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**BULGARIA**

## FIRST PERSON

# A Teacher Who Makes a Difference

**“I believe in young people. We have to help them make their dreams come true here in Bulgaria.”**



Photo: Vsihtko za zhenata newspaper

*Mita Georgieva coaches her students in successful business techniques.*

In 2007, Junior Achievement headquarters named Mita the 2007 JA Worldwide Teacher of the Year. The award inscription is apt: “You made the difference.”

Mita Georgieva has spent her professional career as a statistics teacher at the Sofia National High School in Finance and Business. Always open to innovative teaching methods, in 1997 she began working with the Junior Achievement Bulgaria (JAB) program to introduce practical entrepreneurship and economics education in Bulgarian primary and secondary schools. “Upon my first encounter with these programs I was fascinated by the effective way they present key economic concepts,” says Mita.

Mita introduced various JAB programs at her school and became a consultant to students participating in JAB’s most popular program, Student Company. She began adapting English textbooks to the Bulgarian educational setting, including case studies about the Bulgarian economy. In 2002, her work was recognized by the Minister of Education who officially approved Mita as a methodologist in economics.

In addition to coordinating a council where JAB teachers discuss the most effective ways of applying the economics programs at schools, Mita trains volunteer teachers new to the JAB program. “The teachers are very interested and understand that JAB programs enable them to be pioneers in the educational process,” Mita explains. “I see the greatest advantages of JAB programs in providing integrated knowledge. Every concept builds upon already acquired knowledge and skills.” Mita also coordinates closely with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education to ensure official support of JAB programs.

Among Mita’s fondest memories are the student companies she instructed through the years. In 2001, she and the student company William Juniors traveled to the Young Enterprise Trade Fair in Dorset, England, where they won the runner-up award for best trade stand. Last year, Mita’s students from the company ABC Business initiated the first nationwide student entrepreneurship conference. Mita finds her experience with student companies highly rewarding because young people team with ideas and enthusiasm. “Students gain the knowledge that nothing is impossible if they have a clear goal and the ability to make their own decisions. They learn how to work as a team and become financially literate.”