

My JA Story

Preparing children to be engaged and responsible global citizens

“More than 80 of my 450 graduated students (17,8% of students, compared to 3-4% average) set up real companies successfully”

Armando Persico

Teacher in Italy

“*Treat a man as he appears to be, and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be.*” (J.W. Goethe)

“I’m a crazy man! Why? Because I’m a Chartered Accountant-turned-Professor! Many people asked me about this choice...but I love being an edupreneur, teaching with entrepreneurial activities. With my methods of teaching, my students are successful at entrepreneurship and... life”.



Armando is currently working at the Institute of Vocational Training Ikaros Foundation, which extended the JA programme ‘Enterprise in Action’. Armando has been involved in teaching financial literacy and entrepreneurial education in high schools since 1996. This results-proven project leader has a long experience in managing pioneering projects with European schools. Armando also created a network of European teachers dedicated to teach entrepreneurship in their schools (involving more than 1,000 teachers from 15 European countries). He won several EU competitions which allowed his students to travel and create various joint ventures with their peers in Europe.

Thanks to his learning by doing method, students gained real experience in the world of business: coming up with a business concept, developing a business plan, taking responsibility and being accountable towards their shareholders while running their JA mini-company. They also developed attitudes and skills necessary for personal success and employability, as well as an understanding of how business works. Additionally, they gained insight into self-employment, business creation, risk-taking and coping with adversity. There is no doubt Armando has successfully motivated his students to become leaders. Recognised by his peers and within the ecosystem, Armando contributed to several articles in specialised magazines and was invited to workshops organised by the European Parliament.

Achievements



- JA Europe Teacher of the Year Award 2010 - Brussels
- JA Italy Ambassador Award 2011 - Milan
- Top 50 Global Best Teacher Prize 2017 - Varkey Foundation London
- Top 50 Italian Best Teacher Prize 2017 - Ministry of Education (MIUR) - Italy
- 14 of his students’ teams won 16 European prizes
- 3 registered patents

JA Europe is Europe’s largest provider of entrepreneurship education programmes, reaching 3.5 million students in 39 countries. JA Europe brings the public and private sectors together to provide young people in primary and secondary schools and early university with high-quality education programmes to teach them about enterprise, entrepreneurship, business and economics in a practical way. JA Europe is the European Regional Operating Centre for JA Worldwide® (www.jaworldwide.org).





My JA story



I have a dream... to improve the teaching profession and offer apprenticeship and entrepreneurship opportunities to all students.

As a coordinator of the Italian version of the 'dual system apprenticeship' model, I introduced the first Italian vocational 'management' path. This is an exciting challenge for the Ikaros Foundation vocational schools where I work. My role is to coordinate 250 younger colleagues (regardless of their subjects) and introduce them to teaching entrepreneurship and providing training. Together with teachers from those schools, we involve more than 2,000 students, from secondary vocational and university level education, in the following areas of study: business, ICT, electrical, electronic, hairdressing, cosmetology, culinary, pastry-making, agricultural, mechanical, graphic design and logistics.

At Ikaros Foundation, we are committed to reviving and promoting the vocational education system. We aim to make it evolve from being a 'last resort' choice before students join the 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) club - as it is the Italian tradition - to a conscious and positive choice. The so-called 'artisan revival' pathway is now facilitated thanks to an improved professional teachers' development and entrepreneurship education. It's a fantastic pioneering model of excellence in Lombardy and easily extended to all of Italy.

I also have another important dream. I would like to establish a Foundation (together with local and national bodies) to promote the creation of start-ups by focusing on three specific target groups: vocational schools, students and people in need. Its objective would be to allocate, for a decade, 10,000 EUR annually to 10 Italian vocational schools. Those schools will be selected based on their offerings of specialised courses in the field of 'human services'. The money will be used to provide tools and raw materials to the start-ups created by the students. Their startup will be in line with their field of study and will benefit disadvantaged people in the area, at affordable rates. This foundation represents a win-win solution for everyone! Students will gain new entrepreneurial and technical skills, will learn how to run a business and may even make a small profit for the services they deliver while they are studying. Society will see the number of young people in a NEET situation decrease and people in need will feel more included. Supporting businesses will themselves contribute to empower their future customers or employees. Furthermore, vocational schools will bring innovation by offering a new method of teaching vocational subjects which will encourage and motivate both its students and teachers; engaged in new, modern and effective learning processes.

Armando

