” -Janet Jackson

Now I know I got to take| Control, now I've got a lot| Control, to get what I want| Control, never gonna stop| Control, now I'm all grown up

I have come to recognize that the power is not mine alone to have or to hold. To be more specific, I have wanted the power to create liberatory learning spaces—the power to reimagine
what learning can look like for all. The power to empower others to ensure that, as a collective, we can truly reimagine the learning space. Looking back on my Theory of Action going into residency, I realize it theorizes my ability to first understand what is needed and wanted by my local and global community. From there, as we set collective visions, then we can work to garner, leverage, utilize and redistribute power. This is one lens that helps me to understand where I have had success, and also where I have made missteps. Where does the need for control come from? Why is it so persistent? For me, a desire for control comes from operating from a place of fear—fear that things can hurt me, fear that things may not work out, fear that there may not be enough. At times, I have a scarcity mindset. I recently purchased a shirt that says, “RELAX, nothing is under control.” I have come to realize how true this is. One of my favorite sayings is “People will only support what they create.” Working with others to build a joint vision is critical.

When I left Green Dot Public Schools, one of my biggest frustrations was the fear-based model of education. This idea of controlling and people wanting to do things in a particular way feeds into the siloed nature of work: I will do this over here because I can control it by myself. However, all work really connects and overlaps, so the more that we can join and find ways to build collaboratively, the more we can push the work forward. The more I have been able to collaborate and work with my interns, the better it has been for everyone. Also, trying to hoard work and control is exhausting. It supports a competitive, capitalistic, selfish way of being that keeps the individual from finding joy.

Entrepreneurship is a marathon, not a sprint. When I started my strategic project, I knew that this project would be a matter of planting seeds and that I could not see all of our outcomes
come to fruition in ten months. However, I did not think about providing support for learners who went through our program beyond the ten months. I have been on an entrepreneurial journey all of my life, since I was a child selling candy. Throughout my life, I have usually opted to go and work because of the risk I have associated with entrepreneurship, and also the windy, uncharted path that comes with it. I have found most success through mentorship and coaching. I love development programs and the people I have met along my journey who continuously push me. When I am building out future programs and work, and even for myself, taking the approach that understands the marathon, the ongoing and growth experience is critical with how I apply pressure for myself and my team members. The greatest growth and joy come in working together with others. We make each other think. We push each other. We teach each other. We grow from each other. This takes time.

In mid-March, at the end of our second project, I had the opportunity to spend time with my interns. This was transformational for our working relationship. Time is a social construct and also one of the most powerful resources. Having the time to spend with my interns to simply have dinner, go on a walk through a slave castle, or even design a presentation together in a non-urgent way, allowed for a much more powerful co-constructive experience. I have developed strategies for slowing down and recognizing when I am entering into fear mode, why I am entering into this mode, and how I can address irrational fears. This is a powerful tool to keep from replicating broken leadership models and modes of operation. With our course, “Practicing Leadership Inside and Out,” I was taught how to identify somatic signs that alert me to my feelings. This can be a dissociating headache or a heaviness in my body. I have worked with a coach, Anouk Shambrook, to recognize the different selves at play and to recognize the signs of
my body. The process of pausing and listening to the body is critical to making different choices in my leadership.

Traveling to South Africa, Malawi, and Kenya to spend time with my interns was revelatory. My interns mentioned that they were afraid of me prior to my visit; after my visit, they felt as if we understood each other better. Having the opportunity to visit Dzaleka, a refugee camp, and better understand what the experience of our learning community looks like, is something that cannot be done virtually. Also, being able to laugh, hug, and experience the energy of an individual cannot be captured in the virtual space. Additionally, seeing my power and my impact grow exponentially, in person, has shown me that whatever work that is being done needs to always have an in-person grounding component. I, as a leader, need to be able to connect on a deeper level with those I am serving in an education setting, and that needs to be done in person. It is not lost on me how I may come across in the virtual space based on the feedback I have received. It is critical for me to find ways to examine and work to ensure that I am not intimidating those with whom I seek to collaborate.
**Conclusion**

“*Wake Up Everybody*” - Harold Melvin & The Bluenotes ft. Teddy Pendergrass

Wake up, everybody| No more sleepin' in bed| No more backwards thinkin' | Time for thinkin' ahead| The world has changed| So very much| From what it used to be| There is so much hatred| War and poverty| Wake up, all the teachers| Time to teach a new way| Maybe then they'll listen
To what you have to say| 'Cause they're the ones who's coming up| And the world is in their hands| So when you teach the children| Teach 'em the very best you can| The world won't get no better| If you just let it be, na, na, na, na, na| The world won't get no better| We gotta change it, yeah| For you and me| For you and me| For you and me|For you and me|

The goal is to start a global revolution that is not built on antiquated oppressive structures, but instead a rhizomatic infrastructure of powerful innovative organizations that seek to design a world where everyone succeeds. When I talk about the future vision for Change The Tune, I have said our big goal is, by 2032, to have a collaborative community of 1,000,000 BIPOC Transformational Leaders building new community systems. The work that I have done this year has given me the global perspective necessary to build a new system where capitalism, education, healthcare, agriculture, and every industry that one can think of, is reimagined.

The most critical lesson I have taken away from this is: I am not the movement, and I cannot create the movement, and the vision for the movement is not mine alone. The movement is the collectives, and the vision for it has to be built together. What will move us forward is not me working to shoulder the bulk of the work but creating systems of accountability wherein others have a vested interest in what they are supporting. Through focus groups, surveys, and our
program graduates, we made a significant level of progress in the Innovation Creation Studio. It is my hope that we learn from our blind spots, expand the vision, and grow our impact.

Process is product. How we build opportunities and experiences matters as much as the outcomes. If we repeat old processes that are rooted in oppressive practices, then our innovations are at risk of replicating the broken system. Adaptive leadership is critical as we speak to a future of new possibilities and opportunities.

Music is love. By intentionally bringing in sound and joy to connect with the culture and humanity of our community, we can turn challenging moments into joyful moments of growth. Creating multiple modalities for messaging, from the visual to the auditory to the written, will ensure that all can participate in the revolution.

The process is a marathon. The goal is not completion, the goal is growth and movement forward. Entrepreneurship and innovation are a journey. Building structures that create learning systems to support the humanity of learners and the ongoing journey is one that must continuously evolve. The marathon continues!

“Be Alive” - Beyonce

It feels so good to be alive| Got all my family by my side| Couldn't wipe this black off if I tried| That's why I lift my head with pride| I got a million miles on me| They want to see how far I'll go| The path was never paved with gold (gold)| We worked and built this on our own (own)| And can't nobody knock it if they tried| This is hustle personified| Look how we've been fighting to stay alive| So when we win, we will have pride| Do you know how much we have cried?| How hard we had to fight?| it feels so, so, so, so good| (Got all my sisters by my side) uh, I got all my sisters by my side | (Couldn't wipe this black off if I tried) oh, black off if I tried| (That's why I lift my head with pride) Uh, now we're sitting on top of the world again, huh
More About GEM’s Partners

In each region where GEM operates, they have established reliable program partnerships with NGOs to deliver our in-person program model. Below is a list that explains each of our sites and their partnership structure (GEM Prospectus, 2021, p. 29).

**Lebanon:**

In Tripoli, Bekaa Valley, Beirut, and Saida, GEM partners with several organizations, including the Lebanese Association for Scientific Research, a nonprofit that works to provide a better higher education journey, and MAPS, a nonprofit, non-governmental organization that aims to develop the capacity of individuals to create good, dignified societies. GEM also partners with The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which provides assistance and protection for some 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees to help them achieve their full potential. (GEM Prospectus, 2021, p. 29)

**Malawi:**

In Dzaleka Camp, we work with Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL), a collaborative partnership of organizations and institutions designed to provide tertiary education to those who would not otherwise have access to higher learning opportunities by drawing on the rich centuries-long Jesuit tradition. (GEM Prospectus, 2021, p. 29)

**Kenya:**
In Kakuma camp and Nairobi city, GEM is beginning to contract with JRS, which operates two temporary protection houses for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SVGB) and children with protection needs, offering comprehensive case management, psychosocial support, and skills training. (GEM Prospectus, 2021, p. 29)

**Rwanda:**

GEM partners with Kepler, a nonprofit blended learning university program which offers online learning opportunities paired with in-person instruction and workplace experience at two sites, Kepler Kigali, which opened in 2013, and later Kiziba camp. Kepler has been a key testing ground for our full model. (GEM Prospectus, 2021, p. 29)

**South Africa:**

GEM partners with the Scalabrini Centre, which delivers development and welfare programs to the migrant and local communities of Cape Town. The Centre offers specialized services to migrants, refugees, and South Africans through seven main programs. GEM also launched a new site model in Johannesburg South in November 2021.

**Global:**

On a worldwide level, GEM works with UNHCR, which provides access to camps. Working with refugees is innately fluid because of the landscape's rapidly changing politics. We are also a founding member of a UNHCR-led consortium, the Connected Learning in Crisis
Consortium, focused on tertiary education for refugees and supporting university programs on the ground. (GEM Prospectus, 2021, p. 29)
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Appendices

Appendix A: Capstone Playlist

Appendix B: Fall Program Outline Deck

Appendix C: Spring Program Outline Deck

Appendix D: Current Website with curriculum resources:

Appendix E: Program Curriculum Outline:

Appendix F: Application Rubric

Appendix G: Innovation Creation Studio Application

Appendix H: Guest Pitch Deck

Appendix I: Social Impact Collective Presentation

Appendix J: GEM Entrepreneurship Focus Group Survey:
(Our interns sent out a few versions, however this version went to all sites and captured the bulk of our learners)