LAIDLAW LEADERSHIP-IN-ACTION PROJECT

Starting a Career at a Start-up!

Six weeks at MyPocketSkill

Understanding the role of FinTech and EdTech to increase financial inclusion

This is a snapshot of my experience of working in a dynamic start-up at the intersection of FinTech and EdTech exploring Financial Inclusion amongst Young People

MYPOCKETSKILL

Aayush Garg · LSE Laidlaw Scholar 2026 · MyPocketSkill · London, United Kingdom · June to August 2026

My goals

Improve AI & Technical/Data Literacy

Challenge: applying AI tools to build SQL/Python based platforms for data analysis and bots

Growth: I was able to construct 3 different deliverables; Funnel/Cohort Analysis, a Moderation Bot, and a Research Report after decoding trends/data in Financial Education amongst Gen-Z.

Understand the functioning of a Start-up

Challenge: decoding the rationale behind the decision-making across the 5 years of the startup

Growth: I was able to decode the database, funnel, industry climate and business model to provide a comprehensive business strategy for the founders to act upon.

Develop Adaptable Communication Across Stakeholders

Challenge: similar findings had to be adapted towards banks, the founders, academia etc.

Growth: I was able to design several one-page posters to market key figures to different stakeholders and investors to partner with the company over the research report I wrote.

Week by week

- **Week 1:** Kick-started quantitative research by designing algorithms to conduct cohort/funnel analysis
- **Week 2:** Presented my findings / Kick-started qualitative research through community engagement and cold calling
- **Week 3:** Began qualitative research on Gen-Z attitudes towards investing and existing gaps in Financial Education.
- **Week 4:** Submitted my first draft / Attended the Financial Education Forum that provided additional insights to improve the draft.
- **Week 5:** Built a Moderation Bot and organised a marketing day with kids from the platform.
- **Week 6:** The busiest week: presented the Gen-Z Investing Report, completed an analysis of the business model and areas for improvement (structural), and showcased the two bots I built to improve the system.

Events participated in

Ollo x MyPocketSkill AI Accelerator — Organisation, PR Management, and Qualitative Research through interaction with platform users. JUL 26

Financial Education Forum 2026 — Attendee, gathering insights and information about the space that further aided the development of the Gen-Z Investing Report AUG 26

Key Deliverables

01 **Gen-Z Investing Attitudes Report,** involving 1200+ respondents and focus group insights, attracted LSEG, Aviva Investors, Fidelity, and EY for collaboration and publishing.

02 **Supply-side activation, Ambassadors Programme Redesign, and Moderation/Ticketing Bot** advised programme restructuring and motivated new backend features, as well as clear rules for moderation and a restructured programme for ambassadors.

03 **Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis** of the business and a comprehensive strategy for short- to medium-term success motivated the development of new front-end features and processes I suggested, and further reflection on solutions to address gaps identified in the analysis.

My military experience and the LiA

01 **"You are as strong as your weakest man."**
As a lieutenant, I learnt that instructions must be delivered at the level of the person with the least context. That transferred into how I presented my funnel analysis and report: establish the baseline first. The audience changed, however, which meant the language was designed to persuade, not to direct.

02 **"Leaders set the pace."**
In the military, commanders set the direction; non-commissioned officers executed it through clear standard operating procedures. A startup works differently: a small team moves fast and wears many hats, so that structure is still being built. Working alone in Week 3 showed me how much it matters for motivation, so I helped build small pieces of it myself: a moderation bot built on structured rules, and a redesigned ambassadors programme. When I lead a team, setting the pace and keeping regular human contact will be a deliberate part of the job.

Reflections THE LONGER VIEW

What surprised me

In my first week, I sat in on an investor meeting where our visitor had a different picture of the platform and the industry, and I stepped in to clarify how it worked. It brought back something one of my military commanders used to say: "Common sense is not always common." What we treat as shared knowledge isn't always shared, so when pitching or discussing, I learnt that understanding shouldn't be assumed.

What I learnt about leadership

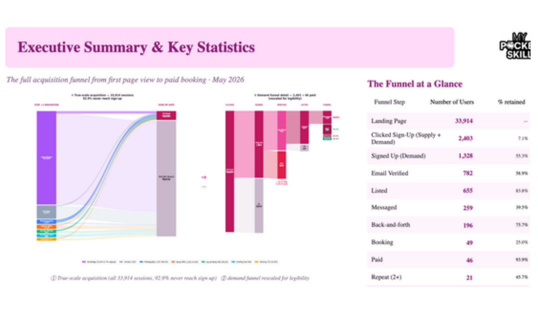
In my first week, I admired how closely the founders were involved in everything: messaging at odd hours, moving between meetings, solving problems as they came up. It showed me how easy it is to get absorbed in the day-to-day of something you care about. But leading well sometimes means stepping back to take a macro perspective. I learnt that the view from above matters as much as the work on the ground.

What I learnt about myself

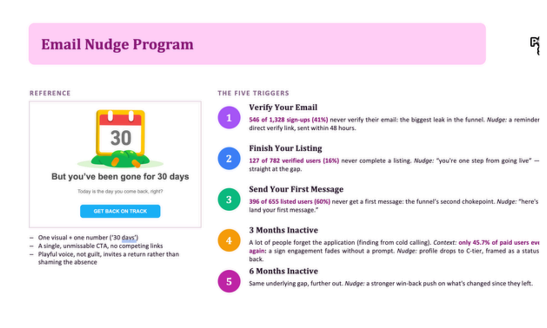
Accountability and Purpose are my two biggest motivators. By Week 3, I was walking into the office five days a week to find no one there, and with no one waiting on a task, I could finish it on my own time. The Monday evening sessions guiding our Student Ambassadors were the one part of the week that felt like a team. I learnt that I still get things done when nobody is watching, but the drive has to come entirely from within, and that is more tiring than I expected.

Work samples

FUNNEL ANALYSIS



SOLUTIONS



RESEARCH REPORT

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Skills developed

Creativity · Adaptability · Research · Automation and Process Design · Systems Thinking

Automation vs human connection

I spent a lot of time building my AI literacy and tools to increase efficiency, relying on them for most tasks, especially the secondary research for the Gen-Z Investing Report. They helped me deepen my understanding, yet I never encountered one key perspective: intergenerational distrust among immigrant communities, which was only raised at the Financial Education Forum. I realised these tools are there to build depth, but they are limited to the extent of your own knowledge.

ADVICE TO MY DAY-ONE SELF

Talk to as many people as possible, the internet and technology provide access to depth, but only people give you ideas, perspectives, and breadth in your wisdom.