



Improving the Recognition of Junior Achievement of Armenia

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
Submitted to the Faculty of
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science by:

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This report represents the work of WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its website without editorial or peer review. For more information about the projects program at WPI, please see <http://www.wpi.edu/academics/ugradstudies/project-learning.html>.

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report submitted to the faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in cooperation with the Junior Achievement of Armenia. Submitted May 10, 2020.

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Abstract

Junior Achievement of Armenia (JAA) is committed to educating young people about financial literacy, work readiness, entrepreneurship, and citizenship. Our goal was to improve the recognition of JAA in the eyes of potential donors. We used a survey to determine alumni perception of JAA programs, social media, and alumni engagement, developed an updated website with a user's manual, and recommended strategies to enhance social media presence and improve alumni engagement. Our project lays groundwork for future projects.

Executive Summary

Junior Achievement of Armenia (JAA) is a nonprofit organization committed to educating young people about financial literacy, work readiness, entrepreneurship, and citizenship. JAA teaches crucial problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership skills. According to the Executive Director of JAA and our project sponsor, Armine Hovhannisian, students have trouble differentiating between regular courses and JAA courses, as students believe that JAA's courses are part of their regular studies. One of the organization's biggest issues is that it lacks the ability to reach people outside of those who already know about the program. We aimed to measure the value and current awareness of JAA and increase the recognition of their work and achievements among the alumni.

Background

JAA is an affiliate of Junior Achievement (JA), the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to educating youth. JA was founded in 1919 by Horace A. Moses, Theodore Vail, and Winthrop M. Crane in Massachusetts. JA's core mission is to ensure that every child has a fundamental understanding of the free enterprise system. While the development of JA continued, more schools had incorporated JA's education program into regular school curricula and piloted programs that benefit students from kindergarten to college. As more countries requested JA programs, JA formed JA Worldwide, which is currently active in more than 100 countries and benefits over 10 million students. They provide this learning experience through additional classes outside of the normal curriculum. With emphasis on theoretical knowledge of business and economic principles, and real-life practices in business settings, JA provides the education that students need to prosper in tomorrow's world.

JAA became part of a pilot project in eight schools as electives for high school students in 1993. Armine Hovhannisian has been the Executive Director since it was established. With the goal of serving K-12 students in Armenia, JAA aims to educate Armenian students about the economy and the free market by involving their students in civic education projects. In addition to JA's main lessons, JAA focuses on teaching younger generations to be socially responsible and solve community issues. It aims to inform their students about what kind of problems they are surrounded by and prepare them to be responsible citizens in the future. It also encourages students to broaden their horizons and perspectives by preparing them for their future professions. Levon Mkrtchyan, the past Minister of Education, noted that from the very first days of the formation of the new educational system of JAA, it played a very active role in the improvement of education in Armenia. It was the first to develop a new system of economics and design studies for the Armenian education system [2]. Moreover, it helps the youth in Armenia to understand the role of business in the global marketplace and the concept of the enterprise system. Currently, the program has grown to reach more than 1,400 schools throughout the Republic of Armenia and, starting from the fifth grade, students have the opportunity to learn how to create a business plan and how to execute said plan. The program is so well-integrated within the regular school curriculum, that many students do not realize they are in a JAA course. The students may notice it is a different type of class, but they do not know why.

Our project consisted of working with JAA to measure the value that their program brings to students who have graduated from the program. Our goal was to aid in bringing recognition to

JAA in order to lay the groundwork for future expansions through grants and donations. Our objectives to complete this goal were the following:

1. Determine alumni perception of JAA
2. Provide content and develop a strategy to update the JAA website
3. Provide a strategy to enhance the social media and raise awareness of JAA
4. Recommend strategies to improve alumni engagement

Methods

We used a survey to gather data about the alumni and how they feel about JAA. These collected data were then used to provide testimonials, success stories, and statistics for use in fundraising efforts such as JAA's grant applications, as well as for social media marketing. We began the creation of our survey by brainstorming the kinds of questions that would prompt alumni to discuss the value brought to them by JAA. After developing our initial questions, we met with our sponsor and had her critique them. We then revised the survey and dispersed it to alumni of JAA. The survey was made in Google Forms and divided into three sections: Demographics (to determine which groups of people tend to find the most value from JAA), Value of JAA (to promote JAA to grantors and other potential donors), and Social Media & Engagement (to strengthen the connection between alumni and JAA, which could potentially increase donations from alumni). To analyze the responses, we developed criteria (described in detail in section 3.1) to determine which responses we would spend time translating from Armenian to English. We had team member who spoke both Armenian and English read through the Armenian responses and translate whichever ones qualified. This resulted in 58 translated survey responses.

We created a strategy for updating the content and design of the website of JAA as well. We compiled similar website topics together and generated a list of main pages, or headings, for the website. We drew ideas for the headings by using the JA Worldwide and JA USA websites as examples of successful websites. The process of updating the website began with designing the prototypes of pages using pen and paper. We did not have a specific plan while making the drafts, but our goal was to create a set of ideas that we could compare and choose from. We then visualized concrete ideas for the website on Photoshop. We made critical design decisions by referring to the books *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design* and *Balanced Website Design: Optimising Aesthetics, Usability and Purpose*. We wanted to put reorganized content under each of the headings on the same page as often as possible. We also wanted to list ways to help other than donating so that visitors know how to make a non-monetary contribution to JAA.

We built the header and footer of the website in code using DreamWeaver for our templating system. Since DreamWeaver is a program that costs money to use and its templating lacked several features, we later switched to using Handlebars. While designing the website, we simultaneously started writing the content for each section. We began with brief outlines of the content in English and started translating some of it into Armenian.

For sustainable maintenance of the website after finishing our project, we also developed clear instructions for our sponsor on how to edit the website's content. These instructions were given both in writing and video examples.

We produced a strategy to help JAA's employees use social media to raise people's awareness of the organization. We discovered the similarities of successful brands like JA USA, Orran, UCom and Ararat Brandy. We considered the frequency of their updates on different social media platforms to understand how they are engaging with their audience and in which ways. We also met with Anna Dealy, Associate Director of Advancement Communications at the WPI Office of University Advancement to learn about her strategies when producing social media content. Based on our research and interviews, we made a list of recommendations for JAA's social media activity.

We researched companies' branding strategies and interviewed people to gather information on how to create an effective social media and alumni engagement plan. We developed an alumni outreach strategy referencing WPI's strategy since the alumni office has faced a similar situation before. Although JAA is not a college, it is an educational program, so we looked into WPI's strategies to gain a better understanding of how alumni outreach works in general and then adapt these strategies to JAA's needs and priorities. To eliminate the possible difference between the U.S. and Armenia in the method of outreach and other potential social or cultural factors, we also set up another meeting with AUA professionals. At WPI, we interviewed Peter Thomas, Executive Director of the Office of Lifetime Engagement; Thea Marcoux, Associate Director of International Advancement; and Katie Bilotta, Director of Community Relations. Both Peter Thomas and Katie Bilotta had worked at Junior Achievement branches for multiple years. We asked how WPI engages and connects with alumni, what kind of events they host for alumni, how often they reach out to them, and how they manage communication with them.

We also created an Excel database of alumni names, contact information, and contact preferences. This database also contained the school, city/village, and region in which that JAA course was taken. We created a link on the website that allows alumni to sign up for newsletters which will add their names and contact information to the database.

Results

We received 266 responses (250 in Armenian and 16 in English) to our alumni perception survey. There were many respondents that were successful people who mentioned that, thanks to the impact of JAA, they were able to discover themselves, gain knowledge, and stay motivated to achieve their goals. Based on the respondents' impressive and appreciative words, we found that the summer camp played a huge role in their lives. Concerning outreach to alumni, most of them prefer email and phone calls over any social media websites like Facebook or Instagram. Almost 58% of people gave consent to use their names. Almost 76% of respondents were female, and 24% male. Most participants were from Business and Financial Operations, and Educational spheres.

We created a new website with updated headings and subheadings, following with its content. The main headings on the website are 'Home', 'About Us', 'News and Events', 'Programs', 'Alumni', 'Partnerships', and 'Donate.' We also have a button called "How Can I Help?" that, when clicked, will lead the user to a page with links to donate, volunteer as a business consultant, make a financial contribution, and connect alumni with employment opportunities. A user can now scroll through the topics and browse without opening every page on the website to find what they want, and it also allows the user to have a general understanding of JAA more easily.

Concerning social media strategy research, we discovered the similarities of successful brands like JA USA, Orran, and Ararat Brandy. We considered the frequency of their updates on different social media platforms to understand how they are keeping the engagement of their audience and in which ways. We got acquainted with the specifics of posts of image and video sizes with the help of Anna Dealy. She plans the ideas of posts on a printed calendar. We also gained insights about the types of posts alumni want to see and which platform is most used, based on the survey results.

Through interviews with alumni relations specialists from WPI and AUA, we found out that having informal events promote connections between alumni as friends, while professional events promote the continued learning of alumni and help make them feel like they are getting something out of being alumni. For donations, it is also essential to make sure alumni know where their donation is going. Moreover, we were told how strong of a tool social media is as well as about the importance of small branding opportunities.

Recommendations

Based on our results, we created recommendations for JAA's social media, alumni engagement, survey continuation, and website.

First, we recommend extending the survey to more alumni to get as many responses as possible. With the additional responses, our sponsor could also begin to analyze correlations between demographics and recognize the value of JAA.

For the website, we recommend implementing Google Analytics, which will measure the activity on the website and thus will allow our sponsors to measure the success of the branding strategy. Additionally, at the time of writing, our sponsors are in the process of creating a bank account for donations that can be linked to the website. It is important to update the website content as needed and we recommend updating website content regularly as discussed in section 5.2.

Social media is an important part of any brand as it is effective and free. There are also paid options to promote posts on most, if not all, platforms if our sponsor chooses to do so. We recommend creating a Facebook page and maintaining the Instagram account. We suggest following a monthly calendar, created the week before each month begins, that outlines the events and the general idea of posts that are to be made that month.

With more engaged alumni, there will be additional opportunities for fundraising and more awareness of the value that the program brings to students. We recommend planning more events for alumni to network and engage with each other. A great event to begin with is an annual alumni reunion. Small branded gifts are also a fun option to get a brand name out there, especially if the gift is something usable like a pen. We also recommended using the database of alumni names and contact information to send out newsletters and event reminders to alumni.

Conclusion

If more people outside of JAA know and appreciate the work of the organization, more people will want to contribute to the development and expansion of JAA. Our work benefits the efforts toward increasing the recognition of JAA and motivates people's desire to donate money for JAA projects. Donations given will go to the training of teachers, new educational projects, and promote the

expansion of JAA to more students and schools. JAA teaches essential skills for today's jobs as well as financial literacy and civil responsibility. If more students can benefit from this program, Armenia's youth can grow up to be responsible civil leaders and community members who contribute to the economy and society.

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Authorship

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Executive Summary	Lead author	Lead editor	Sentence-level edits	Sentence-level edits
Acknowledgements	Sentence-level edits	Lead author	Sentence-level edits	Sentence-level edits
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Recommendations and Conclusion	Lead author	Lead author	Sentence-level edits	Sentence-level edits

1. Introduction

Junior Achievement of Armenia (JAA) educates Armenian primary and high-school students about the economy and free market through lectures and project-based work. It teaches crucial problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership skills, along with building students' self-confidence. Furthermore, students develop a vision of the future by researching different fields and understanding how to deal with real-life issues.

According to the Executive Director of JAA and our project sponsor, Armine Hovhannisian, students had trouble differentiating between regular courses and JAA as students believe that its special course is given by their schools and is a part of their regular studies. Because it runs solely on donations, a lack of recognition has the potential to cause a lack of funding. Increasing recognition, and thus increasing funding, was the overall goal of this project as without funding, they cannot achieve all of their expansion goals. Our project aimed to measure the value and current awareness of JAA and increase the recognition of their work and achievements.

JAA wanted to increase its use of social media in their branding strategy as it is cheap, easy, and effective. Updating the website was an additional way to update JAA's brand. Currently, the organization is actively using a Facebook group and sharing their daily work and the achievements of students. While we have found Facebook to be the most popular social media platform in Armenia [3], the current Facebook group is insufficient because it is mostly made up of teachers and volunteers who already know about the program and lack the rest of the community that could benefit and be benefitted by JAA such as alumni, grantors, and students. Even though JAA also has a website, the information has not been updated since 2015 due to lack of employees who know how to work on the website. Despite having a website and social media group on Facebook, JAA lacked the ability to reach people outside of those who already know about the program. Using techniques adopted by other brands, we developed recommendations for the use of social media including how often to post and what types of posts we suggest.

After researching user experience, we discovered that content and design are equally important features in website development as they engage the user. We updated the content and design of their website to be more user-friendly and captivating while also promoting JAA's work and achievements through engaging the alumni and utilizing social media. To do this, we surveyed alumni about their demographics, how they would like to be engaged, and the value that JAA brought to their lives. We used the success stories of alumni to share on social media and the website. We also used the survey results to see what type of social media presence and engagement activities the alumni would like to see.

Students in Armenia will now be more exposed to the fact that they are enrolled in a JAA course because our project raised awareness of JAA. If students are more informed that they are part of a JAA course, then as future alumni they could be potential sponsors. Furthermore, if more people outside the program know and appreciate the work of the organization, more people will want to contribute to the development and expansion of JAA. Our work benefits the efforts toward increasing the recognition of JAA and motivates people's desire to donate money for JAA projects. The donations will go to the training of teachers, new educational projects, and promote the expansion of JAA to more students and schools. If more people know and appreciate the work of JAA, more people will want to contribute to the development and expansion of JAA. Our work

will benefit the recognition of JAA and motivate people's desire to donate money for JAA projects. Donations will go to the training of teachers, new educational projects, and promote the expansion of JAA to more students and schools. JAA teaches essential skills for today's jobs as well as financial literacy and civil responsibility. If more students can benefit from this program, Armenia's youth can grow up to be responsible civil leaders and community members who contribute to the economy and society.

2. Background

In this section, we will be exploring Armenia's economic and educational system, the history of Junior Achievement (JA) and JAA, as well as branding strategies. Branding can help the organization in several ways; raising awareness, building the trust of the stakeholders, and showing the value of JAA.

2.1 Educational and Economic Setting in Armenia

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which Armenia joined in December 1923, greatly impacted the education system of Armenia. The USSR's education system focused on "the collective self" rather than the "individual self" [11]. Armenia's introduction to the USSR prompted leaders to end the influence of Christianity in the lessons and begin a new method of arranging the courses in schools. This new method closely resembled the modern Russian way of education. Following the separation from the Soviet Union, economics professors in Russia and Belgium have stated that Armenia had trouble with the restoration of "...its identity and recovery of its economic, cultural and educational values" [11]. In addition to Armenia's educators' difficulty with restoring culture in their education system, Armenians also needed to make sure the education system was modern and effective to educate the youths in Armenia. In order to do so, Armenia had to make major changes in its economic and political systems [11].

In fact, the politics and economics of any region greatly affect the ability of the government to invest in education. After the earthquake in 1988 and continuous political tension with Azerbaijan, major investments were made by the Armenian government in "...preserving the national identity and resurrecting a rich historical and cultural legacy" [11]. Two things that had a major impact on the socio-economic development of Armenia were the inflow of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan and the presence of a worldwide diaspora, that had been established due to the Armenian Genocide. The diaspora of Armenians caused a significant impact on the Armenian economy while the inflow of refugees was more of a shock to the system that caused a lag. The lag in economic development from these impacts has had consequences on the ability of the government to invest in higher education [11].

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly independent Armenia started moving towards a "market-driven economy" [11]. When Armenia was part of the USSR, the school curriculum was focused on Russian culture, history, and language. Now, Armenia's education system is geared towards individuals so that they can study what they want while still benefiting the market. Although the above statements are about higher education, they can be generalized to fit primary education in Armenia as well. The ability of a government to invest in any education, whether it be higher or primary, is greatly affected by its setting. The goal of education is to show children how to thrive in the environment they are in. With capitalism and the free market, a large part of modern Armenian life, primary education aims to give kids the knowledge and practice they need to succeed.

2.2 Junior Achievement Worldwide

With the rise of free markets and capitalism in the world, Junior Achievement (JA) has built a program that teaches youth how to thrive in this environment. Founded in 1919 by Horace A. Moses, Theodore Vail, and Winthrop M. Crane in Massachusetts, JA's core mission is to ensure

that every child has a fundamental understanding of the free enterprise system [22]. Today, JA Worldwide is the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to educating youth. They do this by delivering experiential learning opportunities on topics of business, economics, and entrepreneurship through in-school and after-school programs for students in grades K-12 [6].

JA's core mission was not always to provide an understanding of free enterprise. JA was initially a regional organization made to train youth who moved from rural to urban America in management and manufacturing. After World War II, JA quickly grew from a regional organization to a national organization and was introduced in other countries by the end of the 1950s [14]. The JA program was developed as after-school clubs for eight to 12-year-olds. The clubs operated like miniature businesses, and members made money through the sale of their product and raised capital through the sale of shares. JA further evolved into an education program with textbooks and manuals written to teach young people about how to run a business in a capitalist economy. Later, JA incorporated its education program into regular curriculums in many schools and piloted more programs that benefit students from kindergarten to college [14][6]. As more countries requested JA programs, JA formed JA Worldwide which is currently placed in more than 100 countries and benefits over 10 million students.

In this quickly developing world, JA concentrates on building content around the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to succeed in the 21st century. JA students are taught several important skills to help them in today's dynamic business environments:

- “Analyze and explore personal opportunities and responsibilities.
- Design strategies that include business production, financial, and marketing plans.
- Produce a product, monitor productivity, evaluate product quality, and create a selling strategy.
- Develop an annual report for stockholders and go through the process of liquidating their company.” [6]

With emphasis on theoretical knowledge of business, economic principles, and real-life practices in business settings, JA provides the education that students need to prosper in tomorrow's world. JA provides this learning experience through additional classes outside of the normal curriculum [6].

2.3 Junior Achievement of Armenia

Junior Achievement of Armenia (JAA) is an affiliate of Junior Achievement Worldwide. Armine Hovhannisian has been the Executive Director since it was established. With the goal of serving K-12 students in Armenia, JAA aims to educate Armenian students about the economy and the free market by involving their students in civic education projects.

In addition to JA's main lessons, JAA focuses on teaching younger generations to be socially responsible and how to potentially solve community issues. JAA aims to inform their students about what kind of problems they are surrounded by and prepare them to be responsible citizens in the future. It encourages students to broaden their horizons and perspectives by preparing them for their future professions.

JAA began in 1993 as a pilot project in eight schools as electives for high school students [12]. The program slowly expanded to more schools and extended to more grade levels by offering programs suited for students of different ages. Since April 2011, JAA has been providing the "Entrepreneurial and Civic Education for High School Students" curriculum. As of 2016, JAA offered programs to all Armenian students from primary school to high school [12]. Throughout the years, JAA has also produced and translated numerous textbooks on topics of civic education and economics related to the Armenian business environment. Currently, the program has grown to reach more than 1,400 schools throughout the Republic of Armenia and, starting from the fifth grade, students have the opportunity to learn how to create a business plan and how to execute said plan [12].

The history of having a centralized economy means that many people, even today, don't have the experience of growing up in a capitalist system and thus find it difficult to understand the modern economy [15]. The Armenian government knew that in order to succeed in a free market, its citizens had to be educated about the new economic system. The government saw how well the JAA program was working and the government mandated JAA to expand its program to all grade levels in 2016 [12]. In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia and the JAA signed a memorandum about the understanding and development of entrepreneurship education in primary and high schools around Armenia. The Ministry of Education and Science agreed to present the concept of the entrepreneurial educational system offered by JAA to the Government of the Republic of Armenia [2]. According to the memorandum, the Ministry organizes the teacher recruitment process. The Ministry sends instructions about recruitment and teacher training to schools and the education departments of provincial administrations. These instructions state that teachers must be trained by JAA. The Ministry and JAA have jointly developed standards, programs, teacher manuals, textbooks for all the programs. The business volunteers provided by JAA do not teach any programs. Rather, they are invited by teachers to share deeper knowledge of certain topics with students based on their experience in the business world. In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Sciences in Armenia has accepted the integration of "Life Skills," "Farm business," and "Ancient Armenian literary language" classes offered by JAA [2]. JAA has become so well-integrated that students have trouble understanding that the school is not providing the course. Entrepreneurial education has become part of regular classes in Armenia.

Levon Mkrtchyan, the past Minister of Education, noted that from the very first days of the formation of the new educational system, JAA played a very active role in the improvement of the quality of education in Armenia. JAA was the first to develop a new system of economics and design studies for the Armenian education system [2]. JAA helps the youth in Armenia to understand the role of business in the global marketplace and the concept of the enterprise system. JAA is a very significant source that lets youth learn how to start and run a business [2]. JAA assists in putting Armenian youth in a position that allows them to adapt and prosper in the economy. Conan Paysen, the Director of the USAID Economic Development Division, stated that he is "very excited to see how Voskehat (a village in Armenia) youth is actively participating in community programs" [17]. He believes that "students taking part in JAA projects are going to become the future leaders of Armenia" [17].

One of the most beneficial aspects of the JAA is that students always do a project after they go through the program. For instance, students at the Voskehat school created a strategy to restore the

bus stops in their village during the JAA educational project in 2017. The project also consisted of students creating a non-governmental organization that aimed to solve community problems in Voskehat village. The main problem was that the bus stops were uncomfortable, lacking seats and a roof. Students could apply their skills and knowledge gained during their studies so useful that after their project, the bus stops became safer and more comfortable places than they were before. Satenik Mikayelyan, a resident of Voskehat village, states that the project gave villagers confidence in the public transportation system. The project also increased the use of the public transportation system [17].

Junior Achievement programs can also encourage students to start their own companies. After a “SAV & We” Sewing Workshop with JAA at the Alvank Secondary School, two students, Vera Sevumyan and Vladimir Arustamyan, decided to enter the service market. Their company produced linen for the population of Alvank village in the Meghri region and nearby residents. The students stopped the business due to lack of financial support when they finished the workshop of JAA. Despite the lack of financial support, the knowledge gained from experiencing how to run a business and what potentially went wrong was priceless. If the students pursued this company further, it was expected to expand and provide new job opportunities for the villagers [21]. Projects like these are important for Armenia’s limited job market as each job strengthens the economy through increased spending and economic multipliers. Business creation in general is important because with more jobs being created, more Armenians can benefit from being employed. When they take jobs and earn money, they can spend more money that will circulate within the Armenian economy.

Apart from providing school courses, JAA also provides additional experiences at a summer camp. The camp’s purpose is to reinforce students’ knowledge of economics and civics and allow young people from different regions of the country to meet and network with each other. There is a nationwide competition to go to this camp among JAA’s most outstanding students. The selection of the students for summer camp is made in the following manner: Exams for the students are held in all regions of Armenia in the month of May. Two versions of a test are prepared by a committee, which includes the JAA program coordinator and JAA regional representatives. Each teacher is asked to send their top three students to take the exam. The student who earns the highest score on the test from each school is invited to camp.

According to the Executive Director of JAA, despite showing consistent successes at achieving their mission, JAA has a problem with recognition in Armenia. Students often go through the courses without ever knowing or understanding what it is or what it does. Because of this, JAA is interested in strengthening its brand, especially focusing on the program’s students and alumni.

2.4 Brand Development

Brands are defined as “symbols which [sic] represent beliefs, values, personality and innovation” [5]. Most people consider a brand as something used by for-profit companies to sell products. However, even when an organization is a nonprofit, they still need to ‘sell’. Rather than selling products, though, nonprofits sell their cause. Brands are also essential for “differentiation between other competitive offerings in the market” [5].

JAA would like to strengthen their brand for two main reasons: better differentiate themselves from another organization with which they are often confused with, and to engage the students, teachers, volunteers, and alumni within the program.

In addition to being Executive Director of JAA, Armine Hovhannisian is also the Founder and Chairwoman of the Board of Orran. Orran has a different mission than JAA; it is a charity helping vulnerable children and older people in need. However, people often confuse the organizations and associate JAA press releases and achievements with Orran. Both organizations are headquartered in the same building, although there are no posters or signs that JAA is located there. Developing a stronger brand for JAA will make it easier for people to differentiate between the two organizations. When developing a brand, there are many things to consider such as the community's opinion of the organization's mission and the procurement of information in said community. People within organizations need to "share information on issues related to the corporation's core service" [24]. For JAA, this would mean bringing in education and business experts to make statements on the effect of the JAA program.

A strong brand, as described by Walter Wymer, *et al*, is "well known", "favorably perceived", and "exceptional and extraordinary in comparison to peer brands" [25]. Being "well known" does not refer to being known by everyone, but rather being known within "target groups of managerial importance." Being "favorably perceived" is about the target group having positive attitudes towards the organization. These two attributes are "necessary but insufficient." In order to be a truly strong brand, the organization must be "exceptional and extraordinary in comparison to peer brands." In this case, JAA does not necessarily have to be the most influential brand but, as it is a different institution with different goals, it needs to be differentiated from Orran [25].

JAA has attempted to make the brand more alluring to Armenian people. For example, it changed some elements on the logo of JA (left), by adding another triangle to make it look like Mount Ararat, which is the emblem of Armenia (right).



Figure 1 - Logo of JA (left) and Logo of JAA (right)

However, more emphasis could be put on using social media to let people know about JAA and help spread news and updates about their work to a wider audience as social media is a low-cost and low-effort tool to use when marketing. Social media is often pointed out as an underused tool when it comes to brand development. Campell *et al*. state that social media could change management practices in nonprofit organizations, particularly in how they engage stakeholders. This study identified common reasons for organizations to use social media. The most common reason was "to promote organizational activities". Other uses of social media recognized in the study were getting companies' names out in the public eye, sharing crucial information, remaining up to date on the information of their constituencies, and educating the public "regarding issues pertinent to their organization" [7].

Brands can be managed on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Facebook is the most used platform by the organizations in the study by Campbell *et al.* Facebook is versatile and can be used for more specific needs such as thanking important people, directing the public to other useful websites, and finding new volunteers, staff, and donors [7]. JAA is not using Facebook to gather feedback. Gathering feedback from students and teachers involved in the programs can provide important data on how to improve or expand the JAA potentially.

To aid in developing and spreading JAA's brand, an updated user-friendly website is important. If stakeholders or grantors are researching whether to donate to a company, an initial look at the website should tell them the purpose, mission, financial data, along with the successes of the organization.

The first step to develop a website is researching and developing the principles, functionality, digital trends, and user expectations of the web [23]. The process involves creating prototypes of design, testing prototypes with the user or the stakeholder. Sometimes, before the prototype web designers create a wireframe, which is the image of how the screen will look like without showing its functionalities [20]. After completing these steps, the design needs to be approved before it is sent to the web developer for coding. The web designer needs to consider some essential factors, such as color schemes, typography, navigation, usability.

2.5 Fundraising

To expand, JAA needs more funding. It has previously worked with JHM Charitable Foundation and the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science. These collaborations are what have allowed JAA to develop its nationwide programs in the past. JAA has also partnered with the Central Bank of Armenia, the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development, Mary Kay Armenia, VivaCell-MTS, Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan, Megerian Carpet Armenia, Kanaka Construction Company, and HSBC Bank Armenia. These companies do more than provide funds; they work closely with JAA by providing business consultants for student companies as well as visiting the classroom to relay real world experiences [13].

To ensure the sustainable operation of JAA, our sponsors need to consider the legitimacy of the sources of grants and devise equitable ways of spending the money, so we can raise more funds and gain more donors in the long run. According to the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), there are six virtues every fundraiser must have to collect funds ethically. These virtues are adherence or observance, trustworthiness, accountability, honesty and integrity, transparency, and courageousness. Adherence to the morals in place is one of the most important virtues because if fundraisers do not observe the rules, why have them. Trust between donors and organizations is important as well. The donors must have knowledge of what their money is being used for. If donors find out that their money is being used for something other than they intended, the likelihood of giving again shrinks substantially [19].

Along the same lines, fundraisers also need to be accountable. Accountability means asking donors tough questions and making sure their intentions are aligned with the missional and values of the organization. It also means holding the organization itself accountable for its use of the donations. Honesty and integrity are like accountability, but it includes everyone, not just the donors. When asking for donations, an organization should be telling the truth about what the organization does

and its results. If a potential donor asks a tough question about the impact of the organization, even if altering the numbers would persuade the donor to give and the mission of the organization is righteous, the organization is not being ethical if it lies [19].

Transparency involves accountability, honesty, and trust. To be transparent, an organization must be in constant reflection of the morals they hold. Then they must also be holding themselves accountable for these reflections and actions. An ethical nonprofit's leadership will live their lives in the open. This is more than just providing the correct information; it is about making this information readily available and being enthusiastic to give it to potential and current donors. It is easy to see how all these virtues are tightly connected and to have one, one must have the others. Courage, the final virtue of an ethical fundraiser, is about "living and working against the grain of the world's norms and expectations" [19].

Many might think the ends justify the means when it comes to fundraising for a nonprofit that is believed to do good work, but the means are just as important. The organization's method of raising money needs to be ethical to be just. By upholding these virtues, we can make sure we are doing our best to ensure a proper fundraising strategy and avoid potential immoral actions.

An organization also needs to have a justified reason to ask for funds. Respecting the preferences of donors on how they would like to be approached is of utmost importance. World Vision's (an international relief mission) values when approaching donors are considered a good baseline by the AFP [19]. The tenets are as follows:

- "Communicating Clearly
- Being accurate, complete, current, and relevant in all communication
- Conveying realistic expectations of how a donation will be used
- Honoring supporters' contact preferences and restrictions
- Ensuring all donors' promises are fulfilled
- Seeking opportunities to educate donors on issues of injustice" [19]

These are important guidelines to keep in mind as we move forward in our project as we have recommended using many methods to advertise and fundraise to JAA.

2.6 Project Scope

JAA is facing the problem of low recognition because of many things. According to Armine Hovhannisian the program is so well-integrated within the regular school curriculum, that many students do not realize they are in a JAA course. The students may notice it is a different type of class, but they do not know why [1].

Our project consists of working with JAA to measure the value that their program brings to students who have graduated from the program and are now in the workforce. In order to convey the value to the public, we updated the website and recommended social media, advertisement, and fundraising strategies. We provide recommendations, which will help to create a social media group for alumni so that JAA can contact them and alumni can stay in touch and share their successes.

Our work will benefit JAA which will, in turn, benefit educators, volunteers, and students in the program. Our work will promote the achievements of JAA and is intended to bring in more donors

to the program. JAA currently has programs for grades 10-12 as well as a civics program in elementary schools. Additionally, JAA would like to expand to more grades. The potential new donors, gained from our proposed marketing strategy, will make this expansion possible by funding the training of more teachers and new educational programs. JAA will be focusing most of their fundraising efforts on grants. The grants can be with a bank (through a Corporate Social Responsibility program), foundation, or with the Armenian government.

3. Methods

Junior Achievement of Armenia (JAA) has requested assistance regarding their current lack of recognition in Armenia. We set four objectives to further the goal of improving the recognition of JAA:

1. Determine alumni perception of JAA
2. Provide content and develop a strategy to update the JAA website
3. Provide a strategy to enhance the social media and raise awareness of JAA
4. Recommend strategies to improve alumni engagement.

3.1 Determine Alumni Perception of JAA

We can have a better understanding of how much value JAA's programs are bringing to the people of Armenia by determining how alumni perceive the program. Therefore, a value analysis would be helpful in promoting JAA to potential donors. Since alumni have graduated and are in the job market, they would be able to realistically describe what they have benefited from the program in their lives, whether it is for their jobs, creating a business, or in their daily life. We used a survey to gather data about the alumni and how they feel about JAA. These collected data were then used to provide testimonials, success stories, and statistics for use in fundraising efforts such as JAA's grant applications, as well as for social media marketing.

After brainstorming about the kinds of questions which would prompt alumni to discuss the value brought to them by JAA, we drafted a set of survey questions. We contacted our sponsor and asked if they thought that our survey questions were valuable to what they were seeking. Our sponsor felt that our questions were good but not detail-oriented and the alumni would respond to them with short answers or simply not respond at all. One of the main problems that our sponsor mentioned was that we had too many open-response questions. She also suggested that we brainstorm as a team to make the questions more appealing and mission based. We revised the survey questions to make them easier to answer by having fewer open-ended questions and more checkbox questions to make the survey much easier to respond to, as well as making it easier to synthesize the data. We also drew inspiration from surveys given out by JA USA. The surveys given out by JA USA are standardized end-of-term surveys facing teachers, volunteers, and students. For example, rather than asking "What value did you gain from JAA?", we asked them to rank from strongly disagree to strongly agree if they felt they gained value in specific ways such as teamwork. The differences from the survey we developed is that the audiences are different. The JA USA surveys are given to students who have clear memories about the course, but the JAA survey is given to alumni groups who finished the course a long time ago. We picked questions that are suitable for also asking alumni and used those in our survey. After revising our survey with the critiques from our sponsor, we met with her to discuss the survey and finalize the questions. After the meeting, we worked together to make sure our sponsor's concerns and suggestions were addressed in the final draft.

The survey, developed using Google Forms, was divided into three sections: Demographics, Value of JAA, and Social Media & Engagement. The "Demographics" section went over questions such as name, age, sex, employment/student status, and job category. The "Value of JAA" section had a series of questions that go over the types of value the alumni found from the JAA programs such

as learning how to manage their money, using what they learned often, and increasing skills. This section also went over the potential success stories alumni might have. Finally, the “Social Media & Engagement” section covered how the alumni heard about JAA, what type of social media they use, what kind of posts and engagement they would like to see from JAA, as well as their contact information. In addition to the main survey questions, we made sure the subjects agreed to and signed an informed consent form prior to beginning the survey. We took the survey to measure the approximate amount of time it would take to fill it in and found that the survey took about 10 minutes to complete.

With the information from the Demographics section, we could determine which groups of people tend to find the most value from JAA. With the Value section, we used the data to promote JAA to grantors and potential donors. With the Social Media and Engagement section, we could help strengthen the connection between alumni and JAA that would consequently grow the number of people who know about JAA and potentially increase donations from alumni.

To distribute the survey, our sponsor reached out to regional representatives of JAA and asked them to call 100 alumni via any comfortable medium and ask each to complete the survey. She also posted the survey in the JAA Facebook group. We drafted the message that went along with the survey then translated it into Armenian and sent it to our sponsor. We had links to both an Armenian and English version of the survey. The survey was in the format of a Google Form so that we could easily compile the data. We analyzed the data to see if there were any consistent answers to any of the questions or trends, such as if all the subjects found out about JAA from a teacher or from Facebook. Once the data were translated and synthesized, we added testimonials to the content of the website based on survey responses with the consent of using the name of the respondent. We also created sample Instagram posts using testimonials for our sponsor to use. For example, we used quotes from the survey answers as a post on social media. To analyze the data, we had one of our team members who speaks both English and Armenian translate about 50 responses into English. We did not translate all of them because we collected 266 responses, as per our sponsor’s request. We developed criteria to assist in our decision-making on translating the response. If the respondent included most of these points in their answers, we translated it:

- The respondent is an alumnus
- The respondent consented to us using their information
- The respondent answered the open-ended questions
- The respondent left at least two sentences under any of the open-response questions
- The respondent has a prominent position such as a principal or government member
- The respondent has a unique response
- The respondent stated that they found a lot of value in JAA programs

We chose these criteria because we had more than 200 responses, and we needed to filter and choose which ones served our purpose. The purpose of translating was to present testimonials in English on social media and the website. However, this does not mean we ignored incomplete responses. Since we were using what we translate as examples of success stories, we wanted good and impressive examples. The demographic questions were fully translated because the answers are predefined. We determined the following percentages from the survey results:

- Time periods in which alumni learned what JAA is
- Sex, age group, employment/student status

- Job industries in which alumni are employed
- Social media platforms alumni use the most
- Types of social media posts alumni would like to see from JAA
- Types of engagement/events alumni would like to see from JAA
- Rankings alumni gave JAA in teaching them various skills

The target audience of the data is potential donors including grantors and alumni. Showing how people who went through the program feel about the value it brought to their lives provided first-hand accounts for why donors should fund JAA. We created lists of testimonials given by survey respondents that our sponsors can use on the website and social media.

We know that the survey data were biased because we were only using the alumni for whom we have contact information. If an alumnus or alumna gives contact information, they probably found value from JAA and wanted to continue being connected with it.

3.2 Provide Strategy and Content to Update the Website

Our second objective was to raise awareness by adding content and creating a strategy to update the JAA website. To determine the structure of the website and content in each page, we researched and compared the websites of JA Worldwide, JA USA, Orran, and made a list of information about JAA we want to put on the JAA website. We then compiled similar topics together and generated a list of potential headings we could make. We got ideas for the headings from the JA Worldwide and JA USA websites, as an example of successful educational websites. We also took any specific requests from our sponsor, such as a list of ways people could help JAA. We used a Google Document to organize all this information.

Some of the information we used for content already exists on the website, but it is organized in a manner that is not user friendly. Therefore, we decided that we wanted to put reorganized content under each of the headings on the same page as often as possible. It is more efficient to design the website to present general information and not specific facts for users to get an overview, then be able to choose which information they want to learn more about. It would thus be more understandable if we put more general content on the same page, and users can see more detailed information when they want to by clicking on the general information. With this change, a user can scroll through the topics and browse without opening every page on the website to find what they want, and it also allows the user to have a general understanding about JAA more easily. We spoke to our sponsor about this and she stated that she was fine with that as long as we have drop down menus on the navigation bar that lists all the subheadings and brings the user to that part of the page, similar to a table of contents. After reading some sections about the history, values, and impact of JAA, a visitor will be more likely to continue reading and even contribute to the program. We also listed ways to help other than donating so that visitors can have the option and know how to make a small contribution to JAA even if it is not monetary.

We initially designed the prototypes of pages for the website using pen and paper. We didn't have a specific plan while making the low-fidelity prototypes, but our goal was to create a set of ideas that we could compare and choose from. We created a primary design, but there were many changes and updates after research. We used this method because it is quick, easy, and allowed us to get our ideas out in a simple way. An example of one of our website designs can be seen in Figure 2.

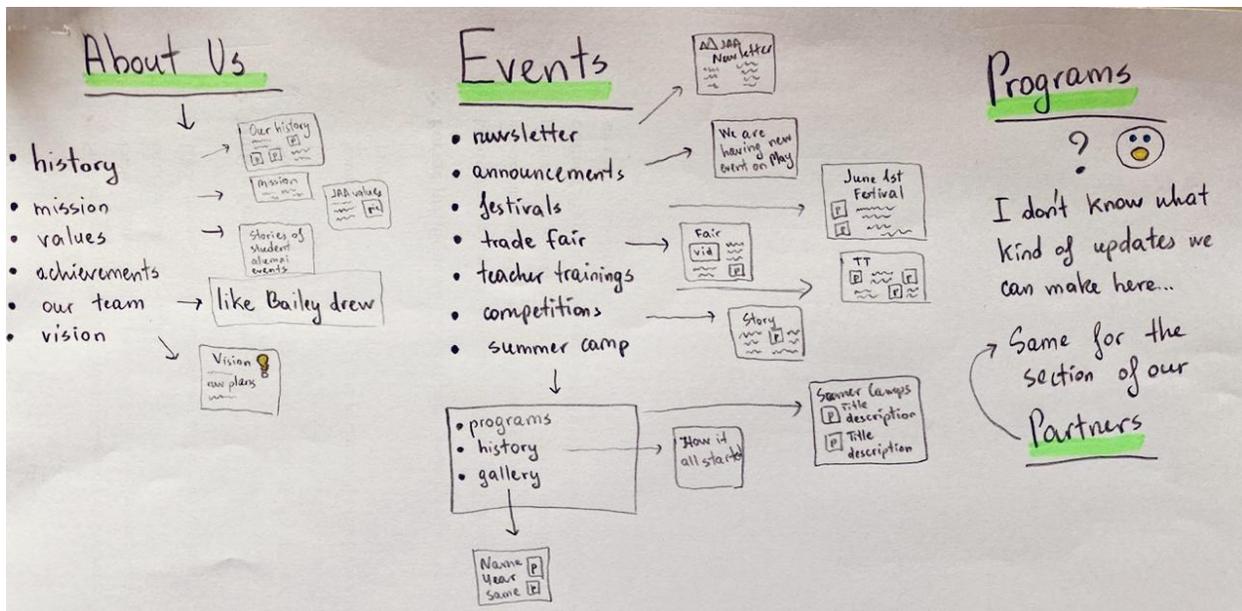


Figure 2 - Early Design Work for the Website

The layout of content for each section was created in Photoshop. The aim of the website mockup was to have an entire picture of the look of the website before we code the website. The critical design decision was made by referring to the books *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design* and *Balanced Website Design: Optimising Aesthetics, Usability and Purpose* [4][16]. We used the books to design an effective layout for presenting different kinds of information in each page while achieving a modern aesthetic style. The aesthetic style and design element of the website was created based on the websites of JA Worldwide, JA USA and other JA organizations from different countries. Furthermore, JA Worldwide has a design guideline including detailed information for fonts and colors, along with many design elements, such as dividing lines and frames. JA Worldwide also provided more than a hundred icons in a wide variety of themes. We incorporated many of the design elements and icons to our website design, which helped us to maintain a consistent aesthetic style across our website and be like the JA Worldwide website. The benefits of creating the website mockup in Photoshop are the rapid design process and the ease of modifying. We created the website mockup in a short period of time, so we can show our sponsor for her suggestions, and make changes accordingly. Later, the website was then coded based on the mockup, and the sponsor can have a reference for design of the website after we finished the project.

We also began building the header and footer of the website in code using DreamWeaver for our templating system. Since DreamWeaver is a program that costs money to use and their templating was hard to learn, we later switched to using Handlebars for templating. To do this we added Node.js to our project which is an open source server environment written in JavaScript. We, however, are not using the server aspect and are instead using the tools Node.js has to offer, specifically, Gulp. With Gulp, we can make an automated workflow for optimizing assets for usage on the web as well as an easy to use development server where the website can be viewed before making it public. In addition, Gulp will compile the Handlebar templates automatically. We also used GitHub Pages to host the design we programmed so we can easily show it to our sponsors.

While designing the website, we simultaneously started writing the content for each section. We began with the brief outlines of the content in English and started translating some of it into Armenian. Our sponsor said she would prefer to have all the content in English, and she can work on the translations later so that we did not spend a lot of time on translating. Once we were done designing and writing the content for the website, we programmed the website and deployed it. We also wanted to provide an updated version of the JAA logo as the only available picture of it was blurry and has an outdated style. We looked at other JA branches' logos and the Junior Achievement Worldwide guidelines on how to make a logo and made several options. However, our sponsor informed us that she does not want to change the logo as they would then need to re-register the logo with the Armenian government. We still took the current logo and made a higher resolution version.

We also made analyses of fake financial data so that when JAA receives their audit information, they can display the data in a clean, organized fashion for any website users. We discuss these analyses more thoroughly in section 5.2. For sustainable maintenance of the website after finishing our project, we developed clear instructions for our sponsor on how to edit the website's content. These instructions were given both in writing and picture examples. We began by making a list of possible scenarios our sponsors might run into, such as wanting to change the logo or add a heading. We then created step-by-step instructions that described the best way we knew to handle the scenario. We also included scenarios that we recommended but did not have time to implement such as how to add a Armenian language version and how to add a gallery of photos. We tested the quality and comprehensibility of the manual by giving it to one of our team members that is not familiar with web development.

3.3 Provide Strategy to Enhance Social Media

Our third objective was to provide a strategy to help JAA to use social media to raise JAA's awareness among the public. This is important as social media is an effective, low-effort, and low-cost way to reach many people. To develop a social media strategy for JAA, we first researched branding strategies deployed by other companies. First, we looked at Orran's branding strategy because it is also a nonprofit and it is very well known. We also investigated famous Armenian brands such as Ararat Brandy. Despite being a for-profit company, the branding strategies can be applied to JAA as these strategies can be effective for different types of products. We also looked at other JA organizations' social media accounts and determined what can be applied to JAA.

To expand our knowledge about the work that goes into social media strategies, we also met with Anna Dealy, Associate Director of Advancement Communications at the WPI Office of University Advancement. We asked her about what types of posts get the most interaction, which social media platform is the most popular, and what some "best practices" are when it comes to using social media. We also asked how she plans her posts and if she has a template for a posting calendar that she prefers. We asked these questions in a general context, but she mostly used her experience working with WPI to answer them. She has worked in social media for other companies, but the majority of her expertise comes from working at WPI.

From the branding research and our interview with Anna, we produced recommendations and a calendar for JAA social media posts. These recommendations also include how to optimize the effectiveness of posts and operation of the official account. The guidelines could also include optimal wording and timing of posts.

Promoting a brand is another large part of marketing. A company can have amazing social media accounts and still be unknown. Because of this, we investigated options to promote JAA in the classroom. Options for this include posters in common areas of schools and asking teachers and volunteers to distribute brochures or swag (e.g. pens or stickers with the JAA logo) to students. We used the research on marketing strategies of other companies to create an approach to explain what JAA is in a succinct fashion. Volunteers who come into the classrooms could also encourage the students to follow the social media and investigate what JAA is and why they are going through a given course.

3.4 Recommend Strategies to Improve Alumni Engagement

Our final objective was to develop an alumni outreach strategy. In order to develop this strategy, we referenced WPI's strategy since the alumni office has faced a similar situation before. Just like JAA's current situation, WPI previously did not have a great alumni-engagement strategy, and WPI usually lost contact with alumni when they graduated. JAA does not have a full list of all alumni with their preferred contact methods and does not have an effective method of contacting the alumni as the employees track all these data manually. To investigate WPI's strategy, we interviewed Peter Thomas, Executive Director of the Office of Lifetime Engagement, Thea Marcoux, Associate Director of International Advancement, and Katie Bilotta, Director of Community Relations, at WPI. Both Peter Thomas and Katie Bilotta had worked at a Junior Achievement branch for multiple years. We asked how WPI engages and connects with alumni, what kind of events they host for alumni, how often they reach out to them, and how they manage communication with them. We referred to WPI's experience in engaging alumni to develop a strategy for JAA to reach out to their alumni. Although JAA is not a college, it is an education program, so we can look into WPI's strategies to gain a better understanding of how alumni outreach works in general and then adapt these strategies to JAA's needs and priorities. To eliminate the possible difference between the U.S. and Armenia in the method of outreaching and other potential social or cultural factors, we set up a meeting with Narine Petrosyan, AUA Office of Alumni Relations Manager. We can find possible differences in the method of outreaching and develop a strategy that can be effectively used in Armenia for JAA.

To aid in engaging alumni we created an Excel database of alumni names, contact information, and contact preferences. This database also contains the school, city/village, and region in which that JAA course was taken. We created a link on the website that allows alumni to "sign up" for newsletters which will add their names and contact information to a Google Sheets database.

In addition to gathering information from professionals, our survey included questions about what kind of events alumni want to see, what kind of social media platform alumni use, what types of posts they would prefer, how often they would like to be contacted, and what they want to be contacted about. We can use the data from the survey responses along with our research to develop an ideal strategy for JAA alumni outreach.

In summary, we created and sent a survey sent to JAA alumni. We then analyzed the data and made social media and alumni engagement recommendations. We also researched and interviewed people to gather information on how to create an effective social media and alumni engagement plan. In addition to these recommendations, we created a new website and a website manual for JAA. In the next section we will be going over the results of these methods.

4. Results

4.1 Alumni Perception

We received 266 responses (250 in Armenian and 16 in English) to our alumni perception survey. Our target subjects were the alumni of JAA, but we also received responses from school students and teachers of JAA. Teachers shared their opinion about the advantages of JAA courses and the ways they would like to be involved in the process of raising awareness of the organization.

We learned that JAA includes and encourages the participation of physically disabled children in their programs, which is uncommon in Armenia. According to the National Institute of Labor and Social Research of Armenia, 8047 physically disabled children in Armenia do not get an education because of difficulty in integrating into regular life, such as accessing the school environment [18]. From the survey, we learned that, with the help of JAA, one student with disabilities gains the skills needed to create her own non-governmental organization that helps and encourages people in need.

Among the respondents, we got many successful people who mentioned that, thanks to the impact of JAA, they were able to discover themselves, gain knowledge, and put enough effort to achieve their goals. Based on the respondents' impressive and appreciative words, we found out that the summer camp played a huge role in their lives. Concerning the outreach of alumni, a majority of them prefer email and phone calls over any social media websites like Facebook or Instagram. Almost 58% of people gave consent to use their names. In the additional information section, many participants showed their gratitude for our initiative and project. Three individuals even wanted to participate in our project and be helpful to us.

The Alumni demographic breakdown is shown in Figure 3. From top to bottom, are sex and age, when respondents learned about JAA, employment/student status, and industries in which alumni are employed. These data are likely biased towards responses from people who appreciated their JAA experiences, so these results represent a starting point for any future surveys.

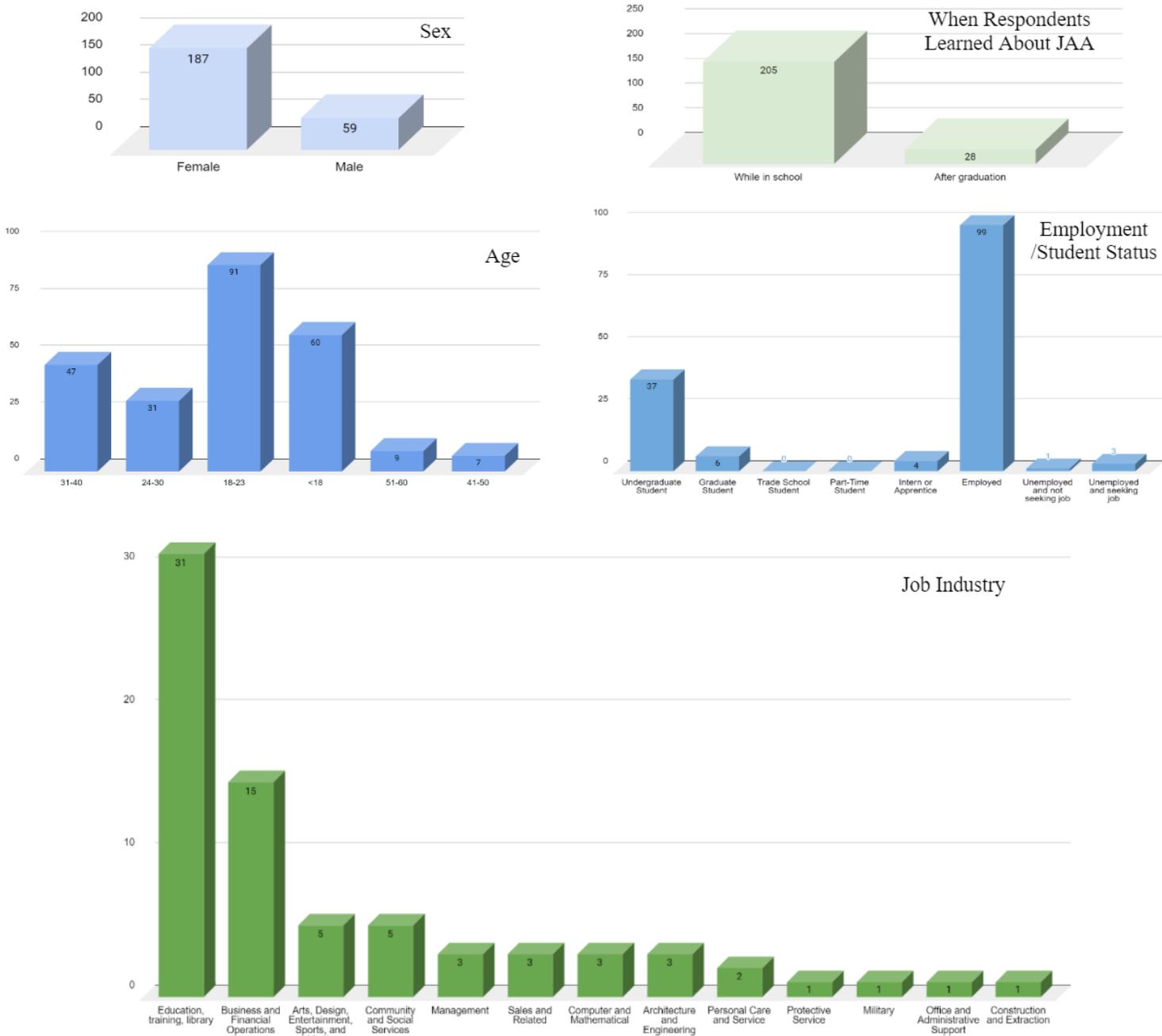


Figure 3 - Alumni demographic breakdowns (From top to bottom: sex, age, when respondents learned about JAA, employment/student status, and industries in which alumni are employed)

Despite what our sponsor has told us, the majority of people learned about JAA while in school. This could be explained by the bias that people who are taking the survey probably wanted to stay connected to JAA and thus found out about it earlier. This information, when statistically significant, could be used to show JAA where to focus advertising to be the most effective. If most people learn about JAA in school, they could look into how to become more known to alumni. The job industries that alumni chose to go into is also a very interesting result. One could assume

that because JAA is an educational program, the people who felt most connected and wanted to fill out the survey are in the educational field.

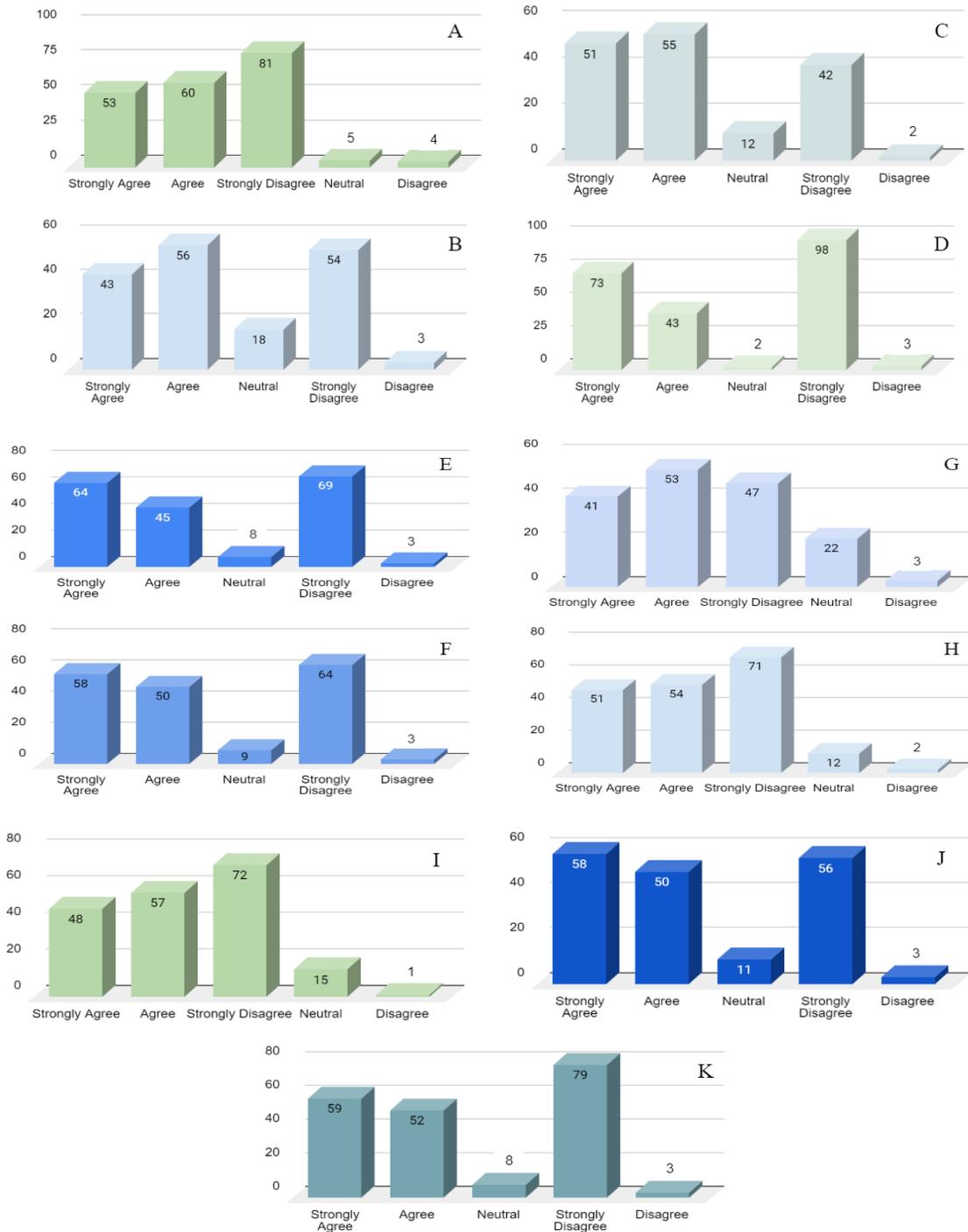


Figure 4 - Alumni Perception on JAA Building Skills in, from to bottom, Thinking Creatively, Conducting Research, Brainstorming, Working in a Group, Understanding My Own Abilities and Skills, Problem Solving, Thinking Critically, Being a Smart Consumer, Financial Skills, Leadership, and Organization Skills

As seen in the above chart, most respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statements that JAA gave them specific skills. We did get a lot more people saying they strongly disagree than we expected. We have shared the survey results with our sponsor and highlighted this fact. They will then be informed so they can improve the value of JAA.

4.2 Website

We have designed a new website based on our research. At the time of writing, our draft of the website can be found here: jameskajon.github.io/jaa-website. We hosted at this address to finish all the coding without having to interfere with the current JAA website. We then transferred all the updates to the real website within a few hours with our sponsors. The main headings on the website are 'Home', 'About Us', 'News and Events', 'Programs', 'Alumni', 'Partnerships', and 'How Can I Help'. These headings were based on the original website's headings and our vision of simplifying website navigation. The headings evolved from feedback from Armine Hovannisian and research of JA Worldwide and JA USA headings. On the bottom of each page we have provided important contact information such as the address for headquarters, the phone number, the email address, and a link to the JAA social media pages.



Figure 5 - Website Footer Including Contact Information and Social Media Links

On the 'Home' page, we have a large photo of children in a JAA program. Below that is a short description of what JAA is. We then have a short section for the most recent announcements, a sample of testimonials from alumni, and a promotion video from Junior Achievement Worldwide. The purpose of the homepage is to give the visitors a general picture of what JAA does even if the visitors do not dig through the entire website.

On the 'About Us' page, there is information about JAA, such as the history of the program and its vision, mission, and values. This page is also where we state the achievements and impact of JAA as a whole and link to the results of our survey and other surveys done by JAA. We also have descriptions and pictures of the employees and regional representatives working at JAA.

The 'News and Events' page contains recent announcements as well as a list of events sorted by date. There is a short description of each event, along with a photo, and each short description is linked to a full description so that if the user clicks on it, the visitor can read more. The visitor can also find the newsletters produced by our sponsor and news stories about JAA below the events. Our recommendations include our suggested method to sustain the website and keep the news current.

The 'Programs' page contains descriptions of each of the curricula. These descriptions were written by our sponsor. The programs included are JA Entrepreneurship, JA More Than Money, Economics, Global Business Ethics, Brain Ring, Entrepreneurship and Civic Activism for Young

People, Online Courses, and teacher training. Success stories and testimonials are also on this page, as shown in Figure 6.

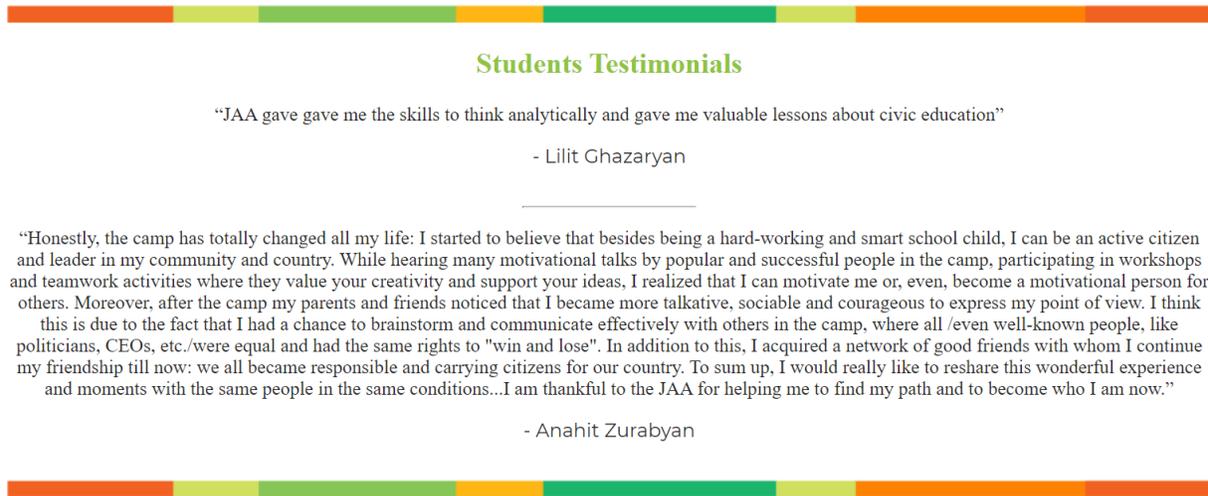


Figure 6 - Student Testimonials Shown in the 'Programs' Page of the Website

The 'Alumni' page contains links to the social media specifically made for alumni and a way to sign up for the mailing list. There is also a job board where alumni can look at jobs posted by others. The purpose of the 'Alumni' page is to provide alumni with ways to connect with JAA and each other. The job board is there so that alumni can network with each other and potentially help each other find jobs without having to meet in person.

The 'Partnerships' page contains a statement from our sponsor about their partnerships with various businesses and what partners do. There are logos of the partners that link to their websites as well. The 'Partnerships' page gives credit to the largest donors to JAA and shows future donors that JAA values their partners enough to advertise them.

The 'How Can I Help' page contains a link to the 'Donate' page as well as information on volunteering as a business consultant and connecting alumni with employment opportunities. The 'Donate' page contains JAA's wiring information.

Along with the updated content and design of the website, our sponsor also sent us a new logo to use, as shown in figure 8 and to replace the old logo.



Figure 7 - New Logo We Were Sent

4.3 Social Media Research

To use social media in an effective and organized manner, a social media strategy is suggested [9]. To make a strategy, there are many aspects to keep in mind. One of which is S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals. These goals are made to measure progress from utilizing the strategy and see if adjustments need to be made [9]. In order to measure progress, “tracking meaningful metrics” is crucial. These metrics can include shares, follows, comments, likes, website clicks, and more. The next steps to creating a good strategy are to know the audience and competition with other brands. Knowing the audience can be done by defining who the target audience is and simply researching what they tend to like in terms of platforms and posts. One can learn from competition’s mistakes and see what they do that works well by simply looking at social media accounts of other brands in the same category. Before making a strategy, it is necessary to audit the current social media accounts to see what works well and what is not worth the time. Other important steps to planning is to find inspiration, create a posting calendar, and evaluate the strategy as needed. One of the greatest factors in using social media to brand is that social media allows “[the] company to leapfrog traditional media and forge relationships directly with customers” [10].

From comparing the brands of groups such as JA USA, Orran, and Ararat Brandy, we learned the similarities of these successful brands. Shown in table 1 are the criteria we used to analyze the brands and which brands fulfilled that criterion.

From our meeting with Anna Dealy, we learned that there are different uses for different platforms. Front-facing platforms are platforms that are used for posting but not much for interaction, such as Facebook pages and Twitter. These can be used for gaining a wider audience and announcements. On the other hand, there are more interaction-based platforms, such as Facebook groups. These are great for getting to know a core part of the audience. They have a smaller following but often offer a more enriching experience. WPI has many alumni groups and their rule of thumb is to post in it when needed but let it be run by alumni, as when something is announced by a peer, it is more natural to engage with it. She also said that Twitter is best for live updates because it is quick to convey a message and easy to read.

Table 1 - Social Media Comparison

Criterion	JA USA	Orran	Ararat Brandy	WPI
Facebook page	X	X	X	X
Facebook group				X
Instagram	X	X	X	X
Highlighted stories (on Instagram)	X	X	X	X
YouTube	X		X	X
Pinterest	X			
Twitter	X	X		X
Frequency of posts	Everyday	Every 2-3 days	Every 3-5 days	5 times a week

As shown in Table 1, Facebook pages and Instagram are most used among the companies. Each company also has at least one highlighted story on Instagram showing that it is useful for posting multiple, topical things without overwhelming followers. Since a story is only active for one day, highlighting the posts is a great way to make sure people have access to the content. In addition to using stories and highlighted stories to not overwhelm followers, the companies tend to not post more than once a day.

The Facebook group for JAA is extremely active, as many teachers post the activities they do with their students. Unfortunately, this means it is hard to filter through all the posts for more important announcements. The JAA only has a Facebook group, not a page. Groups are useful for a community to stay connected and updated, whereas a page is more beneficial for a company to promote and announce the most important information such as news and events.

According to Dealy, when it comes to posts, personal stories about faculty, alumni, and students often get the most interaction. People also like to know how WPI is helping, whether it be alumni or the world. Tracking the metrics of posts is reasonably easy as there is a function on Facebook and Twitter that displays how many people have interacted with an account's contents. Dealy mentioned she checks these metrics monthly and then does an in-depth analysis yearly. She notes on a report which posts get the most interaction and which get the least. One of her best practices when it comes to posting is to share relevant things and make the content easy to consume. To optimize consumption, there are optimal photograph sizes and time lengths of videos. For example, if a photograph is larger than a specific size, the post will not show the whole image unless clicked on. The optimal image sizes and video lengths are easy to look up but are constantly changing. Anna also suggested that we attach a photo with every post as it will help the content to stick out and people are more willing to look at photos than read.

When planning her posts, Dealy prints out a monthly calendar and writes down the general ideas the posts will have on each day. When planning these posts, she notes how important it is to have a calendar of all the events happening that month. This is so she can post about events as they are happening and fill in other posts on less eventful days. She typically posts five times a week.

From the survey, we gained insight about the types of posts alumni want to see and which platform is most used, as shown in figures 9 and 10, respectively. For figure 10, we took the rankings of how often respondents used each platform and summed them. We have created videos for our sponsor on how to make templates similar to those on other JA social media accounts. We have also made two posts on the JAA Instagram, one wishing people a happy Victory Day and one displaying a testimonial we received from the survey. We created a story highlight of the employees that work at JAA. We explore further uses for these data in section 5.3.

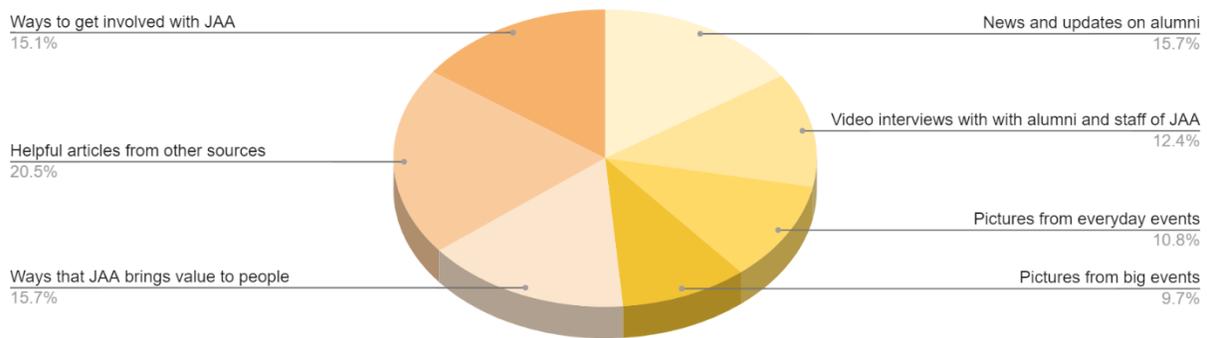


Figure 8 - Types of Posts Alumni Want to See

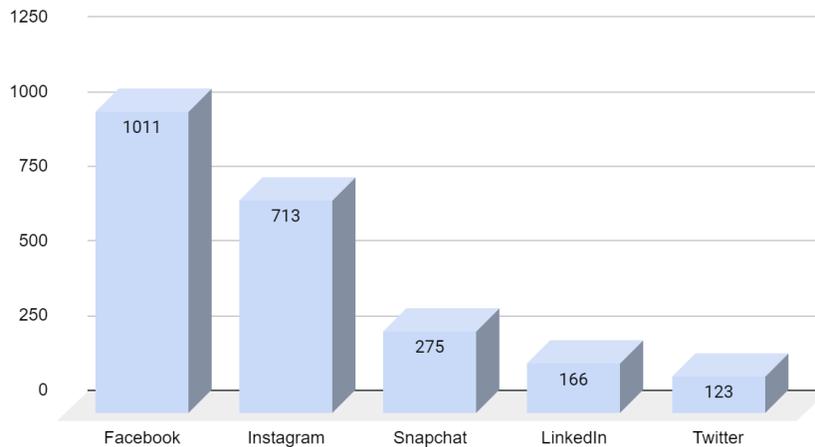


Figure 9 - Alumni Usage of Social Media Platforms

4.4 Alumni Outreach

When interviewed, Peter Thomas stated that “adhesiveness” was extremely important to alumni outreach. In other words, alumni need to feel connected to the program, whether it be through the work students do in the program or through relationships with the volunteer. He also stated that alumni need to benefit from being engaged with the alumni program. For instance, WPI hosts both professional and informal events such as networking nights and dinner parties. Having both types of events are important because informal events promote connections between alumni as friends,

and professional events promote the continued learning of alumni and help make them feel like they are getting something out of being alumni. Peter also emphasized the importance of keeping organized and secure data when it comes to the contact information of alumni. It is preferable to have software that does this. He specifically recommended Salesforce. Making sure to keep the alumni stimulated but not oversaturated in emails is an important balance as well. He said that his office never sends more than two emails a week to alumni. Additionally, he sends a list of upcoming events for alumni twice a month and a newsletter that is specifically for alumni once a month.

When asking for donations from alumni, it is also essential to make sure they know where their donation is going, and that they feel like they have a say in how it is spent. When WPI uses donations from alumni, they use it for things that WPI students and faculty would like or need. On the other hand, some alumni choose to give their donation for a specific reason, for example renovating a specific building, and WPI makes sure to honor the request to use the donation in the specified way. Despite this, the alumni office strongly encourages people to donate to WPI in general so that they have a more flexible budget to work with.

We also interviewed Katie Bilotta, Director of Community Relations at the WPI University Advancement Office. Community Relations focuses on bringing outsiders in to see WPI and representing WPI at outside events. This means things like inviting government officials and CEOs to WPI ribbon cutting events. For example, Ed Markey, the Senator of Massachusetts, attended a fundraising event held for WPI's Armenian project center where students like us presented our projects. Katie was also a part of an award-winning Junior Achievement program in Central Massachusetts, so her insights were incredibly useful. One of the most essential things Katie mentioned is having a relationship with important people. The office does not necessarily have to ask for money but when they keep in touch with important people and show them the great work they are doing, then alumni are likely to give money on their own. She mentioned how strong a tool social media is as well as small branding opportunities. These branding opportunities can be things as small as handing out a pen branded with the JAA logo during the program. Having a physical item will help people remember that they went through the program and remember who provided the program. She recommended we use this tactic at JAA to increase the recognition of JAA as a separate entity from regular education. As great as social media and small branded items are, she also recommended we use personal touches such as hand-written notes to make alumni feel connected to JAA. Finally, Katie recommended a couple of online tools that might help increase the recognition of JAA: Back At You Media which manages social media, and Adwerx, which helps websites show up when someone Googles something close to the mission.

Thea Marcoux, Associate Director of International Advancement at the WPI University Advancement Office, also gave us insights into alumni engagement. Her job entails keeping international students engaged and informed. She uses 12 different platforms to communicate with alumni, such as WhatsApp and WeChat. It is immensely important to note which platforms are best for a given region which is mostly learned through trial and error. The international office uses online and physical signup sheets that allow people to change their contact information or preferences or add themselves to the alumni list. One of the most important things she does is using a personal touch. She keeps track of birthdays and regional holidays of international alumni and tries to contact them to wish them a happy birthday or happy holidays. Along with personal messages, she sends newsletters including upcoming events and student/alumni showcases. She

notes that younger generations tend to like social media and email while older generations tend to like paper mail.

There are people that are more connected and are more willing to respond to outreach. The people more engaged are more likely to donate. Despite this, she states that engagement and stewardship of the relationships should take place before the donations. Although donations are a significant aspect of alumni engagement, the focus should be engaging alumni. When people do donate, they have the option to decide where the money goes. This is done simply by using a comment box wherever donations can be made.

The events her office holds include project receptions for Master Qualifying Projects and Interactive Qualifying Projects, private dinners for specific alumni groups. With private events, because they are mostly run by alumni, her office usually only has one colleague there to answer any questions and encourage networking. They sometimes also help plan the events.

Some final points Thea made were that people love free merchandise, such as pens, stickers and flags, and the alumni office needs to focus on letting current students know who they are, so they know the benefits of being part of the alumni groups. To do this, her office is looking into inclusive events for students and alumni to connect. The people most engaged as alumni are the people who were engaged as a student so engaging students is a critical step. She also mentioned the use of TechConnect, which is WPI's alumni-only version of LinkedIn. Being able to find a job through networking is one of the best benefits of being alumni from a certain alma mater.

To make sure we did not have a bias of only gathering information from the US, we interviewed Narine Petrosyan, Manager at the AUA Office of Alumni Relations. She shared AUA's alumni engagement strategies with us. Her office starts gathering data right after the students graduate from the university. She mentioned that the most effective way to contact the alumni of AUA is by email or phone calls, and sometimes through Facebook. AUA organizes annual events for the alumni, but besides the events, alumni can use the library services of the university free of charge. Besides sending surveys, interactive posts, or emails about career services, they are trying to think of strategies to engage the alumni on social media. She said they are very attentive to the achievements of the students, and they share success stories of alumni on their website and on their Facebook page. Concerning fundraising, most of the time alumni donate money when they are asked. Her opinion on the matter was that participation is more important than the amount of money they want to donate. She also mentioned that it is beneficial to keep personal contact with alumni.

When considering the data gathered from interviews, we must keep in mind potential biases of the interviewees. They might want to portray their office in the best way possible and thus might be painting a more optimistic, rather than realistic, picture. The data are still useful as they show what methods are used and the general ideas behind alumni engagement and fundraising and we used these data to make recommendations on alumni engagement strategies.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

From our observations and the key findings of our project, we are able to make recommendations for both the continuation of JAA's brand development and the overall success of JAA. These recommendations can be grouped in four categories:

1. Continued Use of the Survey
2. Upkeep of the Website
3. Enhanced Use of Social Media
4. Engagement of Alumni

By making these recommendations, we hope to further assist JAA in their journey to becoming a well-known and well-funded NGO. We have confidence that our social media and alumni engagement recommendations, as well as the creation of an updated website, a website manual, and a JAA Instagram page, will help JAA grow.

5.1 Extending the Survey

We recommend continuing the use of the survey to get as many responses as possible. The target population would be the same as it is geared towards alumni. The benefit to continuing this survey is to get more specific and statistically valid results on what alumni think of JAA's programs and what they want to see from JAA in terms of engagement. With more responses, JAA could also expand their list of alumni contacts. To lessen potential biases in future surveys, we suggest diversifying the method of administering the surveys. Since we only got responses from people who answered to the regional representatives on the phone or by email or people in the Facebook group, they were more likely to have enjoyed the JAA experience in the first place and want to stay connected. To distribute the surveys, our sponsor has different options, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 - Options for Method of Sending Survey

Option	Effects	Consequences
Email/mail the survey to all alumni for whom contact information is available every few years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reaches more alumni - Easy to manage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would only contact people who wanted to stay in touch w/JAA - Would have to manually input all paper responses
Post survey link on all social media	-Reaches everyone who is willing to click on link, even those for whom we may not have contact information	With no direct message to people asking them to fill out the survey, they might feel less inclined to do so
Offer incentive for answering survey, such as entrance into raffle	More likely to get responses from people who are not positively or negatively biased towards JAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spending money on incentive - Get answers from people who do not really care and just want to win raffle

None of these options are perfect because it is unlikely to receive a perfect sample of a population. We would recommend mixing these and any other options and using trial and error.

We also recommend doing an analysis to correlate the value a respondent found in their JAA experience with their demographics. Since we did not receive enough responses, we could not report any generalizable conclusions. These types of analysis would have to happen after the sample size (number of responses) is statistically valid compared to the population (alumni). Such conclusions to find would include the rankings of JAA teaching each skill given by females vs. males, or if alumni who agreed to have been taught a specific skill by JAA ended up in certain industries. Doing this would expose any potential biases against or for certain demographics in the programs. For example, if men are more likely to succeed in a JAA course, perhaps the volunteers are biased towards helping men. Showing a bias could encourage the investigation into what caused that bias and if it is solvable. This analysis, alternatively, could show how unbiased the programs are if all groups of a demographic find the course equally valuable, which would be a great thing to show grantors.

5.2 Upkeep of the Website

We recommend implementing Google Analytics. To do this, our sponsor will have to make sure to maintain the privacy of the users. Armenia has very specific rules on internet privacy and the use of Google Analytics, largely reflecting the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulations. Google Analytics will measure the activity on the website and thus will allow our sponsors to measure the success of their brand. If our sponsor advertises the website on a certain social media platform and the number of visitors the website receives increases, one can conclude the advertisement was successful.

On the ‘Donate’ page of the website, there should also be easy-to-read infographics and charts about where donors’ money goes. Shown below in Figure 11, is the example created using fake numbers.

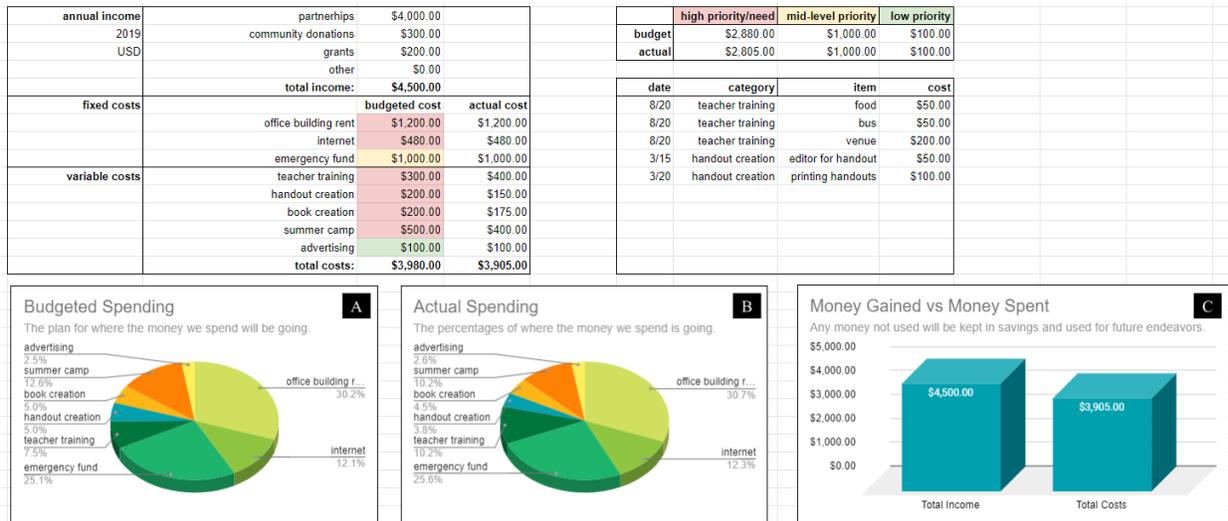


Figure 10 - Example of Financial Data Analysis Using Fake Data

We wanted to display the percentage breakdown of where all the money goes. We also deemed it extremely important to show how much money is being spent versus how much is being donated. This chart along with a statement about what JAA will do with unused money makes sure all financial matters of JAA are transparent. If desired, JAA can also show the data that went into making the charts to show how necessary each line item is as well as its cost and purpose.

We also recommend creating a special donations account with the HSBC bank of Armenia. This account could then be linked to the website and thus will make it possible for people to donate directly and easily on the website. With the donation page, JAA can encourage people to donate on the website. They can set up a recurring donation option on the donation page as well, so that donors can easily set aside a certain amount to donate every desired period. We provided information on ethical fundraising (found in section 2.5) when developing fundraising strategies.

We recommend that the website content be updated as changes happen to JAA. To stay on a schedule, we suggest updating the testimonials and events monthly, and updating everything else yearly as there are not many changes to the other aspects of the website. We suggest monthly updates as it will give enough time for the content to be viewed without making the website look outdated. When a user realizes part of a website is outdated, they can lose faith in the rest of the content. To avoid this, there are detailed instructions on how to update the website in the website manual.

In the future, it may be beneficial to associate the success stories and testimonials with specific JAA programs the student took, so the audience can know more about the specific programs JAA offers. With this, we suggest keeping a general area for any success stories and testimonials that are not about specific programs but about JAA as a whole.

Additionally, JAA should translate the content in the website to Armenian. We would also recommend creating a gallery of photos on the “Events” page displaying the photos taken during events. The website manual goes over how to create this.

5.3 Enhanced Use of Social Media

Based on the answers of the survey participants, we determined which social media platforms to use to contact and engage alumni. According to the results, Facebook (54%) and Instagram (35%) are used frequently, whereas Snapchat (4.2%), LinkedIn (2.5%), and Twitter (1.2%) are the least often used by the least number of alumni.

Since one of our project deliverables was an Instagram account and JAA already has a Facebook group, we recommend creating a Facebook page. This will allow people to see the events and main ideas of JAA in an organized manner. The group is great for a personal touch and seeing what JAA is and does daily as it is an interactive space where anyone in the group can post, but when people want specific information, they can go to the page as it is a front-facing platform where the page manager can post for everyone to see but people who follow the page cannot post.

We also recommend making a monthly calendar the week before each month begins outlining the events and general idea of posts that are occurring that month. When it comes to types of posts, we recommend all of the following, as they were all equally voted on by survey respondents to be posts they would like to see:

- Success stories of alumni and students
- Helpful articles, specifically about learning new skills
- Updates on information about the impact of JAA (e.g. newsletters, survey results)
- Ways to get involved with JAA, such as volunteering, networking, and fundraising events
- Pictures from everyday and big JAA events, such as classroom learning and the annual showcase

We also recommend posting well wishes on holidays as most, if not all, of the companies we looked at, made these types of posts. To prepare these posts, it is a good idea to have an organized gallery of photos to use as well as a set of templates. We also suggest using infographics with minimal words for any information that needs to be shared as well as people are more likely to look at photos than words. To make the infographics and templates, we have found that Canva, a free graphic design tool, works well. There are built in templates, including ones for social media posts. Of course, we are not deterring our sponsor from using words when needed, we only suggest using as few as possible when possible. We also recommend posting the same content across all platforms at similar times. This is to make sure everyone, regardless of the platform they use, will receive the content.

According to Anna Dealy, posting five times per week works well, but since there is no designated employee that works solely on social media, like Anna Dealy, we recommend starting to post one time per week, slowly moving up to a maximum of five times per week (on average).

The highlighted stories feature on Instagram could be beneficial for JAA as well. On the JA USA Instagram, for instance, they have a story called “JA Takeover” for when somebody in the organization “takes over” the account to show what they are doing for a large event they were

invited to that is relevant to JAA such as a training seminar on economics. On WPI’s Instagram they have a story highlight called “Projects” and one called “Student Life.” Both could be beneficial to highlight both the students’ projects and the activities done in the classroom.

5.4 Engagement of Alumni

With more engaged alumni, there will be additional opportunities for fundraising and more awareness of the value that the program brings to students. Based on the interviews with faculty in the alumni offices of WPI and AUA, we have determined many suggestions for JAA to better engage alumni. We suggest creating an email alias containing the emails of all alumni as well as email aliases for different groups of alumni, such as alumni in different countries. These email aliases should be moderated so that only employees of JAA can send emails and any emails not sent by JAA employees must be approved by JAA employees. This will allow for easy communication with alumni and will encourage alumni who may move away to stay connected. Emailing alumni about once a week will make them feel connected without feeling overwhelmed. JAA should offer an “unsubscribe” option for people who may not want to stay as connected as others. While email is good for straightforward communication from JAA, groups will allow members to communicate amongst themselves without long, confusing email chains.

In the future, we recommend planning more events for alumni to network and engage with each other. As shown in Figure 12, survey respondents liked the idea of volunteering events and classes for new skills to engage them. These events should be the focus of the near future while adding in the other types of events and engagement can be part of a long-term plan. Another great event to begin with is an annual reunion of alumni. Teachers and alumni of JAA can get back together, connect, and network. During this event, we recommend having at least one form of entertainment, such as a keynote speaker, along with food and drinks. When holding an event, it is also a great opportunity to take photos for social media and the website. It was also noted by Anna Dealy that one should upload photos from big events to a photo database, such as Flickr, where people can login and download the pictures.

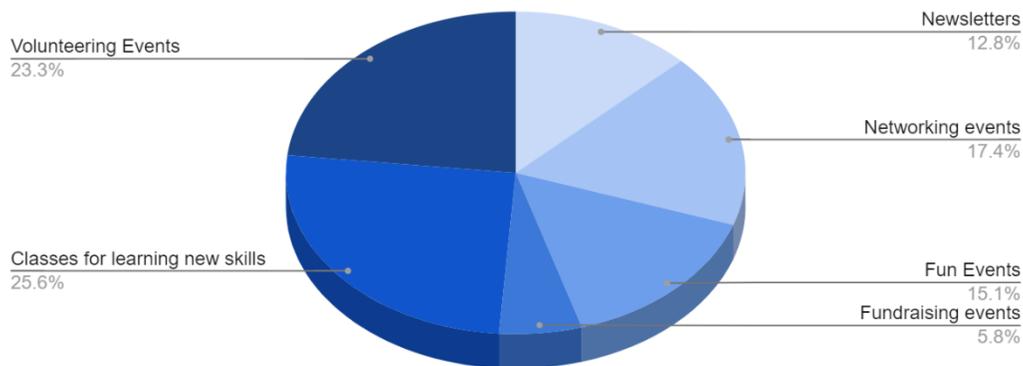


Figure 11 - Events and Engagement Alumni Want to See

To aid in engaging alumni, we also recommend making a Facebook group for all alumni and for different alumni groups, such as international alumni or alumni of the summer camp. Groups are easy to manage because, rather than managing all the members, our sponsor just has to advertise that the groups exist and if people want to join them, they can. Groups can also be moderated by admin to make sure people who do not belong in the group can be denied access.

Small branded gifts are also a good option to get a brand name out there, especially if the gift is something usable like a pen. Since all students should have books or handouts used for the program they are in, branding those items clearly is a good way to make sure students know where the course is from.

5.5 Conclusion

We wanted to increase recognition of JAA beyond those who are already familiar with the program. We started with research of the historical background of JAA, how it started, integrated and developed its new educational motives in Armenian school's curriculum. As students have trouble differentiating between regular courses and JAA courses, we developed social and branding strategies to help JAA with recognition. To do this, we improved the engagement of their own alumni. We surveyed alumni and shared their success stories on social media and the website. We also used the survey results to see what type of social media presence and engagement activities the alumni would like to see. Moreover, we updated the content and design of their website to be more user-friendly and captivating while also promoting JAA's work and achievements through engaging the alumni and utilizing social media. We provide a website manual with detailed instructions which will be helpful for JAA staff to make updates on the website of JAA that we created.

All these were enhanced to raise awareness of JAA in Armenia, and students will now be more exposed to the fact that they are enrolled in a JAA course. And, if more people outside the program know and appreciate the work of the organization, more people will want to contribute to the development and expansion of JAA. Our work benefits the efforts toward increasing the recognition of JAA and motivates people's desire to donate money for JAA projects. With the help of our social media posts showing the values and achievements of JAA, many people will be motivated to donate money for JAA works. Donations given will go to the training of teachers, new educational projects, and promote the expansion of JAA to more students and schools.

5.6 Future Projects

Our project could easily be expanded into many other future projects. Using the continuation of the survey and our initial recommendations for alumni engagement, a team could begin to implement the strategies we talked about such as hosting events and sending weekly emails. A future team could also get a deeper look into the social media account by performing audits of JAA's social media and providing information on which aspects perform the best. Since we recommend continuing the survey, a team could analyze the results and statistically determine if there are certain demographics of people who perform better or find more value in JAA. They could then do an in-depth look into why that might be and what can be done to change the inequality.

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