

Volunteer Report
ボランティア活動の報告

VOLUNTEER REPORT

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REPORT INITIATIVE:

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme excels in promoting concepts such as internationalization and global awareness. These concepts can be taught not only within the classroom framework, but within the wider community as well. Many JETs spend time volunteering with other JETs or Japanese volunteers. They visit orphanages, nursing homes, and children's hospitals, fundraise locally, raise awareness about issues such as the environment, poverty, the homeless, and hunger, and use their vacations days to volunteer in Japan and build homes in poverty-stricken areas abroad.

JETs are seeking more basic information in English on volunteer activities within Japan. They want to know how to start their own fundraisers or awareness programs at school and how to get involved with current volunteer activities by local branches of well-known NGOs/NPOs such as UNICEF and Habitat for Humanity. JETs especially desire activities that can involve students or link them to their local communities. Human rights, animal rights, environmental awareness, volunteer trips abroad, direct involvement with Japanese charities, and organizing soup kitchens and clothing drives for the homeless are just a few kinds of volunteer activities that JETs would like to know more about while living in Japan.

National AJET wishes to bring to light the various volunteer and global education activities JETs engage in during their time on the Programme. We are presenting this report in hopes that the Ministries can provide more volunteer-related resources to JETs. We aim to have volunteer activities recognized as an integral part of the JET Programme experience, as they promote cross-cultural understanding within the classroom and express a vision of peace and harmony between foreigners, the Japanese public, and communities around the world.

THE PRIMARY QUESTIONS:

- What percentage of JETs volunteer or know of other JETs who volunteer?
- How often do they volunteer and what kinds of activities do they engage in?
- What volunteer organizations are JETs familiar with?
- Do JETs believe that volunteering has an impact on the way the JET Programme or foreigners in general are perceived in Japan?
- Do JETs think that CLAIR/MEXT could provide more information on ways to engage in volunteering while on the JET Programme?

METHODOLOGY:

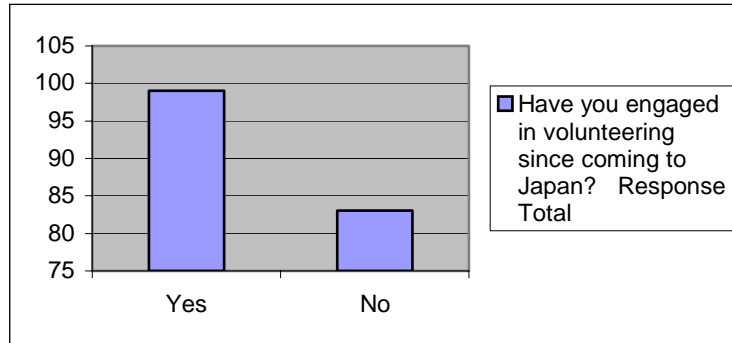
An electronic survey was distributed via National AJET and Prefectural listserves to JETs across Japan. There were 188 responses to the survey. This report analyzes the results of 13 of the 37 total survey questions, highlighting some of the results with comments and graphs.

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DATA:

Volunteer Experience

Have you engaged in volunteering since coming to Japan?



A total of 99 surveyors (54%) have engaged in volunteering since coming to Japan.

Comments from the Survey:

**I work on behalf of Go M.A.D. SIG – we go abroad to volunteer at orphanages, sell Christmas cards, plan fundraisers like prize raffles and run donation drives.*

**I've engaged in beach clean up and environmental-awareness campaigns.*

**I went on a Habitat for Humanity trip to the Philippines.*

**I organized International Festivals, environmental clean-ups, events for Special Interest Groups, and local AJET charity events such as Musicals and Bike Rides.*

Volunteer Trip

Have you been on a trip abroad volunteering?

33 surveyors (18%) have been on a trip abroad volunteering. Many of these travelled through either Habitat for Humanity or Go M.A.D. Volunteer Organization / Special Interest Group.

Volunteer Other JETs

Do you personally know other JETs who have engaged in volunteering since coming to Japan?

131 (72%) personally know other JETs who have engaged in volunteering since coming to Japan. Of these surveyors, Habitat for Humanity was the most familiar organization.

Volunteer Frequency and Knowledge

About how often would you say you volunteer?

80 (46%) of surveyors volunteer once or twice a year, 36 (21%) volunteer every couple of months, and 3 (2%) volunteer almost everyday.

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Which of the following volunteer organizations have you heard of? (Please check all that apply)

By far, UNICEF was the most widely known volunteer organization since 167 (96%) of surveyors responded that they are familiar with the name. Amnesty International, Habitat for Humanity, Rotary Club, Lions Club and Go Make A Difference Volunteer Organization / AJET SIG were also familiar names to JETs.

Have you seen advertisements for any of the above organizations or other international organizations since coming to Japan? (posters, fundraiser, fliers, etc.)

120 surveyors (68%) have seen advertisements for the listed organizations or other organizations since coming to Japan. Of those JETs who have seen advertisements, Habitat for Humanity, Go M.A.D., UNICEF, OXFAM, and Amnesty International are the most widely known organizations in Japan.

Volunteer Knowledge Japan

Do you think fundraising in Japan is different than fundraising in your home country?

111 surveyors (73%) think fundraising in Japan is different than fundraising at home.

Comments from the Survey :

Negative:

**Back home, we do car washes, sausage sizzles, raffles, etc. I'm not sure if that's done much in Japan.*

**No one has ever come to my door selling candy bars, cookies, magazine subscriptions, Christmas trees or wreaths, pizza, or calendars.*

**School children often do fundraisers for school teams, activities or for humanitarian programs in the USA. I've never heard of fundraising here.*

**It seems to take a lot more paper work here. Maybe there's just not enough awareness?*

Positive:

**People are far more generous here, and far less suspicious of my intentions.*

**In Japan they have much clearer statements about what the money will buy.*

**It's not as pushy and aggressive as American fundraising. And besides that NHK guy, no one comes to your door trying to sell your calendars or chocolates. Instead, they seem to get revenues from performances or festivals.*

**The methods are different to fit in with the culture. Campaigning is more effective here.*

Of those JETs who have organized or co-organized fundraisers at their schools, the following fundraisers were tried successfully:

**As part of a series of lessons on hunger and poverty, we learned about the unequal distribution in the world and gave money to Kokkyo Naki Kodomotachi's efforts to build children's homes in Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.*

**For Christmas 2003 I collected funds for AIDS education in Ghana through a group called MU-JERES, which was started by a fellow JET. For ten school days, I collected money in the form of five- and fifty- yen coins from the students and teachers.*

**School and clothes donation drive and money collection at school.*

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**I sold Christmas Cards to my teachers and turned them into a Pen Pal project with my students. All proceeds from the sale of the cards went to an orphanage in Thailand.*

Volunteer Team Teaching

Do you think successful team teaching lessons could be planned around the concepts of volunteering or global education?

84 surveyors (51%) definitely believe that successful team teaching lessons could be planned around the concepts of volunteering or global education.

JET Charities

Of those JETs who have a local Charity Committee, the following were described:

**Those JETs who knew of a Charity Committee were highly involved. Examples include the Genki Seinenkai in Kochi-ken, an annual musical in the local dialect, helping with the “Christmas Card Campaign” through Go M.A.D., and a lot of local fundraising for Habitat for Humanity trips abroad.*

Are you interested in pursuing volunteer activities while living in Japan? If yes, please comment.

Most JETs, 125 (77%), are interested in pursuing volunteer activities while living in Japan. Environmental issues, helping at orphanages, community projects, visits to children’s hospitals, soup kitchens for the homeless, meals-on-wheels for the elderly, and designing musicals are a few types of volunteer activities that JETs hope to pursue.

Volunteer Influence

Do you think the volunteering actions of JETs in Japan have a positive influence on the reputation of foreigners in general?

Most JETs, 90 (55%) definitely think that the volunteering actions of JETs in Japan have a positive influence on the reputation of foreigners in general.

Comments from the Survey:

**As an international volunteer, I can show my students a completely different way of living, highlight problems that occur in that country and around the world, but also empower my students to become active world citizens. A few of my students have since begun engaging in local volunteering projects.*

**I think that volunteering in Japan can only have a positive influence on the way that foreigners are perceived by the Japanese. In rural areas in particular, volunteering may change local opinions about foreigners.*

**If we all share our time then we would have a better world, definitely something closer to peaceful, if not, peace itself.*

Do you think the volunteering actions of JETs in Japan have a positive influence on the reputation of the JET Programme as a whole?

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Most JETs, 85 (51%) definitely think that the volunteering actions of JETs in Japan have a positive influence on the reputation of the JET Programme as a whole.

Comments from the Survey:

**I think JETs, by definition, make excellent volunteers.*

**It allowed me to bring more internationalization to the classroom. It gave my students a chance to see how people their age live around the world.*

**Many of us are very interested and willing but don't know how to get involved.*

**Direct involvement with Japanese Charities, possibilities of work experience. Provide contact details for English speakers of international charities with Japan-based offices.*

**Instead of sitting in an empty office during Fuyu/Haru/Natsu yasumi, the ALT could be allowed to participate in volunteer activities. Alternatively, the ALT could be used by his CO for internationalization activities in the community*

**Special leave, even if just a few granted days, would be a huge help*

**Volunteering should be an essential part of JET, as it connects JETs more strongly to the communities they live within.*

**If the purpose of the JET program is fostering better relations between Japanese people and the JETs then promoting volunteer activities that are in line with this goal should fall within the responsibilities of CLAIR and MEXT.*

CONCLUSION:

A majority of JETs, 107 (66%) of surveyors, believe that CLAIR/MEXT should provide more information on volunteer opportunities to JET participants. Many JETs want to know how to start their own fundraisers at school or how to get involved with current volunteer activities by local branches of NGOs/NPOs. Human rights, animal rights, environmental awareness, volunteer trips abroad, direct involvement with Japanese charities, and working with the homeless are just a few types of information on volunteer activities that CLAIR/MEXT could provide.

QUESTIONS TO CLAIR AND THE MINISTRIES:

Could CLAIR provide a list of Japan-based volunteer organizations for JETs in English?

A list within the JET Handbook, a link on the JET Programme or CLAIR website, in a newsletter, or through our local Contracting Organisations would all be good ways to disseminate information about volunteering in Japan. The titles of organizations, a contact name and details, and a calendar of major events would help JETs who are interested in volunteering find local charities easily or participate in prefectural or national events in Japan.

Are there any cultural implications JETs should be aware of when they wish to start a volunteer or fundraising project?

These opportunities will not only promote cultural exchange at the basic level, but also help JETs bring their volunteer experience from home to Japan and bring people together, working towards a common goal of making a difference to improve the lives of others.