JA Global Impact Report 2023

JA Worldwide®

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Celebrating JA's Impact

At JA, we celebrate all forms of impact, from those that incubate global social movements to those that foster better outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. Since our founding, millions of JA alumni have built new ventures from the ground up, won election to the highest political offices, studied at leading universities, and invented products that have revolutionized industries. Millions more have built ethical and sustainable small businesses that help the world meet the challenges of the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development. And millions of other JA alumni have achieved less well-known—but no less laudable—successes, like being the first in their families to graduate from college, spending less than they earn in order to save for retirement, and becoming respected and effective leaders.

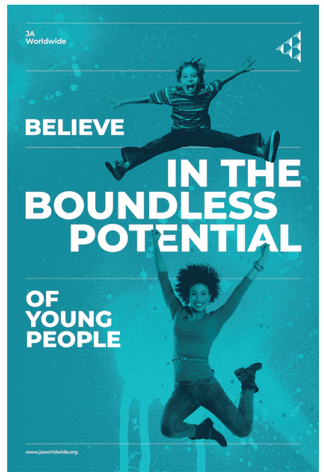
As a result of their JA experiences, our alumni start more companies, hire more employees, and produce significantly larger annual sales than ventures led by non-alumni. Our alumni also save more, hold less debt, and are less likely to spend more than they earn. JA alumni report higher levels of household income and career satisfaction. And they're less likely to drop out of school, face unemployment, or collect social insurance. You'll learn more about this data throughout this report.

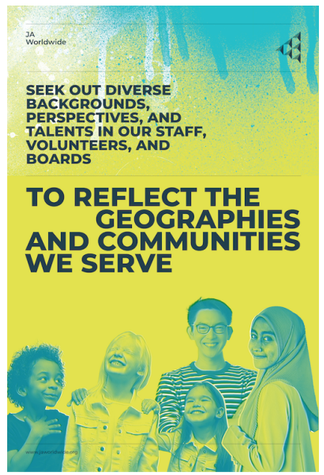
Using Data to Prepare Youth for Employment and Entrepreneurship

Today, more than ever, non-governmental organizations are under pressure to demonstrate impact to key stakeholders and investors. For JA, this is simply part of our culture. JA is a data-driven network that uses research and evidence not only to demonstrate our impact but also to make critical programmatic and policy decisions. We are constantly building our capacity to collect data, identify impacts, and develop systems for reporting and using data. As a global organization that operates in 115 countries with over 50 different programs, building this body of evidence has involved partnering with many different researchers in multiple countries to conduct numerous evaluations and studies.

Data in this report are sourced from over 40 studies of JA learning experiences from 2007 to 2022, using robust research methods to understand program impacts. The results of these studies speak to the importance of our programs in addressing global economic issues among youth. However, we are interested in more than the impact of our learning experiences—especially how these experiences can be implemented most effectively inside and outside of the classroom. JA is now using data from these studies to inform our practices as part of a process of continuous improvement, ensuring that our programs are designed based on valid and accurate research findings, are robustly impactful to the youth we serve, and build critical alliances in civil society.

About JA Worldwide





What We Do

As one of the world's largest and most-impactful youth-serving NGOs, JA delivers hands-on, immersive learning in entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial health. Each year, we deliver more than 15 million student learning experience through over 400,000 teachers and business volunteers, making us one of the few organizations with the scale, experience, and passion to build a brighter future for the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

JA's experiential curriculum begins with exposure to critical skill sets—collaboration, creativity, self-confidence, and resilience—that prepare students for university, vocational education, the workforce, or their own startup ventures. JA students job shadow skilled mentors, challenge themselves and their teammates during technical and business innovation contests, get their first taste of entrepreneurship, test their skills through a range of experiences, and lay the groundwork to be the next generation of job creators.

The Skillset and Mindset that Employers Seek

We equip young people from every corner of the world with the employment and entrepreneurship skills they need right now—and in the future. By building a wide range of skills and nurturing self-belief, JA prepares young people for the future of work, teaches them how to think entrepreneurially, and ensures they have the tools to be financially capable adults.

But the impact of our real-world training goes beyond individual students. For over 100 years, JA has operated all over the world, even in areas of political instability, violence, and war, ready to help students through the unemployment, poverty, and hopelessness that stem from such conditions. By helping youth develop the employment and entrepreneurial tools to find meaningful work and start sustainable companies, JA serves as conduit for peace and prosperity. Through JA, young people are equipped with the skillset and mindset to build thriving communities.

Our Global Network

Our Theory of Change

Photo by JA Worldwide/KLP

Self-efficacy is at the center of JA's theory of change, the underpinning of the JA difference, and serves as the foundation of many of our learning experiences. Self-efficacy is a major influencer of belief systems that can positively impact choices, motivation, and behaviors, leading to success when engaging in new challenges.

As they experience JA, our students develop self-efficacy—the belief that they have the power to achieve their goals—which is as important as skill building when preparing young people for employment and entrepreneurship. By acquiring critical work skills and activating their self-efficacy, JA students are more prepared for the future, have an edge in achieving their aspirations, reduce the likelihood of youth unemployment, and embark on startup enterprises in their communities.

JA students develop self-efficacy in four ways:

- Skills acquisition: Mastering skills through hands-on experiences
- Role models: Observing others with self-efficacy being successful
- Practicing optimism: Rerouting negative thoughts into positive ones
- Supportive belief: Hearing that others believe in your ability to succeed

The result is a global generation of empowered young people who are ready to compete for highly skilled jobs and embark on startup enterprises in their communities.

JA Learning Experiences

Teachers and volunteers can choose from among dozens of JA learning experiences, including the samples shown here.

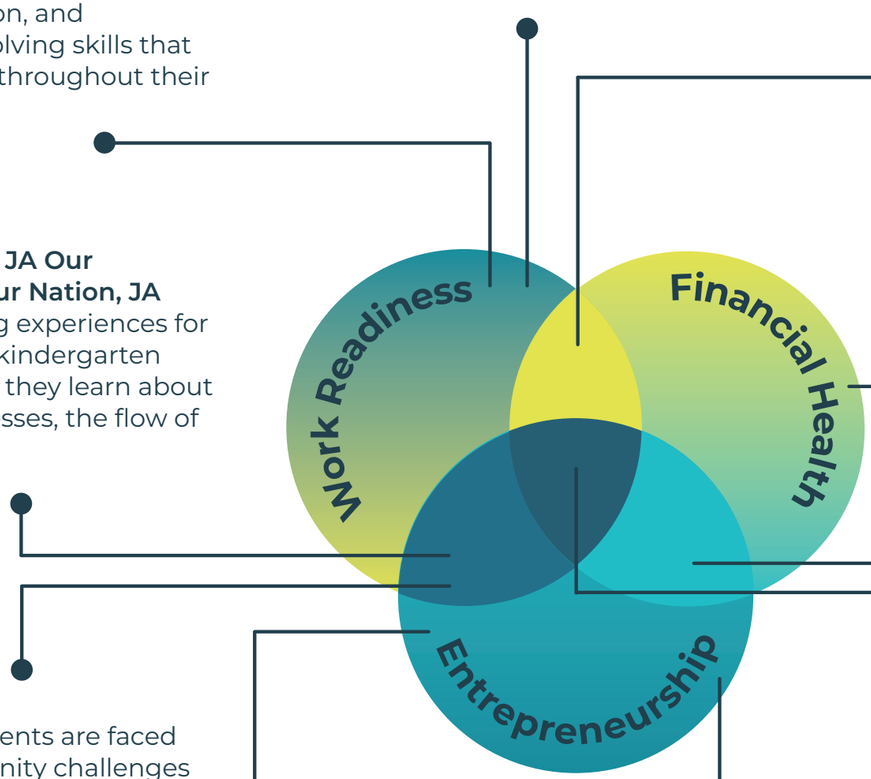
JA Success Skills: Students learn communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that help them throughout their careers.

JA Job Shadow: During a visit to a professional work environment, students face a series of challenges to problem-solve.

JA Economics and JA Economics for Success: Students build strong personal finances and explore career options based on their skills, interests, and values.

JA Ourselves, JA Our Families, JA Our Community, JA Our City, JA Our Nation, JA Our Region: A series of learning experiences for primary school students, from kindergarten through fourth grade, in which they learn about people, their work, their businesses, the flow of money, and more.

Cha-Ching Curriculum: Students ages 7 to 12 learn to earn, save, spend, and donate.



JA More than Money: Students learn to earn, spend, save, give, and start a business.

JA Innovation Camp: Students are faced with business and community challenges that require entrepreneurial thinking, foster innovation, and build work-readiness skills.

JA Company Program: Students produce a product, create a company, and manage their businesses from start to finish.

JA It's My Business: Students anticipate customers' wants and needs, create a detailed business plan, participate in a pitch session, and embrace entrepreneurial thinking.

JA Be Entrepreneurial: Students start their own entrepreneurial ventures and transition from student to professional.

Entrepreneurship: Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Through JA's real-world entrepreneurship programs, students work as a team to develop an innovative product or service, finance their startup business, creatively market their product or service, and launch their careers as entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs. The JA Company Program, our flagship offering, is the longest-running entrepreneurship program in the world. Students not only create real companies with real products and services, but also learn to overcome adversity and rise to the challenges they face.

Entrepreneurship

Photo by JA Worldwide

One-third

of alumni in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) credit the JA Company Program with helping them choose a university major that's aligned with their interests, including an overwhelmingly "strong interest" in being an entrepreneur.[1]

In a longitudinal study conducted two years after JA students completed the JA Company Program in Europe,

94%

are enrolled in education, employment, or training, compared to 88% for non-alumni.[2]

Every September, Egyptians face a black cloud that results from burning rice straw, a remnant of the rice harvest. The smoke and ash lead to a host of respiratory ailments. At the same time, Egypt faces a shortage of wood products with which to build furniture and other items.

JA alumnae Salma Sherif, Khadija Radwan, and Habiba Shawkat saw an opportunity to improve the health of both Egypt's air quality and its economy. Using rice straw that would otherwise be burned, the three young entrepreneurs build stylish, high-end furniture without requiring imported wood to build them.

Entrepreneurship

Photo by Kate Carlton

JA Company Program participants in Sweden are

30%

more likely to start a company than are comparable non-alumni.[3]

In Norway, JA alumni are more likely to be involved in creating companies, desire to be self-employed, and believe they have the skills to create companies. 85% of alumni are still running their own businesses. today.[4]

20% of JA alumni in the Eastern Caribbean report being self-employed versus 2% of non-alumni.[5]

In Accra, Ghana, JA alumna Mabel Simpson sorts through a stack of African-print fabrics, while her two employees stitch together colorful laptop bags, handbags, backpacks, shirts, and cushions.

Mabel studied visual arts in school, and it was there that she also learned to run a retail operation. Her school had a JA shop on campus, and students were responsible for all aspects of managing the store, including keeping it running and profitable, and learning the basics of business.

Mabel took those skills and poured them into her fashion brand, mSimps. “The most important thing I learned from JA was business management,” Mabel said. “You need both a creative mindset and business know-how. JA gives you all of this.”

Entrepreneurship

Photo by JA Europe

In northern Nigeria,

100% of students who completed JA ITS TYME agreed or strongly agreed that they are likely to start their own business.[6]

In JA Americas,

71% of alumni in an entrepreneurship program say that it's highly likely they'll own their own business within a year.

70% of female JA alumni in the same program believe they can own their own businesses.[7]

JA alumni in the UK start more companies and hire more employees, and their firms produce significantly larger annual sales than those led by non-alumni.[8]

Entrepreneurship

Photo by JA Worldwide

More than half (51%) of Junior Achievement USA alumni report that they have started or owned a business at least once in their lifetimes. This number jumps to two-thirds (67%) among Hispanic and Latino JA USA alumni.[9]

Of the JA companies launched in a remote area of Indonesia marked by poverty and financial vulnerability,

85%

have reached a level of maturity that ensure sustainability. 70% are run by women.[10]

More than 90%

of JA Company Program alumni in Africa credit JA for their success in business.[11]

Joseph Ndinya of Kenya-based White Charcoal salvages paper from Nairobi trash dumps and compresses it into briquettes, an alternative to wood-based home-heating fuel. Using earnings from his company, Joseph was able to buy his mother a house.

“If not for the JA training and White Charcoal business,” Joseph said, “I would be jobless, and I don’t know if I would be alive.”

Entrepreneurship

Photo by JA Europe/Ung Företagsamhet

Azad Ali escaped persecution in Kurdistan at age 12 and was on the run for many years. Finally settling in Sweden, he started a new life and, at age 17, formed a JA company with a team, selling the wooden lamps he designs. During the JA Sweden Company of the Year competition, the team sold two lamps to Mikael Damberg, Sweden's Minister for Industry and Innovation, who posted a short video on social media showing his new lamp and demonstrating how easy it was to assemble. Azad was selected to represent his region at a dinner at the Royal Palace with the royal family, all of Sweden's governors, and another 180 invited guests, ranging from celebrities and sports stars to community leaders.

It was an overwhelming experience for Azad to visit the palace. "I never had a country. Where I come from, you are never exposed to the people who are in charge. When I left the palace, I cried. It's an experience I will never forget," Azad said.

The company was reorganized in 2018 and changed its name to AXD, which stands for Azad eXciting Design. Azad, now 25, continues to grow AXDSweden. "We currently have six employees and a premises of approximately 3,000 square meters, where our employees manufacture furniture, interiors, displays, and shop fittings, and also offer contract manufacturing."

Azad has also found purpose in his work, encouraging local youth and other refugees and immigrants to turn their passions into careers.

De La Vega Global Entrepreneurship Award

JA's entrepreneurship programs teach students real-world business skills so they'll be ready to create the jobs of the future. Through the JA Company Program—our flagship entrepreneurship program—students work with business-savvy mentors to launch companies that deliver innovative products and services. Student teams also participate in JA Company of the Year competitions at local, national, and regional levels, demonstrating their products and services in trade fairs and presenting their businesses onstage to esteemed judges.

"Entrepreneurship leads to prosperity everywhere around the world. And prosperity around the world leads to peace."

–Ralph de la Vega

The De La Vega Global Entrepreneurship Award recognizes outstanding JA entrepreneurs. The first-place team from each of our six annual regional JA company competitions (including Company of the Year, Gen-E, Young Entrepreneurship Celebration, and National Student Leadership Summit) are automatically entered as finalists for the award. As part of the competition, each team submitted a video that tells the story of the company in a creative way and makes the team stand out. New in 2023, teams were asked to detail any adversity they faced and explain how they overcame it. Each team also submitted an executive summary, which includes a brief version of the business plan, marketing goals, challenges faced, successes achieved, and a company financial report.

For the 2021 award, JA student companies that won the regional competitions in Denmark, Eswatini, Oman, Peru, Singapore, and the U.S. (Texas), were the finalists for the global prize. Team Bubbles, the inaugural winner from JA Denmark (Fonden for Entreprenørskab), improves communication between educators and students who suffer from attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders (ADHD). Students wear noise-cancelling headsets that eliminate audio distractions, creating a direct line of communication between teacher and student, improving academic performance.

For the award given in 2022, JA student companies from Bahrain, Canada, Kenya, Singapore, Slovakia, and the U.S. (Ohio) competed for the global prize. Each JA student company brought something different to the competition, from team size to product or service. Project Yoof from JA Kenya built an online platform to help students' mental health; MarketAngelo from JA Canada makes it easy for students to learn about ESG and investing through friendly virtual competitions with actual cash prizes; Scrapcap from JA Singapore takes old-school uniforms and repurposes them to make caps; Hasib from INJAZ Bahrain invented a device that makes biking safer in their community; and Finlit from JA of North Central Ohio (USA) created a board game to help young people learn financial literacy. Ultimately, it was Scribo from JA Slovakia and its environmentally friendly replacement for whiteboard markers made from recycled printer wax that won the competition.

In its third year, finalists for the De La Vega Global Entrepreneurship Award included JA student companies from Greece, Guam, Mexico, UAE, the U.S. (Ohio), and Zimbabwe were finalists for the prize. Ultimately, JA Zimbabwe's Hekima Inc. from Maranatha Christian School in Harare triumphed for its educational app, Study Buddie. A software development company born out of the JA Company Program in Zimbabwe, Hekima specializes in education-specific technologies with an aim to make education accessible and available to all. Study Buddie gives students access to educational materials, including e-books, courses videos, lessons, and additional study materials. Users can time their studies, schedule their tasks, form study groups, and connect with teachers in real-time. The app also includes a stress-relief game to help students recharge during study breaks.

Hekima Inc.'s founders—Tinovimba Sagonda, Shingirai Muchingu, Blessing Bvunzawabaya, and Kudzai Katanda—came up with the concept for Study Buddie because one of them often became sick and missed a lot of school. Instead of spending her time in the hospital reading comics and watching Netflix, her friends thought it would be great if she could work on her education from her phone. In addition to witnessing their friend's struggle, the founders also saw students in their community (and beyond) fall behind in their studies due to pandemic shutdowns and other concerns, such as having to travel long distances to school on foot.

Tinovimba, Shingirai, Blessing, and Kudzai decided to develop a mobile app to make education accessible to all students. But developing an app was not so simple. App development can come at a high price point, and it's not a task that can be done quickly. Hekima Inc. also needed to differentiate Study Buddie from other apps.

They started raising money for their product by selling shares in their community at US$5 each. With startup funding, they signed up for an affordable online platform that enabled them to develop and maintain the app. They eventually sold user plans for the app at US$2 for the basic plan and US$5 for the premium plan. Study Buddie is available for students in Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Tanzania on Google Play and in the Apple Store.

Thanks to the generosity of the de la Vega family, Bubbles, Scribo, and Hekima each received a US$15,000 cash prize and other educational opportunities, and every finalist team also received USD$5,000. The students are free to spend the money as they see fit, whether that's to continue to grow their businesses or spend it on their educations.

Learn more about the award at jaworldwide.org/delavega.

De La Vega
GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD

Work Readiness: Preparing for the Jobs of the Future

JA's volunteer-led work-readiness programs teach critical work skills that prepare young people for college, trade school, or the workforce. Whether job shadowing skilled mentors, testing their skills through digital experiences, or developing solutions during technical and business challenges, JA students are prepared for the future of work.

Work Readiness

Photo by INJAZ Al-Arab JA MENA

In MENA,

98%

of JA students believe that what they learn in JA will be important later in the future.[12]

JA alumni in Canada are

25%

less likely to be unemployed.[13]

In Portugal,

99%

of JA alumni are currently working (55%) or studying (44%), with only 1% classified as NEET (not in education, employment, or training).[14]

After participating in the JA Company Program,

94%

of students in MENA believe their JA experiences will help them get a better job.[15]

74%

of students in MENA tell us that they're empowered to take on a leadership role in the workforce of the future.[16]

Photo by Michael Crome/Las Vegas Raiders

88%

of JA alumni in the United States report that they are satisfied with their careers, compared to 48.7% of the general public.[17]

Also in the U.S.,

90%

of students tell us that JA prepared them for the future of employment and will help them get a better job.[18]

When an accountant came into Michael Crome's eleventh-grade classroom in Columbus, Ohio, more than two decades ago as a JA volunteer, neither one knew that day would change Michael's life.

Michael was recently promoted to Chief Financial Officer of the Las Vegas Raiders, overseeing all financial aspects of the NFL team, including athlete salaries, stadium sales, merchandise, and more. "Junior Achievement opened the door for me," Michael recalled, "to learn more about my future career. The volunteer who taught in my classroom inspired me with the insight about his career as an accountant. That interaction helped me to find my way into the world of finance, where I work today.

"Seeing someone who looked like me, someone that I could relate to, who was in the classroom, teaching a lesson [caused me to] go that route. I went to college, majored in accounting, and the rest is history."

"Now, I'm trying to find more Michaels," he said, "who may just need one or two chance interactions to set a new trajectory."

Work Readiness

Photo by Young Enterprise

Roughly 75% of students in the UK and the U.S. agree that their JA volunteer business advisor helped them understand the world of work.[19]

More than half of Junior Achievement USA alumni now work or have worked in the same field as their JA volunteer.[20]

Twice as many JA alumni in the Eastern Caribbean report gaining teamwork skills and communication skills through JA programs as compared to their non-JA counterparts. These alumni are roughly three times more likely than non-alumni to be involved in the labor market.[21]

90% of JA alumni in the U.S. say that JA inspired them to succeed in their professional lives, and 88% say that JA widened their horizons.

88% say that JA made them think of new work opportunities or career paths.

80% of JA alumni report that their careers are extremely fulfilling.

88% report that they are satisfied with their careers, compared to 49% of the general public.[22]

Photo provided by Tonatiuh Gómez

In high school, Tonatiuh Gómez attended the JA Mexico FIE Entrepreneurship Camp, never believing it would change the course of his life. But while he was there, surrounded by other students who had passion and vision, he decided he would do whatever it took to accomplish something big with his life. He didn't know exactly what, but his participation in the FIE talent show and his journey in dance would set the stage for the inspiring career that would follow.

Tona credits JA with developing the work ethic, emotional maturity, leadership, and humility required to pursue an emotionally and physically demanding career in ballet. He also learned resilience through JA, a trait that allowed him to not lose hope after being rejected twice by the National Center for the Arts in Mexico City (one of the most important schools in Mexico) after sustaining a serious injury that prevented him from any physical activity for over two years.

Once Tona had fully healed, he had missed the age cutoff for all of Mexico's national dance schools. But then the Superior School of Music and Dance in Monterrey extended its maximum age, and Tona came in just under the wire. He was accepted and trained extensively for one year, during which he ate, breathed, and slept ballet. From there, he was offered a scholarship to The Rock School for Dance Education in Philadelphia, which opened an even bigger world of opportunities, given its close proximity to New York City. Tona started traveling into the city regularly to watch ballets and go on auditions.

Fast-forward to today: Tona was recently promoted to principal dancer—the highest level a dancer can reach—with the San Diego Ballet Company.

JA Entrepreneurial Skills Pass

The Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP) is an international certification of skills and experiences for businesses eager to hire students with an entrepreneurial mindset.

Initiated with the support of the European Commission by JA Europe, the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP) is an international certification of skills and experiences. The global initiative has been endorsed by the Organization of the American States and selected by the World Economic Forum as one of 16 Education 4.0 Lighthouses, examples of public-private collaborations that are reimagining the childhood learning experience and can serve as inspiration for educators, parents, policymakers and employers

This is the first JA global microcredential—currently used in more than 50 countries—certifying that students have had a real entrepreneurship experience through the JA Company Program. A competence-based assessment allows students to reflect on their own progress, and a final test of skills validates and certifies their knowledge about running a business.

89,000+ students enrolled in **52** countries

39,029 ESP holders today, with a goal of 100,000 by 2025

"If I have two young people, one with ESP and another one without, I would definitely present my client the one with ESP because that candidate has proven to have the practice. ESP proves that you have not only read the theory but also that you have the practical experience."

—Geert Vaerenberg, ManpowerGroup

Photo by JA Africa

Financial Health: Cultivating Economic Independence

JA’s hands-on, role-playing financial-literacy programs expose young people to smart saving and investing, thoughtful spending and credit, the role of taxes, the value of employment and community involvement, and the opportunities of global trade.

Financial Health

Photo by JA Africa

In the U.S., JA alumni earn

20%

more in salary than non-alumni.[23]

Over two-thirds (68%) of JA alumni in the U.S. between the ages of 18 and 29 say that they're financially independent from their parents.

Meanwhile, research from Pew shows that only about one in three (34%) Americans in that age range say they're financially independent.[24]

In Europe, JA alumni earn

one month's salary

more in annual compensation than non-alumni.[25]

Financial Health

Photo by JA Worldwide

90%

of JA alumni in the U.S.—where financial education is taught in classrooms across the country—are confident in their ability to manage money.[26]

More than

80%

of alumni in MENA credit JA with helping them better understand the importance of managing their finances.[27]

More than

50%

of alumni of a JA financial literacy and entrepreneurship program are regularly saving money

versus **32%** of non-JA alumni.[28]

In the U.S., 77% of Black JA alumni agree that they have a strong financial footing. Slightly more (89%) agree that their experience with JA helped establish financial literacy.[29]

Financial Health

Photo by Prestasi Junior Indonesia

JA alumni in Canada are

3X

less likely to spend more than they earn. They also save more and have less debt than non-alumni.[30]

20%

less likely to collect social assistance than non-alumni.[31]

The Cha-Ching curriculum—a JA partnership with the Prudence Foundation that started across Asia and is now expanding into Africa—supports teachers as they instill four key money-management concepts (earn, save, spend, and donate) to children ages 7 through 12.

As one example, in the Philippines, program impact was quantitatively evaluated to determine whether Cha-Ching is successful in increasing students' financial literacy. Researchers observed a statistically significant "Cha-Ching Effect," a 66% to 80% overall change in three financial-literacy dimensions: increase in financial knowledge, improvement in financial attitude, and behavioral change toward positive financial decisions.[32]

Photo by Kate Carlton

When Jonathan Mubiru lost a large sum of money to a dishonest vendor, he was so disappointed that he cried. At the time, he was still a university student, and couldn't afford the setback. He stopped taking orders for his small T-shirt company for several weeks. All the joy from running his own business had vanished. "But then I talked to people in my network and learned that they had also made mistakes, and some had lost even more," he said. "It happens. You move on and make sure it doesn't happen again." From that day on, he knew to always require a receipt from his vendors.

His T-shirt business was the extension of a successful JA company from his final year in high school. When he later accepted a job at Citi and his work travels prevented him from keeping his business up and running, he reluctantly decided to close it down. But he is certain that his JA experience gave him the skills that launched his career at Citi. "I learned all work concepts through JA," he remembers. "Organization, accounting, saving, corporate governance. And along the journey, I built networks and gained confidence."

Joining JA was a happy accident for Jonathan. While in high school in Uganda, he walked into a JA presentation looking for another student, but he ended up staying to learn more about JA Company Program. "They were talking about business and leadership, and how to build a board. It was interesting!" he said.

"In the beginning, I thought JA would be easy. I didn't realize how much hard work it was," he said. "Some people fell off; they couldn't do it. You need to manage time, people, the company itself, deal with suppliers, play politics." In general, young people in Uganda are encouraged to focus only on their studies and get good grades while in school, but Jonathan insisted that grades aren't everything. "I have not had a single job interview in which I was asked about my grades," he said. "They ask about what I have done. Studies will get you through the door, but JA experience will keep you in the room."

Building a Financially Capable Generation

Financial capability empowers young people to lead sustainable and resilient lives. The more you know about managing your money—ways to earn it, how to spend it wisely, and how to save money—the more control you have over your life.

That's why we partnered with HSBC and created JA Building a Financially Capable Generation: so young people gain financial management skills, practice smart behaviors, and take actions that enable sustainable living. In 2023, teachers and volunteers in 15 JA locations are delivering the three-part learning experience to groups of students age 12–16 in schools, community centers, and virtual spaces.

Financial Capability Workshop
Volunteers and educators introduce students to key concepts and strategies for managing their money.

FinQuest App
FinQuest is a free educational app, brought to you by JA Worldwide and HSBC. The app teaches young people the basics of managing money day to day, skills and attitudes for lifelong financial health, and strategies for navigating life's financial ups and downs.

FinQuest features four quests. Each quest contains a series of fun activities, minigames, challenges, and quizzes. Users create avatars and compete against peers in classrooms and communities worldwide. FinQuest is currently available in English, and we are working on translating the app into ten languages.

Young people, teachers, volunteers, parents, and JA staff can use the FinQuest app to track progress and coach groups of students through the self-directed learning experience. Just create a Quest Leader account, create your own group, and share the group ID# with your students.

Global FinCap Challenge
Teams of students develop ideas for social action through an intensive innovation camp and international competition.

Academic Performance: Enabling Educational Success

JA helps young people develop the skillset and mindset that enable them to apply themselves academically. Our alumni attain degrees in higher numbers than non-JA students, using traditional educational paths to further build skills, unlock the imagination, and open a world of opportunities.

Academic Performance

Photo by Scott A. Woodward

In Spain, participating JA programs[33] increased math test scores by **20%**

and decreased unexcused absences by **11%**

Also in Spain, the JA Our Community program participation increased students' probability of wanting to go to university by **38%**

and reduced truancy by[34] **18%**

Cindy Jazmin Amaya Gomez, CEO of Chocolovers, started her chocolate company as a JA student in a high-crime, high-poverty area of El Salvador. Working side-by-side with her grandmother, Cindy's venture has been successful enough to pay for Cindy's college education and continues to provide her family with steady income.

Academic Performance

Photo by JA Alumni Europe

A majority of high school participants in Asia Pacific say JA helped them understand the importance of school, with

72%

indicating their wish to pursue higher education.[35]

In India,

96%

of students have been motivated by the SKILLD program to take up leadership positions in schools.[36]

Academic Performance

Photo by Junior Achievement USA

Junior Achievement USA students saw a

41%

increase in test scores, while 82% of JA alumni in the U.S. said that JA connected what they learned in school to the real world.[37]

More than two-thirds (69%) of JA alumni in the U.S. report that they're currently working in their dream careers. By contrast, research by MidAmerica Nazarene College shows that only 25% of Americans report working in their "dream career."[38]

Ninety-two percent of Junior Achievement USA alumni report that JA was a great experience overall, and 91% report that JA motivated them to learn. A strong majority of JA alumni believe that JA played an important role in helping them achieve their goals (90%), improve their personal development (87%), and have confidence in new situations (95%).[39]

Junior Achievement USA alumni are nearly

30%

more likely than non-alumni to have a four-year degree.

67%

more likely to have an advanced degree.[40]

Photo by JA Worldwide

At age 9, JA alumnus Steven Wang emigrated from China to Toronto, where he later became involved in JA of Central Ontario. By age 17, Steven had founded a youth-empowerment initiative in Canada to address poverty, climate change, and other issues, and had started a locally directed microfinance program in Kenya.

Steven, a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, where he honed his skill as a violinist, has served as an ambassador for the Rhodes Scholarship, a mentor to the Schwarzman Scholars program, and a World Economic Forum Global Shaper.

At Harvard Law School, Steven served as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Harvard International Law Journal* and as a teaching fellow for constitutional law, negotiations, and international organizations. Prior to entering legal practice, Steven founded a social enterprise, supported by the Gates Foundation, cultivating the next generation of social innovation leaders, which was recognized by *Forbes* 30 Under 30. He previously oversaw leadership development at Yenching Academy of Peking University, worked as a field program manager at Teach for China, and spent time at the Office of General Counsel at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

“JA,” he said, “gives you real confidence that you can do something with your life. That you don’t have to be a passive observer of the world.” He credits JA with shaping his career and aspirations: “Who knows,” he wondered, “if I would be here today if it weren’t for JA.”

3DE by Junior Achievement: Reengineering High School Education

Whether taking over management of an entire school or operating as a "school within a school," 3DE's holistic approach to learning bridges the education and business communities by connecting classroom lessons with the real world. The model breaks through traditional barriers and reimagines schools and classrooms.

3DE works for all types of students: Those who succeed in traditional educational institutions and are looking for additional growth and skill-building; those who excel in one subject matter but remain uninterested in or unmotivated by other subjects; those who aren't wired for traditional educational methodologies and struggle in school, an experience that often turns them off to education for the rest of their lives; and those who aren't motivated to attend or participate in school at all.

Developed through a shared vision from leaders in education, business, and JA of Georgia, 3DE launched at Banneker High School in 2015 and quickly captured the attention of leaders in the education, civic, and corporate sectors.

3DE anchors its interdisciplinary educational model in a competency-based case method that encompasses math, science, history, English, the arts, and business. As they progress from ninth through twelfth grades, 3DE students immerse themselves in case challenges and case studies, which culminate in a capstone project in their final year. They also receive mentoring from business professionals and industry experts throughout their time in the program.

Visit 3deschools.org.

3DE™
BY JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

THE OUTCOME

3DE Consistently Outperforms Across Key Impact Metrics

3DE is positioning students for economic opportunity and choice-filled lives, by ensuring students are graduating with the skills, mindsets, and behaviors to be competitive in a rapidly changing economy. This starts with fostering student engagement in learning, accelerating academic comprehension and achievement, and ultimately building mastery in transferable skills and competencies.

3DE Students
Non-3DE Students

-21.2%
Fewer Cases of Chronic
ABSENTEEISM
Measured by students with 10%+ absences during year, as compared to non-3DE cohorts.
42.0%
33.7%

+33.6%
Higher 4-Year Cohort
GRADUATION RATES
Compared to 2018 Rates for Title I Schools In 3DE portfolio as rates prior to 3DE start.
75.9%
97.3%

+56.4%
Higher Rates of Immediate
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT
Compared to Class of 2018 Rates for Title I Schools In 3DE portfolio as comparative points.
43.4%
63.9%

+69.3%
More Students Demonstrating
MATH PROFICIENCY
Based on State Standardized Assessments for Algebra I & Geometry and averaged across schools.

+67.6%
More Students Demonstrating
READING PROFICIENCY
Based on State Standardized Assessments for 9th -11th Grade English/ELA and averaged across schools.

100%
Students Developing Skills towards
COMPETENCY MASTERY
Based on 3DE's Competency Rubric for 9th-12th grade progression.

THE FUTURE

BUILT FOR SCALE

With the goal to provide an accessible and effective education opportunity for all students, 3DE is intentionally structured for scalability to reach 1/3 of comprehensive metro high schools in the country, as an inflection point for broader systemic change.

1
PHASE I: BUILD & TEST
TIMING: 2015-2019
IMPACT: 6 Schools in Metro Atlanta
FOCUS: Design, Develop & Implement Model
$ NEEDS: Seed Funding
$4.9M Development
$250K-$350K/Site
$9.2M Total

2
PHASE II: EXPANDED PILOT
TIMING: 2019-2024
IMPACT: 55 Schools in 7 States
FOCUS: Package Scalable Box, Teacher Development & Certification
$ NEEDS: Venture Funding
$250K-$350K/Site
$55M/Total

3
PHASE III: VALIDATE & SCALE
TIMING: 2025-2030
IMPACT: 350 Schools across U.S.
FOCUS: Implement a Build, Operate, Transfer Model
$ NEEDS: Sustainable Funding
$150K-$175K/Site

4
PHASE IV: SCALE & SUSTAIN
2,500
3DE SCHOOLS

Tech Readiness: Building STEM and Innovation Skills

Through the Education 4.0 framework from the World Economic Forum (WEF), critical skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and innovation emerge as those that are critical to employment success. JA's immersive learning—whether in-person or online—gives young people the opportunity to develop these skills.

From problem-solving and collaborative experiences to programs that teach and reinforce adaptability, JA is on the forefront of training youth to be the next generation of innovators.

Photo by Simona Fodor

JA alumni in the UK are

7x more likely to start a digital or cloud-based company than non-alumni.[41]

In Italy, JA students increased their innovation skills by **71%**

&

increased problem-solving skills by[42] **75%**

JA alumnus Cornel Amariei hails from Bucharest, Romania, where he grew up watching his parents move through the world with locomotor disabilities, and his sister as she lived with cerebral disability.

His company today was born of one of his most impactful after-hours projects: “I was discussing a problem with a friend, and by the end of our discussion we came up with the idea of inventing glasses for the sight-impaired,” Cornel recalled. “It was just a random idea, but we began analyzing if the concept was doable,” he added. What he found was a gaping discrepancy between the number of people who are sight-impaired and guide dogs available to assist them . . . and the mission for his company was clear.

Guide dogs provide unparalleled care for sight-impaired individuals, but due to the difficulty in training and caring them, there are only about 20,000 guide dogs to aid 40 million blind individuals. Cornel’s company, .lumen—a research startup that uses the most advanced technologies in artificial intelligence, robotics, and neuroscience—has built smart glasses for the blind that mimic the main advantages of the guide dog without the disadvantages. .lumen glasses provide a solution for the other 39,980,000 individuals that aren’t able to benefit from a guide dog.

Photo by JA Africa

Sizolwethu Maphanga's participation in the Eswatini JA Company Program enabled her to transform her appetite for tech into a burgeoning career. In 2018, she co-founded JA student company Nazware Innovations, which created IVOTE, an app that eliminates lines and other delays and ensures accuracy and transparency during the voting process. Under her leadership, her student company won second place at the JA Africa Company of the Year Competition, and Sizolwethu received both the Christi Maherry CEO Rising Award and the JA Africa Employability Award. In 2019, Sizolwethu shared, "We have been approached by our government, which wants to use the voting system for national elections in four years."

She went on to participate in the African Girls Can Code Initiative's first coding camp for girls in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A joint initiative from the African Union Commission, UN Women, and the International Telecommunications Union, the four-year program teaches girls digital literacy, coding, and personal development skills.

With aspirations to start an agriculture technology company, Sizolwethu seeks to transform the agriculture sector by developing software and equipment for farmers. "The goal is to make people more productive in their agricultural activities through the use of my technology products," she said. "The services will range from security-like tracking devices for livestock, digital marketing, and IT equipment production."

STEM²D: Sparking Girls' Interest in STEM

The number of women who attend college and earn degrees is rising, but 80% of graduates in engineering, computer science, and physics are men. In computer science alone—one of the world's best-paid careers, and one with tremendous job security—degrees awarded to women have fallen from 38% in the late 1980s to 15% today.

JA is working to cultivate girls' interest in STEM²D at an early age and help girls and young people in marginalized populations continue to grow and develop in these areas, positioning them to pursue higher education and careers in STEM²D, an acronym for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, manufacturing, and design:

- Science: Observing, studying, and experimenting to better understand the natural world and how it works.
- Technology: Putting science and other knowledge to practical use to solve problems, invent useful tools, envision new possibilities, and establish meaningful connections between people and the world.
- Engineering: Applying science and math principles to design and develop products, structures, machines, tools, or systems that improve everyday life.
- Mathematics: Using a quantitative framework (numbers, quantities, shapes, abstract principles, and problem solving) to describe the world.
- Manufacturing: Creating something from raw materials by hand or by machinery.
- Design: Creating, constructing, or inventing an object, plan, product, or system with a human-centered mindset that results in better experiences for users.

With this foundation, girls and women are primed to make valuable contributions to their communities, companies, and the world in the decades ahead.

To advance student outreach, Johnson & Johnson partners with JA Worldwide, FHI360, Smithsonian Science Education Center, Girl Scouts of the USA, Girls Inc., National Society of Black Engineers, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to develop the youth STEM²D resources and website. The site contains STEM²D activities that can be completed at home, in a classroom, or in other small and large groups for skill-building fun: students might be creating magic slime, coding a robot, or competing in a high-stakes technology challenge!

Through this partnership, JA and Johnson & Johnson have sparked an interest in STEM in more than six million girls.

Learn more about the initiative at stem2d.org.

Photo by Junior Achievement of New Jersey (USA)

Thriving Communities: Empowering a Global Force for Good

As JA students learn the skills to achieve full employment, start their own businesses, leverage educational opportunities, and manage their finances, their ambitions look beyond their own financial reward.

Our 150 million+ alumni—who live and work on six continents—are a testament to JA's global impact, as they serve the needs of their communities, create local jobs, design innovative products and services, and effect both local and global change.

Photo by JA Worldwide/KLP

In Kenya,

30%

of all companies started by JA students are "social enterprise," a company structure that merges for-profit and non-profit ideals with a social or environmental objective that is met by generating revenue from goods and services, not only from grants or donations.[43]

Throughout Africa, after experiencing one (or more) JA brainstorming session, students realized they can act to solve similar problems in their communities.[44]

Participating in JA Spain's StartUp Program increased the proportion of young people helping in family businesses without being paid by[45]

18%

When he was just 12 years old, JA alumnus Jerome Cowans experienced firsthand the vulnerability of children in his Kingston, Jamaica, community when his good friend was killed violently. As a result of this tragedy, Jerome co-founded Leaders Endeavouring for Adolescent Development (LEAD), devoting himself to helping the next generation of young people have better access to education, reduce their economic and educational vulnerabilities, and take advantage of personal-development opportunities.

Photo provided by Bruce Poon Tip

In Italy, the social return on investment in the JA Company Program has revealed itself in several ways. For example, volunteers working with JA see positive change on a number of dimensions, including:

+61% in teamworking

+70% in adaptivity

+68% in finding compromises[46]

In Portugal, after participating in the JA Company Program, **43%** of alumni said they now volunteer.[47]

JA alumnus Bruce Poon Tip was 23 when he founded G Adventures, a travel company that prioritizes sustainable, responsible tourism. Today, G Adventures is the largest small-group travel company in the world, with 2,000 employees in 28 countries serving more than 200,000 travelers every year.

"JA was, without a doubt, the most important thing I did before I started my company," Bruce said. "JA inspired me and transformed my thinking, and it was the first time there was a place where I could harness my ideas about business and entrepreneurship."

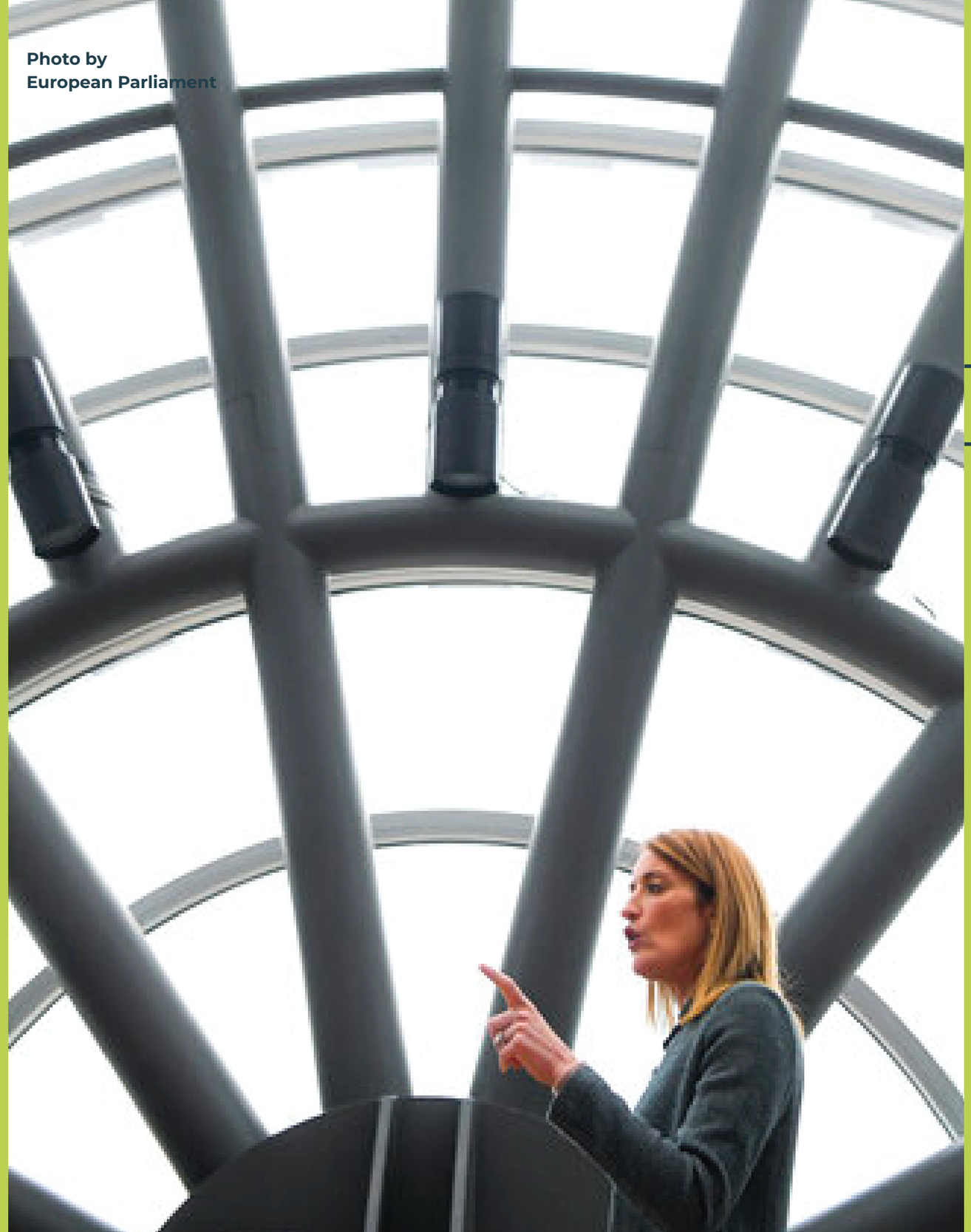


Photo by
European Parliament

Every €1 invested in students through the JA Company Program generated

€4,30

in social return via student projects promoting social change.[48]

When Roberta Metsola became the youngest President of the European Parliament in 2022, she already had decades of leadership experience that began with JA Malta. A lawyer with expertise in European law and politics, Roberta was first elected to office as Secretary General of the European Democrat Students, as well as to posts in the European Youth Forum, where she campaigned for Malta's inclusion in the EU.

Roberta was just 25 years old when Malta's Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi encouraged her to run for the 2004 European elections, and although she didn't win a seat until 2013, the resilience she learned through JA kept her in position for future elections.

"The work that Junior Achievement does in acting as a bridge between youth and the professional world is crucial," she said. "By empowering young people to discuss and learn about entrepreneurship and employability, JA is not only inspiring but preparing the next generation of Europeans to succeed in a global economy. As an alumna of Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta, I can testify to this myself."

"JA was nothing less than the best experience of my life."

Thriving Communities

Photo by Rania Saadalah

INJAZ Lebanon alumna Aya Yousef, a nominee for the first-ever Global Student Prize and architecture student at the American University of Beirut, spent time in a refugee camp as a child.

The biggest challenge facing young refugees is a lack of access to proper education and what that does to their mindset. “I wanted to reach students with a similar background—who had lived in a refugee settlement,” Aya said. “I became part of an outreach team to spread the word about educational opportunities at the best universities in Lebanon.

I partnered a year later with two other change makers with the same vision and mission, and we co-founded ToRead to increase the scale of our outreach. ToRead works on bridging and filling the gap between high school students and universities/scholarship foundations. It is an online platform that allows high school students to search, filter, and compare university and scholarship options in Lebanon and abroad.

They can compare all university options in Lebanon, understand the applying criteria, and learn about available services and programs. They can also find scholarships and other opportunities they are eligible to apply for.”

Elevating Youth Voices

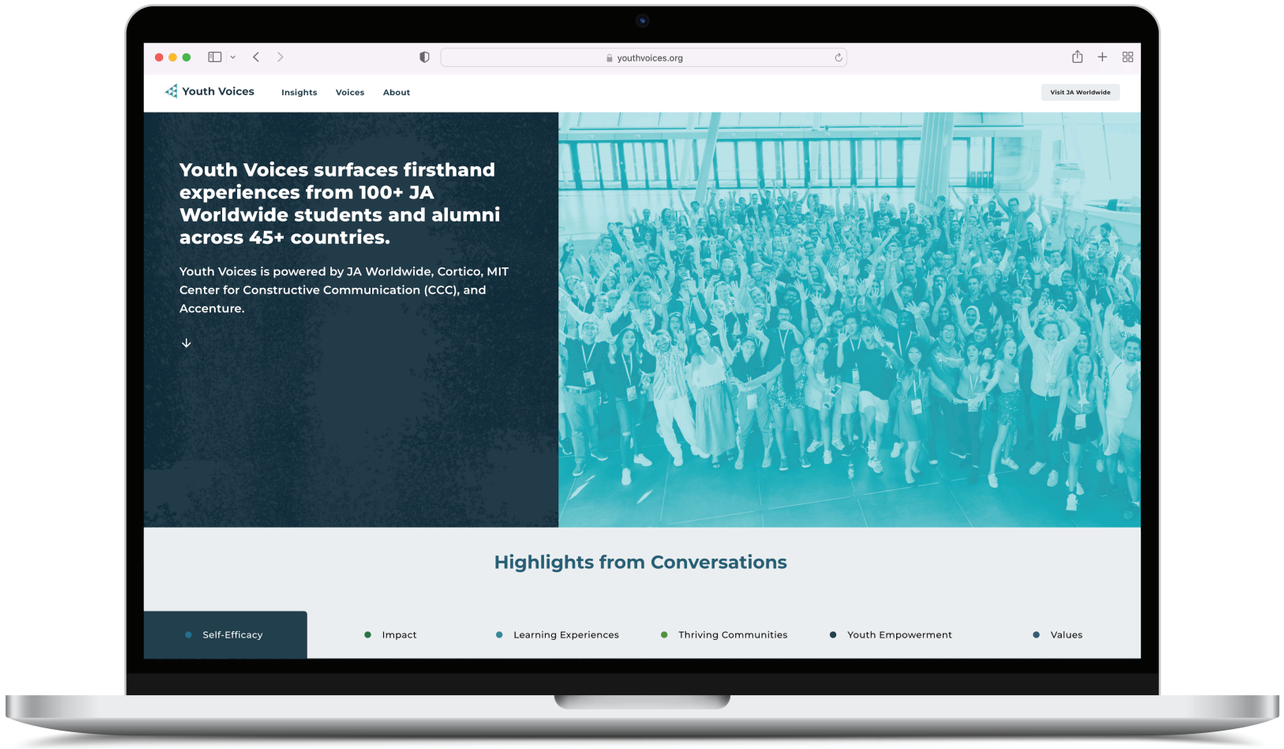
Every three years, JA Worldwide develops a strategic plan that guides our growth and priorities. In 2022, we asked young people ages 15–29 to lend their voices to the strategic plan process, participating as part of an advisor group and sharing their JA experiences.

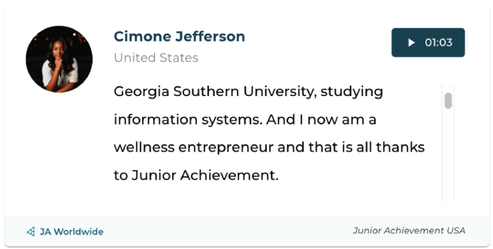
In partnership with MIT Center for Constructive Communication, Cortico, and Accenture, our Youth Voices initiative included more than 100 JA alumni from over 45 countries. Led by nine Youth Advisor Facilitators, JA alumni trained to facilitate discussions, the initiative recorded more than 40 hours of conversations.

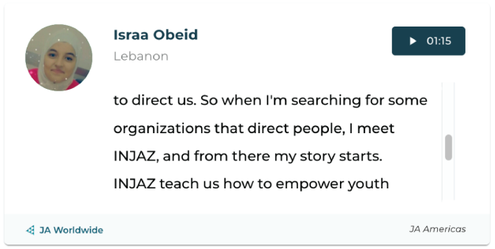
Six key themes emerged from the conversations: self-efficacy, impact, values, youth empowerment, thriving communities, and learning experiences. These themes helped JA shape our strategic priorities and focus areas, ensuring we align to youth needs.

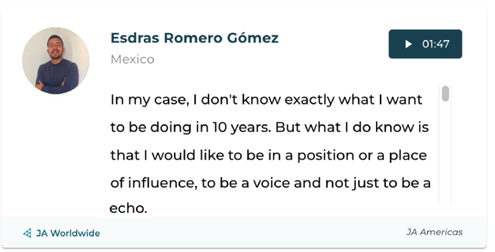
Conversation results and recording highlights are available to the public at youthvoices.org. Through nearly 2,000 highlights, alumni shared visions for the future, experiences of moving from “I can’t” to “I can,” stories about JA’s impact, memories of connecting with communities, moments of setting and achieving goals, and so much more.

Youthvoices.org allows users to navigate through conversation highlights by theme and region, and presents each highlight as both audio and text. These conversations not only strengthen the JA Worldwide strategic plan, but also share a powerful message about JA’s values and impact.









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Additional JA Impact Studies

Research Partners and Supporters of Impact Research

Boston Consulting Group: pages 13 and 21

Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Creation at Stockholm School of Economics: page 19

CID Gallup Latinoamérica: page 8

Citi Foundation: page 8

Citi Foundation: pages 9 and 35

Citi Foundation: page 20

Dexis Consulting Group: pages 7 and 15

Harvard University: page pages 6, 8, and 13

Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation: pages 7 and 20

Kingston University Small Business Research Centre: page 31

Maxwell Stamp, Inc: page pages 6, 8, and 13

Oliver Wyman: page 13

PraxEd: page pages 6, 8, and 13

Prudence Foundation: page 21

PWC: page 26

Silatech and the Taqeem Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment: page 20

USAID JAPRI: page 9

USAID Mission in Barbados / Eastern Caribbean: pages 7 and 15

UWI Consulting: pages 7 and 15

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