



Economic Development and Entrepreneurship

The Challenge

According to the *Review of Economics and Statistics*¹, business startups are responsible for 20 percent of gross job creation. Unfortunately, even though these nascent businesses play an important role in promoting economic development, the number of new firms as a percentage of all businesses has dropped by nearly half since the 1970s, according to the *U.S. Census*². Since 2008, the annual number of new business closings outpaces the number of business startups, notes the *Brookings Institute*.³

This is the first time there has been a continuous net loss of new businesses since the collection of this data began in the 1970s.

The Role of JA

Junior Achievement (JA) created the world’s first youth entrepreneurship education program in 1919. Since that time, more than 100 million young people have been through JA programs, and many of them have gone on to be successful entrepreneurs. JA connects volunteers from the business community with young people through the use of JA’s proven programs to help students understand how business works while inspiring them to consider the opportunities associated with being an entrepreneur.

JA’s programs align with national standards, including the National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education from the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards – C3 Framework, and Common Core State Standards.

Proof of Impact

A 2016-17 JA Alumni study shows that former JA students are 2 ½ times more likely to be involved with starting a business than the general public. They also have a better understanding of how business works and a more positive attitude toward the U.S. economic system. Summative evaluations of JA’s current entrepreneurship programs show that students have positive increases in knowledge of and attitudes toward business creation, increasing the likelihood of these students undertaking entrepreneurial activities as adults.

JA programs help spark students’ interest in entrepreneurship and the possibilities that come with being your own boss.



¹ http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/REST_a_00288

² <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/corporate-america-hasnt-been-disrupted/>

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-small-business/wp/2015/02/12/the-decline-of-american-entrepreneurship-in-five-charts/>