

## **Executive Summary – JA Banks in Action evaluation**

This report presents the findings of a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the JA Banks in Action program implemented in U.S. and International Member offices in the United States, Ireland, South Africa, Colombia and Bahrain. The evaluation showed positive impact on participants' attitudes, behaviors and understanding of the banking process, as well as increased knowledge of banking products and services. Pre and post-tests applied in both participating and comparison classes suggest knowledge increases for those participating in the program while comparison students showed no such gain. These accomplishments came despite the finding that in many schools included in the study, student populations are from disadvantaged backgrounds and face academic challenges.

The goal of the evaluation was to demonstrate the impacts of this updated curriculum on student knowledge, skills, attitudes and self-efficacy related to their participation in JA Banks in Action. Specific program goals that were tested in the evaluation included:

- **Knowledge gains** in banking terms and functions, understanding banking in a global economy, R & D and marketing, and other related subjects.
- **Positive impact on skills**, such as students' interpersonal and life skills and their understanding of personal financial management.
- **Positive impact on attitudes and aspirations**, dealing with career readiness, feelings of self-efficacy; and increased interest in banking and finance careers.

The study findings show not only increased knowledge of the subject matter, but also impact on student aspirations for the future. In many instances, students discovered an interest in finance and economics-related jobs, were thinking more seriously about continuing their education in order to be better prepared for the workforce, or were enthusiastic about saving money and learning how to manage it more effectively. Teachers reported that the topics covered by JA Banks in Action complemented their standard curricula and greatly enhanced students' exposure to financial literacy, career planning, and banking topics. Volunteers also reported high levels of student impact in these areas. Students and teachers reported very positively about the volunteers' participation, in which they explained the concepts while including personal histories and banking scenarios to bring the material to students in relevant, innovative ways.

Respondents told evaluators that the banking simulation was one of the most exciting parts of the program, and students appreciated how it made the concepts they were learning competitive and realistic. Through their participation in the simulation and other teamwork activities in JA Banks in Action, students gained strength in their interpersonal skills while putting the banking concepts into practice. Gains in measures of participants' interpersonal skills showed promising results, as did measures of their understanding of how the concepts and skills apply to their lives. For students, teachers and volunteers, survey questions about their experience with JA Banks in Action show great satisfaction, intention to continue with JA, and positive changes for students in planning and thinking about their futures. This report details these qualitative and quantitative findings, and provides analysis and conclusions about overall program impact.