Forging a Sustainable Entrepreneurial Future for Europe

Junior Achievement Europe is the largest non-profit in Europe dedicated to preparing young people for employment and entrepreneurship. It is a member of JA Worldwide, which for 100 years has delivered hands-on, experiential learning in entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy. Last school year, the JA network in Europe reached almost 4 million young people across 40 countries with the support of nearly 100,000 business volunteers and over 140,000 teachers/educators.

At JA, we believe entrepreneurship is for everyone who wants to solve a real-world problem through business. Today there is no problem more real and more down-to-business than the environmental crisis that our planet is facing. The JA Green Entrepreneurship pledge is not about making profits or counting the number of innovative start-ups that will be created in the next decades. It is about making a difference through environmentally sensitive young people with entrepreneurial mindsets who will launch their own sustainable business solutions; transform from the inside the way companies do business; and support green NGOs and governmental policies as ‘intrapreneurs,’ on the frontlines of the battle to save our climate, habitats, and livelihoods.

The next generation of JA entrepreneurs will revolutionise the future of our planet and the way we manage plastics: they will challenge our reliance on plastic and fundamentally rethink current business models, and will learn and implement the concepts of circular economy, to keep the value of plastic in the economy without polluting the natural environment.

The Julius Baer Foundation is partnering with JA Europe to develop entrepreneurial mindsets in Russia’s next generation. Over the period 2021-2023, JA Europe will create

~ 3 million

tons of plastic waste are generated in Russia every year, of which no more than 12% is recycled.

5,000

Russian students will be enrolled in JA’s green entrepreneurship programme.
and carry out the project Forging a sustainable entrepreneurial future for Europe, based on JA’s experience with its flagship JA Company Programme, as well as the innovative GREENT (Green Entrepreneurship) programme developed by JA Bulgaria.

Turning Vision Into Action in Three School Years
Building awareness and knowledge are the first steps in helping young people to act on sustainability. Empowering youth through the development of a different mindset and skillset can make a crucial difference. By implementing this project in a country with one of the highest Gini coefficients in Europe, we ensure that the seed of sustainable entrepreneurship, especially regarding the use of plastic products, their life cycle, and research on alternative materials, takes root in young people’s minds. The project will run from July 2021 to June 2022, to cover the entire school year, for 3 consecutive years.

In particular, Julius Baer Foundation support will enable JA Europe to:
• build awareness and knowledge on sustainable/green entrepreneurship among 5,000 Russian students, aged 15–18;
• develop a different mind- and skill-set among youth to empower them to become changemakers and shape their own futures;
• ensure that the seed of sustainable entrepreneurship, especially regarding the use of plastic products, their life cycle, and research on alternative materials, is at the heart of the students’ projects; and
• fund three experienced and motivated mentors annually to support 30 start-ups by 2023.

Facts & figures: Russia
• About 3 million tons of plastic waste are generated in Russia every year; no more than 12% is recycled.
• Russia does not have a well-functioning system for collecting plastic waste, which creates a shortage of recyclable materials and hinders the development of the industry.
• Experts note that a low level of environmental awareness and education among the population is an additional challenge.
• Over 90% of waste in Russia is brought to landfills, which represents about 70 million tons of waste per year.
• Russia has approximately 23,500 solid waste landfills, of which 1,000 are municipal, 5,500 are authorised, and 17,000 are unauthorised. Russia’s waste disposal sites cover 4 million hectares and grow by 10% annually.
• Most landfills are outdated and pose challenges to the environment and the surrounding population.

For more information about Junior Achievement Europe, please visit www.jaeurope.org

“Becoming a successful entrepreneur starts with mindset, is built with experience, and polished with education.”

Unattributed