Youtube Link 👍Watch the full video
https://youtu.be/xB-DVkms6YI

App Link: https://ai-money-coach.base44.app

BEFORE YOU SPEND

AI Money Coach & Financial Thinking Assistant

Build a mobile-first AI financial coaching application called Before You Spend.

This is NOT a banking app.

This is NOT an expense tracker.

This is NOT an investment platform.

It is an AI money coach that teaches people how to think about money, understand their own financial behavior, make better spending decisions, save more, and understand what their money could become over time.

The core philosophy is:

> Don't tell people what to buy. Help them understand what their money is doing and what their choices could create.

1. THE CORE USER EXPERIENCE

The experience should feel like having a smart, patient, financially knowledgeable coach sitting down with you and asking:

> "You earn ₦200,000 every month. Let's understand where that money is going."

The AI should have a conversation with the user rather than presenting endless forms and charts.

The user should be able to say:

> "I earn ₦200,000."

The AI responds:

> "Okay. Before we build anything, tell me what usually happens to that ₦200,000 each month."

The user:

> "₦50,000 electricity, ₦50,000 for my girlfriend, ₦40,000 food, ₦30,000 transport and the rest just disappears."

The AI should NOT immediately create a generic budget.

Instead, it should investigate.

2. THE FINANCIAL INTERVIEW

This is one of the most important features of the entire application.

The AI should interview the user about their money.

For every significant expense, the AI should understand:

- What is the expense?
- How much is it?
- How often does it happen?
- Why do you spend this money?
- Is it essential?
- Is it supporting someone?
- Is it emotional?
- Is it social?
- Is it convenience?
- Could it be reduced?
- Could it be eliminated?
- What would happen if it disappeared?
- What would happen if the amount were reduced?

- What does the user actually want this money to achieve?

The AI should be curious rather than judgmental.

3. UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND SPENDING

Do not simply classify spending as:

"Good"

or

"Bad."

Understand WHY the person spends.

For example:

User:

> "I send my girlfriend ₦50,000 every month."

AI:

> "Tell me a little more about that. Is the ₦50,000 supporting something essential, like rent, food or medical expenses, or is it more of a relationship expense?"

User:

> "She doesn't really need it. I just like helping her."

AI:

> "I understand. If helping her is important to you, we don't necessarily need to remove it. But what if you reduced it to ₦25,000 and redirected the other ₦25,000 toward your emergency fund or an investment? Would that still allow you to support her while also building something for yourself?"

The AI should help users think through trade-offs.

---

4. SCENARIO SIMULATOR

This should be a major feature.

Allow users to ask:

> "What if I stop spending ₦50,000 on this?"
>
> "What if I reduce this from ₦50,000 to ₦30,000?"
>
> "What happens if I save ₦20,000 every month?"
>
> "What happens if I invest ₦30,000 every month?"
>
> "What happens if I continue spending like this for five years?"

The AI should calculate and explain the consequences.

Example:

> "If you redirect ₦30,000 per month instead of spending it, you would have ₦360,000 after one year before any investment returns."

Then show potential long-term outcomes using clearly stated assumptions.

---

5. "WHAT COULD THIS MONEY BECOME?"

Turn spending decisions into opportunity-cost education.

Example:

User spends ₦50,000 every month on a discretionary expense.

The AI can say:

> "Let's imagine you redirected that ₦50,000 every month."

Then show:

- 1 year
- 3 years
- 5 years
- 10 years

Show both:

Cash saved

and

Illustrative value if invested

Investment calculations must clearly state the assumed return and must NEVER present hypothetical returns as guaranteed.

Example:

> "At an illustrative 10% annual return, investing ₦50,000 monthly could grow to approximately ₦3.9m over five years. Actual returns can be much higher or lower, and investments can lose value."

The purpose is education, not promising returns.

---

6. LOCATION-AWARE FINANCIAL EDUCATION

During onboarding, ask the user's:

- Country
- Optional state/region
- Currency
- Financial goals
- Risk tolerance
- Investment experience

The financial education and opportunities shown should depend on the user's location.

For example:

Nigeria users should receive Nigerian financial education and opportunities.

US users should receive US-relevant financial education.

Users in other countries should receive information relevant to their jurisdiction.

Do NOT assume that an investment product available in Nigeria is appropriate or available to a user elsewhere.

7. LIVE FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

The application should have access to current financial information from reputable sources.

When discussing financial products, investment options, regulations, interest rates, inflation, market conditions, or investment opportunities, the AI should research current information rather than relying on outdated knowledge.

Prioritize:

1. Government financial regulators
2. Central banks
3. Stock exchanges
4. Official investment-provider documentation
5. Reputable financial institutions
6. High-quality financial publications
7. Academic/research sources

For Nigerian users, prioritize authoritative sources such as:

- Securities and Exchange Commission Nigeria
- Central Bank of Nigeria
- Nigerian Exchange Group
- Other relevant Nigerian regulatory bodies

The SEC provides investor education covering investment basics, strategies, opportunities, risk, diversification and investor protection, and provides tools for checking registered operators.

The application should provide source links whenever current financial information is presented.

---

8. INVESTMENT EDUCATION

The AI should teach users about concepts such as:

- Saving
- Investing
- Compound growth
- Inflation
- Risk
- Diversification
- Bonds

- Treasury bills
- Stocks
- Mutual funds
- ETFs
- REITs
- Fixed income
- Retirement planning
- Emergency funds
- Dollar exposure where legally and practically relevant
- Long-term wealth building

For Nigerian users, educational content can include relevant Nigerian capital-market instruments such as equities, government securities, mutual funds, ETFs and REITs.

Explain concepts in simple language.

Example:

> "A bond is essentially a way of lending money to a government or company in exchange for interest and repayment according to its terms."

Do not overwhelm beginners with financial jargon.

---

9. PERSONALIZED INVESTMENT EDUCATION

The AI should connect investment education to the user's actual situation.

Example:

User:

> "I earn ₦500,000 and can save ₦80,000."

Instead of saying:

> "Buy stocks."

The AI should say:

> "Before we talk about investments, let's make sure your financial foundation is strong. How many months of essential expenses could you currently cover if your income stopped?"

Then:

> "Once your emergency cushion is at a comfortable level, we can explore what investing ₦80,000 monthly could look like."

This teaches financial sequencing.

---

10. NEVER ACT AS A PERSONAL INVESTMENT ADVISER

The app should clearly distinguish between:

Financial education

and

personalized regulated investment advice.

The AI should not:

- Guarantee returns
- Tell users an investment will definitely make money
- Encourage reckless speculation
- Execute investments
- Hold user funds
- Recommend investments as guaranteed outcomes
- Pretend to be a licensed financial adviser

Instead use language such as:

> "Here are some options you could learn about."
>
> "Here are the risks."
>
> "Here's how this type of investment works."
>
> "Here's what you should consider before deciding."
>
> "You may want to speak with a qualified financial adviser."

When mentioning Nigerian investment providers or capital-market operators, encourage users to verify registration with the appropriate regulator. The Nigerian SEC provides a registered-operator lookup for this purpose.

---

11. THE MONEY JOURNEY

The app should have two distinct phases.

PHASE ONE — UNDERSTAND ME

The user provides:

- Income
- Recurring expenses
- Typical monthly spending
- Savings
- Debts
- Financial responsibilities
- Major financial goals

The AI interviews them about their spending.

There is NO requirement to upload six months of bank statements.

There should be NO fake historical data.

There should be NO automatically generated transactions that the user never entered.

Every financial figure shown in the application must come from:

- User input
- User-uploaded information
- Clearly labeled assumptions
- Calculations derived from those inputs

---

12. PHASE TWO — START TODAY

Once the initial financial interview is complete, the AI says:

> "Now I understand how you currently use your money. From today forward, let's build your real financial history together."

From that day onward, users can log every transaction.

Methods:

- Text
- Voice
- Receipt upload
- Screenshot
- Quick entry

Example:

> "Spent ₦4,500 on fuel."

The AI records it.

Over time, the app builds a REAL spending history.

---

13. DO NOT INVENT DATA

This is a critical requirement.

The app must NEVER populate:

- Fake expenses
- Fake income
- Fake transactions
- Fake savings
- Fake historical data
- Fake bills

If the user has not provided information, show:

> "I don't have enough information yet."

If an estimate is necessary, clearly label it:

> "Illustrative estimate based on the assumptions you provided."

---

14. FINANCIAL COACHING CONVERSATION

The AI should continuously help the user think through decisions.

Example:

User:

> "I want to buy a ₦300,000 phone."

AI:

> "You can buy it, but let's look at what it means for your finances."

Then:

- Current income
- Current savings
- Emergency fund
- Existing obligations
- How long it would take to replace the money
- What happens if the purchase is delayed
- What happens if the money is saved instead

Then ask:

> "Would you still want the phone if buying it meant delaying your emergency fund by two months?"

The goal is not to tell the user what to do.

The goal is to help them make a conscious decision.

---

15. FINANCIAL TRADE-OFFS

For every major financial decision, the AI should be able to present:

Option A

Continue current behavior.

Option B

Reduce spending.

Option C

Eliminate spending.

Option D

Redirect the money toward savings.

Option E

Redirect the money toward an investment.

Then explain the consequences of each.

---

16. EMERGENCY RUNWAY

Calculate:

- Essential monthly expenses
- Current savings
- Months of expenses covered
- Days of runway
- Target emergency fund

Example:

> "If your income stopped today, your current savings could cover approximately 47 days of essential expenses."

Then:

> "Your first target could be three months of essential expenses."

The app should help users work toward this progressively.

---

17. MONEY POCKETS

Users can organize their money into pockets such as:

- Housing
- Food

- Transportation
- Utilities
- Family
- Relationship
- Lifestyle
- Business
- Savings
- Emergency Fund
- Investment
- Personal Development

The AI can suggest pockets based on the user's actual life, but the user always controls them.

---

18. SAFE-TO-SPEND

After sufficient data exists, calculate:

> "Based on what you've told me, this is approximately what you can safely spend."

Do not show this feature using invented information.

If insufficient information exists:

> "I need a little more information about your bills and spending before I can calculate this accurately."

---

19. FINANCIAL HEALTH CONVERSATION

Do not reduce financial health to a meaningless score.

Instead explain:

- What is working
- What is fragile
- What is improving
- What is holding the user back
- What could change

If a score is used, it should support the explanation rather than replace it.

---

20. INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY EXPLORER

Create a section called:

"What Could My Money Become?"

Users can enter:

- Amount they can invest
- Frequency
- Time period
- Risk tolerance

The app can show educational scenarios.

Example:

> "If you invested ₦25,000 monthly for 10 years, here's what the contributions would total."

Then optionally:

> "At an illustrative annual return of X%, the hypothetical future value would be Y."

Clearly separate:

Your contributions

from

Illustrative investment growth

and clearly state that returns are not guaranteed.

---

21. MARKET & INVESTMENT LEARNING

Create an educational feed that explains:

- What is happening in relevant markets

- Why it matters
- What terms mean
- What risks exist
- What beginners should understand

For example:

> "Interest rates have changed. Here's what that can mean for savers and investors."

The app should use current sources and cite them.

Never present old information as current.

---

22. THE AI'S PERSONALITY

The AI should feel like:

- Intelligent
- Calm
- Curious
- Practical
- Encouraging
- Honest
- Slightly challenging when necessary
- Never judgmental

It should be willing to say:

> "I don't think that's the best financial decision for you."

But it must explain WHY.

It should ask questions rather than lecture.

---

23. VISUAL DESIGN

Use a premium financial aesthetic.

Primary colors:

- Deep green

- Near-black
- Off-white
- Subtle neutral gray

Avoid the stereotypical bright fintech blue.

The feeling should be:

wealth + calm + intelligence + trust.

Use deep green for:

- Positive financial progress
- Savings
- Growth
- Important actions

Use black/near-black for:

- Navigation
- Primary typography
- Strong visual hierarchy

Use red/orange sparingly for genuine warnings.

---

24. HOME SCREEN

The home screen should primarily show the conversation.

Example:

Good evening.

"*You told me you earn ₦200,000 monthly. Let's figure out where your money is going and what we can change.*"

Then:

Your money snapshot

Income: ₦200,000

Committed: ₦140,000

Flexible: ₦60,000

Savings: ₦0

Emergency runway: Not enough data yet

Then the AI continues the conversation.

---

25. THE PRODUCT'S CENTRAL QUESTION

Everything in the application should ultimately help the user answer:

> "What is my money doing today, and what could it be doing for me tomorrow?"

The application should not simply tell users:

"You spent ₦50,000."

It should ask:

> "Why did you spend ₦50,000?"

Then:

> "Did that spending move you toward something you care about?"

Then:

> "If you redirected ₦20,000 of that spending, what could it become?"

Then:

> "Would that change be realistic for you?"

That is the product.

---

26. MVP PRIORITY

Build the first version around these features:

1. Conversational AI money coach
2. Income input
3. Recurring expenses input
4. Financial interview
5. Spending explanation and psychology

6. Scenario simulator
7. Savings opportunity calculator
8. Emergency runway
9. Money pockets
10. Voice expense logging
11. Receipt/screenshot logging
12. Real spending history beginning from the user's first day
13. Location-aware financial education
14. Current financial/investment research
15. Investment education
16. "What Could My Money Become?" calculator
17. Deep green + black premium UI

Do NOT build bank integrations initially.

Do NOT require six months of statements.

Do NOT populate fake historical transactions.

Do NOT make the user manually build a complicated budget before they can use the app.

Start with their story.

Understand their money.

Understand WHY they spend it.

Then coach them toward a better financial future.

INCOME GROWTH COACHING

The AI financial coach should understand that financial improvement does not always come from cutting expenses.

If the user's essential expenses and financial responsibilities are consistently too high relative to their income, the AI should gently transition from:

"How can we reduce your spending?"

to:

"How can we improve your income?"

The AI must never assume that the solution is simply to spend less.

---

1. DETECT WHEN INCOME IS THE PROBLEM

Analyze the user's:

- Monthly income
- Essential expenses
- Recurring expenses
- Family responsibilities
- Debt obligations
- Savings capacity
- Financial goals

If the user's expenses leave very little or no room for savings, explain this honestly.

Example:

> "We've looked at your spending, and I don't think cutting another ₦5,000 from your budget is going to solve the bigger problem. Your income is currently carrying a lot of responsibility."

Then ask:

> "Would you be open to exploring ways you could increase your income?"

Do not make the user feel inadequate or ashamed.

---

2. ASK ABOUT THEIR WORK

If the user is willing to explore additional income, ask conversationally:

"Tell me what you currently do for work."

Then ask:

- What is your current role?
- How long have you been doing it?
- What do you enjoy about it?
- What don't you enjoy?
- Is your current job full-time?
- Do you have evenings or weekends available?
- Can you work remotely?
- Are you interested in freelancing?
- Are you interested in a side business?
- Are you interested in learning a new skill?
- Would you consider another job?
- Would you consider taking on additional responsibilities at your current workplace?

Do not turn this into a long questionnaire.

The AI should ask questions naturally based on the user's answers.

---

3. DISCOVER THEIR SKILLS

Ask the user:

"What are you already good at?"

Allow the user to answer naturally.

For example:

> "I'm good at writing, I know Canva, I can manage social media and I've been learning AI."

The AI should extract potential monetizable skills such as:

- Writing
- Graphic design
- Video editing
- Social media management
- Sales
- Customer service
- Coding
- Data analysis
- Accounting
- Teaching
- Consulting
- Photography
- Marketing
- Project management
- Administration
- Voiceover
- Translation
- AI automation

The user should NOT have to select from a huge list.

They can simply talk.

---

4. DISCOVER INTERESTS

Ask:

> "What kind of things do you naturally enjoy learning about?"

Also:

> "Have you seen anything recently that made you think, 'I could actually do that'?"

This is important.

The AI should identify opportunities based on:

Skills + Interests + Experience + Available Time + Market Demand

rather than simply recommending random side hustles.

---

5. INCOME OPPORTUNITY EXPLORER

When the AI understands the user's background, it can research current opportunities.

Examples:

- Freelance services
- Remote jobs
- Contract work
- Consulting
- Digital services
- AI-related services
- Local businesses
- Creator opportunities

- Online teaching
- Specialized professional services
- Small business opportunities

The AI should use current web research when suggesting opportunities because job markets, rates, platforms, and demand change.

For each opportunity, show:

Opportunity

What it is.

Why it fits you

Connect it to the user's skills.

What you need

Skills/tools required.

Time to first income

Provide an estimate and label it clearly as an estimate.

Potential income

Use realistic ranges rather than guaranteed earnings.

Difficulty

Beginner / Intermediate / Advanced.

First step

Give the user one concrete action they can take.

---

6. DON'T PUSH SIDE HUSTLES ON EVERYONE

The AI should ask permission.

Example:

> "Would you like me to explore ways to increase your income, or would you rather focus entirely on reducing your current expenses?"

Possible answers:

- Increase income
- Reduce expenses
- Both
- Not right now

Respect the user's choice.

---

7. SAVE EVEN WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT

The application should NOT tell someone:

> "You need to save 20% of your income."

That can be unrealistic.

Instead, determine what the user can actually afford.

If someone earns ₦200,000 and has ₦195,000 in necessary expenses, the coach might say:

> "I don't want to give you an unrealistic savings target. Let's start with ₦1,000 or ₦2,000 if that's genuinely sustainable."

The objective is to build the habit of paying yourself first, even if the initial amount is small.

Then progressively increase savings as income improves or expenses decrease.

---

8. MICRO-SAVING STRATEGY

Allow the AI to suggest:

- ₦500
- ₦1,000
- ₦2,000
- ₦5,000
- ₦10,000

depending on the user's actual financial situation.

Example:

> "You don't have much room right now, so let's not pretend you can save ₦50,000. Could you start with ₦2,000 every payday?"

Then show:

₦2,000 × 12 months = ₦24,000 contributed

And optionally show an illustrative investment scenario if appropriate.

The point is:

Start with what you have. Increase as your capacity increases.

---

9. INCOME INCREASE SCENARIOS

Allow users to simulate:

> "What if I earned ₦50,000 more?"
>
> "What if I got another ₦100,000 monthly?"
>
> "What if I increased my salary by 20%?"

Show how the additional income could be allocated.

Example:

Additional income:

₦50,000

Suggested allocation:

₦20,000 — Emergency fund

₦15,000 — Long-term savings

₦10,000 — Investment education/opportunity

₦5,000 — Lifestyle

But the AI should explain that this is a suggestion, not a fixed rule.

---

10. AVOID LIFESTYLE INFLATION

If the user's income increases, the AI should ask:

> "Before you increase your spending, what if we decided where that extra money goes first?"

Example:

Current income: ₦200,000

New income: ₦300,000

Instead of automatically increasing lifestyle spending by ₦100,000, the AI could explore:

- Emergency fund
- Debt repayment
- Savings
- Investment
- Education
- Business capital

The user should consciously decide what the additional income accomplishes.

---

11. VOICE-FIRST FINANCIAL COACHING

Voice should be a first-class feature, not an afterthought.

Users should be able to conduct the entire financial interview using voice.

They can say:

> "I make 250,000 a month. I spend about 70,000 on rent, 30,000 helping my family, around 40,000 on food and maybe 20,000 on transport."

The AI should extract the information and respond naturally.

Users should also be able to say:

> "I'm a teacher but I'm really good at designing things and I've been interested in AI."

The AI should recognize:

Occupation: Teacher

Skill: Design

Interest: AI

Potential opportunity areas: AI + education + design

The AI should ask follow-up questions conversationally.

---

12. VOICE EXPENSE LOGGING

At any point the user can say:

> "I just spent 4,500 on fuel."

The AI records it.

Or:

> "I bought food for 8,000 and then sent my sister 10,000."

The AI should recognize two separate transactions.

Before committing ambiguous information, confirm it.

---

13. VOICE FINANCIAL JOURNAL

Allow users to talk about their money without necessarily creating a transaction.

Example:

> "I feel like I always spend too much whenever I get paid."

The AI should recognize that this is a financial reflection rather than an expense.

It can respond:

> "That's useful to know. Do you usually find yourself spending more immediately after payday?"

Over time, these conversations can help the AI understand the user's financial psychology.

---

14. INCOME + EXPENSE DECISION TREE

The coach should generally follow this reasoning:

Step 1

Understand income.

Step 2

Understand essential expenses.

Step 3

Understand discretionary spending.

Step 4

Understand WHY the user spends.

Step 5

Identify unnecessary or reducible spending.

Step 6

Determine realistic savings capacity.

Step 7

If savings capacity is too low, investigate income growth.

Step 8

Understand the user's skills, interests and available time.

Step 9

Research relevant income opportunities.

Step 10

Create an achievable income-growth experiment.

Step 11

Help the user allocate additional income intelligently.

---

15. THE COACH SHOULD ALWAYS ASK:

> "Is the problem spending, income, or both?"

This is a fundamental principle of the application.

Someone earning ₦1,000,000 and spending ₦950,000 has a different problem from someone earning ₦150,000 and spending ₦145,000.

The coaching should recognize the difference.

---

16. THE ULTIMATE GOAL

The application should help users progress through:

Understand your money

↓

Understand why you spend

↓

Reduce what doesn't matter

↓

Save what you realistically can

↓

Increase your income

↓

Protect your money

↓

Learn how investing works

↓

Build long-term wealth

The AI should never promise wealth.

It should teach the user how to make better financial decisions repeatedly.

The fundamental philosophy remains:

> "I don't want to manage your money for you. I want to teach you how to manage it yourself."