

# JA COMPANY PROGRAM

## For Indigenous Learners

Program Report  
April 2024



JA  
British  
Columbia

Member of JA Canada



PROGRAMS FOR  
**INDIGENOUS  
LEARNERS**

# OVERVIEW



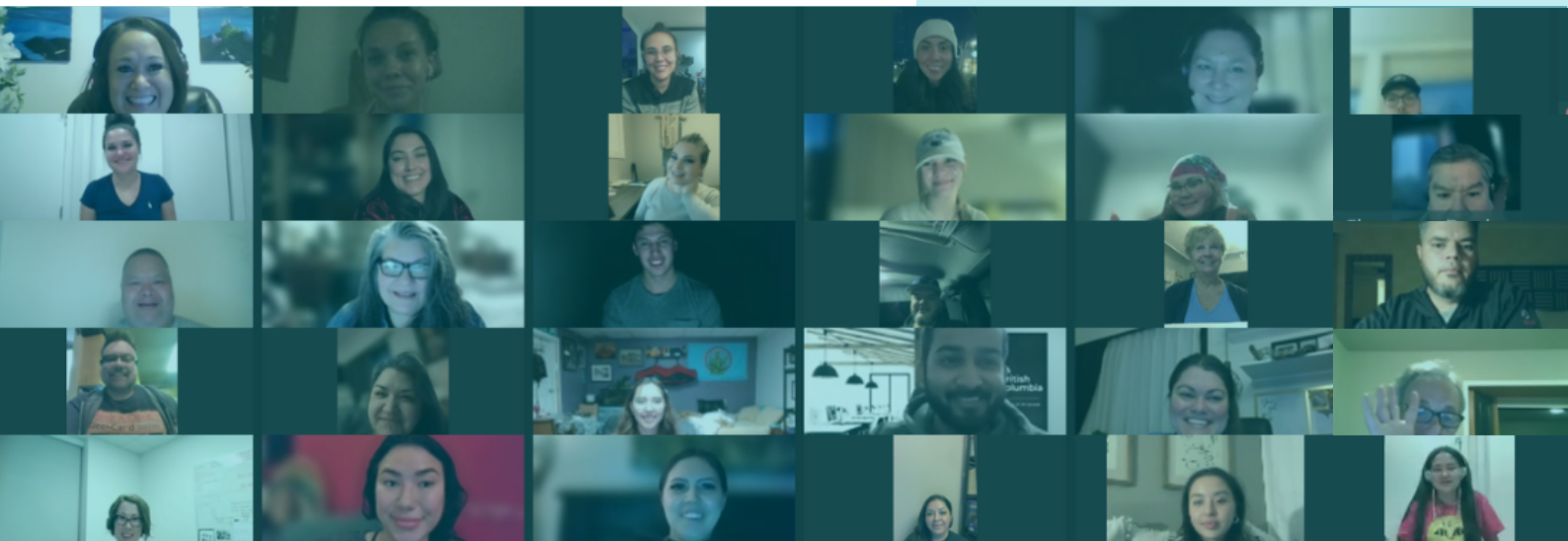
In January 2024, JA British Columbia (JABC) introduced a pilot initiative: the JA Company Program for Indigenous Learners. This after-school entrepreneurship endeavor was meticulously designed to nurture economic independence while exemplifying JABC's dedication to inclusive education and empowerment within Indigenous communities.

Delivered virtually over nine weeks, this experience guided 29 learners through the journey from business ideation to execution, equipping them with indispensable business skills and expertise to embark on their entrepreneurial ventures.

This pilot program was made possible thanks to support from Canadian businessman and philanthropist Peter Brown.



Learn more about programs for Indigenous learners at [jabc.org/indigenous](http://jabc.org/indigenous)

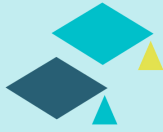


“ At its core, the program aims to bridge the gap by providing comprehensive guidance and support to Indigenous communities, fostering self-sufficiency and economic independence. ”

-Kimberly Sommer  
Program Director,  
Indigenous Communities



# PROGRAM REACH



**29**

**Participants**

**7 Male, 22 Female**



**18**

**Communities**



**4**

**Program Mentors**

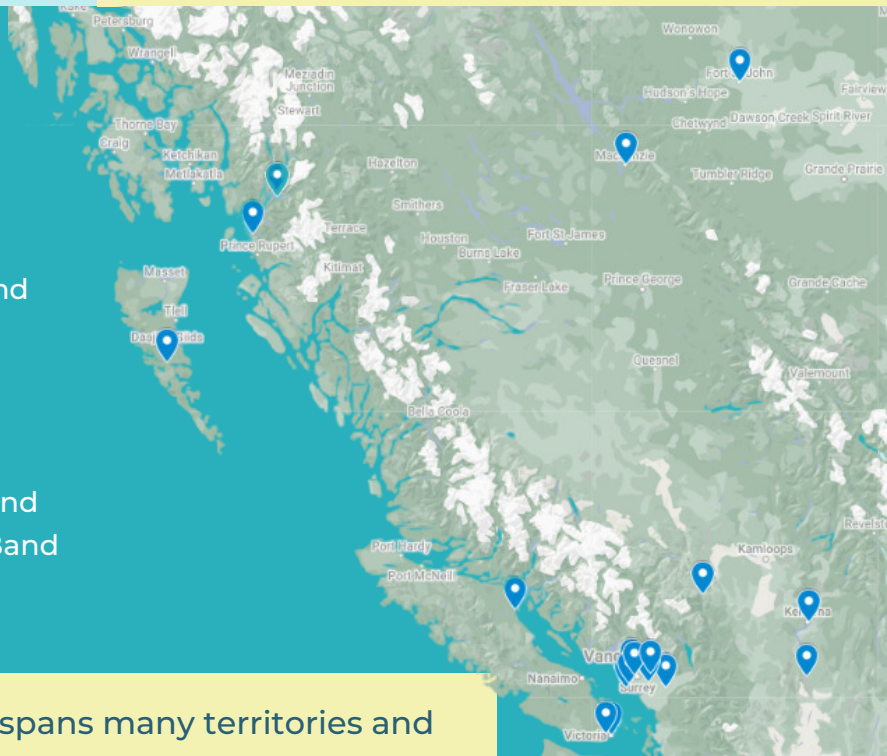
In response to interest from various communities across the province, JABC revamped the program from an in-person format to a virtual one to meet the demand.

“ Thank you to those who supported this program in its various ways. I believe that it will help myself, my family, and in the future, I hope it will help my community with the businesses I will build. ”

-Student

## COMMUNITIES REACHED

- |                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Abbotsford     | Langley              |
| Burnaby        | Lax Kw'alaams Band   |
| Campbell River | Lytton               |
| Delta          | MacKenzie            |
| Fort St. John  | Maple Ridge          |
| Gingolx        | New Westminster      |
| Haida Gwaii    | Osoyoos Indian Band  |
| Kelowna        | Songhees Indian Band |
| Langford       | Tsawwassen           |



We acknowledge that our work spans many territories and that our head office resides on the traditional ancestral unceded shared territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations peoples.



# PROGRAM SNAPSHOT



## SCHEDULE

Led by Kimberly Sommer, this online program ran every Wednesday from January to March, 2024, featuring nine one-hour sessions. Participants collaborated in virtual breakout rooms, engaged in dedicated Q&A segments after the lessons, and devoted extensive time to individual preparation.

Kimberly's one-on-one support and ongoing communication ensured learners had the resources needed, boosting their confidence and program completion as they developed their startup ventures.

## CURRICULUM

Topics included business conceptualization, planning, financial management, legal and ethical considerations, the development of marketing strategies, and many others. Integral to the curriculum was the infusion of Indigenous perspectives into lesson plans, materials, and activities, nurturing the growth of Indigenous-owned enterprises.

The program also included a special guest speaker Chris Scott, Chief Operating Officer at Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As part of the experience, each student company was encouraged to address one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals integrated into the JA curriculum. These goals held particular significance as many directly affect local reserves and Indigenous communities in B.C.



72%

of participants reported, post-program, that the UN Sustainable Development Goals now have a deeper impact on their perspective as global citizen.



# BUSINESS VENTURES



The program left a significant impact, resulting in the creation of detailed and comprehensive business plans. Driven by a determined group of participants, a wide range of ventures were submitted upon program completion. These budding entrepreneurs were also provided with an allowance to kickstart their startups. Businesses included:

- Food truck offering coffee, bannock and Indigenous-inspired snacks
- Beauty boutique
- Spiritualist retail store
- Non-profit volunteer business
- Online Indigenous clothing and art store
- Cleaning business
- Housesitting service
- Life coach
- Yoga and meditation business

These initiatives exemplify the program's effectiveness in fostering innovation and empowering Indigenous entrepreneurs to pursue their goals and make meaningful contributions to their communities.



## LEARNER OUTCOMES

As part of JABC's ongoing efforts to deliver relevant and meaningful learning experiences for learners, we surveyed participants before and after the program to discover more about their attitude and awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities.

### AFTER COMPLETING THE PROGRAM:

72%

said they have a clearer vision of their future career pathways.

92%

reported an increased awareness of what it takes to start up and operate a business.

88%

expressed they developed new skills to pursue a career in business.

76%

reported an increased confidence in making financial decisions.



# LEARNER SPOTLIGHT



“The insights and knowledge shared throughout the program have far exceeded my expectations. You not only provided practical guidance but also instilled in me the confidence and determination to pursue my goals with renewed vigour.

**I am proud to say that I have finally taken the plunge and launched my own business after almost five years of hesitation.**

The tools and resources you have provided have been invaluable in helping me navigate the intricate process of starting a business in B.C. I feel equipped and empowered to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.”

-Melissa-Ashley

“I'd like to thank JABC, Kim, Amish and Peter Brown who helped make this program possible. It has helped open doors and give many suggestions on starting my food truck/coffee shop.

**Learning about licensing, marketing ideas, budgeting, and finding grants were all great lessons.**

Many Hych'qas.”

-Aaron



“I have gained invaluable knowledge and skills that have brought me one step closer to realizing my dream of opening my own business. The lessons and experiences I have had during this program have been truly enlightening.

**I have learned not only about the intricacies of business operations but also about the importance of perseverance, teamwork, and creativity in the entrepreneurial journey.**

Thank you once again for providing me with this life-changing opportunity.

I am excited to continue my entrepreneurial path, armed with the knowledge and skills I have gained from this program.”

-Karen



[View highlight video](#)

“

As a high school student, I wasn't sure what to expect from this program, but it has exceeded all my expectations. The hands-on learning approach, coupled with insightful guest speakers and practical exercises, has equipped me with the tools and confidence to explore entrepreneurship further. I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity.

”



# ABOUT JABC



JA British Columbia (JABC) is a not-for-profit impact organization that delivers hands-on, immersive education in work readiness, financial health, and entrepreneurship. Through JA, young people are equipped with the skillset and mindset to build thriving communities. Learn more at [jabc.org](http://jabc.org).



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