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Disaster Awareness and Preparedness in the JETCommunity
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disaster awareness and preparedness in Japan is a major concern amongst all residents, both Japanese and foreign. In the past twelve months alone Japan has experienced earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, landslides and tornadoes. However, disaster awareness and preparedness was brought into particular focus in March 2011 when The Great East Japan Earthquake struck the north of Japan. The earthquake caused widespread disaster with many communities seemingly unprepared for the severity and scale of the damage that occurred. Since then disaster awareness and preparedness has been an important issue in local communities nationwide.

The 4,372 current Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants live throughout Japan’s 47 prefectures, each with their own weather systems, geographical features and immediate risks in the event of a natural disaster or emergency. Currently, there are various systems in place to make JET participants aware of and prepared for large scale emergencies and natural disasters, such as earthquakes or typhoons. However, report findings indicate that JET participants feel these systems could be improved by making the information available more frequently, in a language the participant can understand, and through a medium that is readily available and commonly used by JET participants.

Furthermore, the findings indicate while the majority of those surveyed consider themselves aware of the potential disasters which could affect their area, they remain fairly unprepared in the event of an emergency actually occurring. Additionally, there is confusion among participants of the steps to take in the event of an emergency, for example, whom to contact first and what to do next.

This report concludes that while there is a high level of satisfaction among JET Programme participants regarding receiving and understanding emergency information, there is a need for further instructions which are simple to understand, readily available in the participant’s native language and communicated to them on a regular basis in a format that they have easy access to, such as email.
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INTRODUCTION

Living in Japan, JET Programme participants are often exposed to natural hazards. The potential risks posed by typhoons or earthquakes are unfamiliar to many foreign residents as their home regions may not be affected by the same types of natural disasters. Furthermore, many JET Programme participants may not have an adequate understanding of the Japanese language or customs to adequately understand or prepare for such disasters. This leaves some JET participants vulnerable as they might not understand signs, news, announcements or supplementary information pertaining to how to keep safe in the event of an emergency or disaster. Also, on coming to Japan, many JET participants may be unaware of some necessary precautionary measures such as knowing where the nearest shelter is, having emergency supplies, or keeping a list of emergency contacts.

The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) provides information about what to do in the event of an emergency in the JET Programme General Information Handbook and on its website. Advice is also passed on from the Programme administration at Tokyo orientation and by Prefectural Advisors and contracting organisations at prefectural meetings. These measures are necessary and welcome, but many JET participants may still be inadequately aware of or prepared for a large-scale emergency.

The aims of this report are threefold. First, to measure the degree of awareness JET Programme participants feel they have in relation to potential risks from natural hazards in their region of Japan. In this section, the report aims to ascertain whether there is any lack of natural disaster awareness among JET participants on a local or national level. This section of the report will identify positive factors, highlighting areas of adequate awareness, as well as areas of concern, where JET participants have expressed a lack of knowledge.

Secondly, this report aims to measure the degree of emergency and disaster preparedness among JET Programme participants. This section will provide statistics on how many JET participants are adequately prepared, and what precautionary measures they are pursuing in relation to natural disasters. This section also seeks to highlight areas where JET participants express a lack of knowledge about disasters and how to prepare for them.

Thirdly, this report will examine the impact that The Great Tohoku Earthquake had on JET Programme participants who were in Japan at the time of the disaster, as well as those who had not yet arrived. The report also compares attitudes of JET Programme participants in Tohoku with the rest of Japan.

1 JET Programme General Information Handbook (2013 ed.) p161
2 http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/current/support/emergency.html
METHODOLOGY

The data used in this report come from a survey conducted by the Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) over the period 2-13 September 2013. This survey was distributed to JET Programme participants using an online survey development tool. The survey consisted of a total of 83 questions in a variety of formats including ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, multiple choice and free response. The questions were also divided by different demographic characteristics, such as geographical location, so that respondents answered a selection of the 83 questions most relevant to their demographic profile. For example, JET participants who identified themselves as located on a coastline were asked about their knowledge of tsunami shelters, whereas other respondents were not. This survey was implemented in English.

The survey was divided into three main areas:

- Awareness of natural disasters
- Disaster preparedness
- Impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake

For organisational purposes, this report will follow the above divisions, providing an assessment of survey results for each section and an analysis of the responses. Percentages will be rounded to the nearest whole number where they appear in the text.

Note: The Great East Japan Earthquake is used to describe the powerful earthquake and resulting tsunami which struck the Tohoku region of northern Japan on March 11th, 2011. This report will study the responses of JET participants located in the prefectures most significantly affected by the disaster in order to assess the impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake: Fukushima, Iwate, and Miyagi. Of the total responses, 14% of this survey’s respondents identified themselves as being located in Tohoku.

Throughout the report, the following abbreviations will be used for the common terms used in relation to the JET Programme:

- ALT: Assistant Language Teacher
- CIR: Coordinator for International Relations
- SEA: Sports Exchange Advisor
- AJET: The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching
- JET: Japan Exchange and Teaching (Programme)
- PA: Prefectural Advisor
- RA: Regional Advisor

This report will use the term ‘Regional Advisors’ to describe JET participants that have been chosen or have volunteered to act in supporting roles or as liaisons to the Prefectural Advisors. Not all prefectures designate such positions, or may assign a different name to them (such as Area Leaders, District Representatives or Support Leaders). In addition, the term ‘non-PA’ will be used to designate all JET participants who are not Prefectural Advisors.

Survey Sample

This survey collected responses from a total of 807 JET Programme participants, which is equivalent to approximately 18% of the total current JET Programme population in Japan. Of these respondents, 744 (91%) identified themselves as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), 61 (8%) as Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) and 2 (1%) as Sports Exchange Advisors (SEAs). These results are displayed in the graph below.
The largest proportion of respondents indicated they are in their first year on the Programme (37%), with second- and third-year participants the next most populous groups (28% and 20% respectively). A full breakdown of the results is shown in the graph below. In addition to their roles as ALTs, CIRs or SEAs, a total of 40 respondents (5%) identified themselves as performing Prefectural Advisor (PA) duties alongside their roles as ALTs or CIRs.

In terms of age, 56% of respondents identified themselves as aged between 20 to 25 years old, with a further 29% being aged 26 to 29. A total of 103 respondents (just under 15%) were aged over 30 years old. Furthermore, of the survey’s total respondents, 12% identified themselves as being married or living with a partner and 3% as having dependents with them in Japan.

Note: Although the maximum JET Programme tenure is 5 years, ‘More than 5 years’ is used to denote JET participants who have a combined total of more than 5 years over 2 or more separate appointments.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Disaster Awareness

This section will analyse the extent to which JET Programme participants are aware of potential disasters and the emergency contact procedures in place in the event of a disaster. The section will be split into three subsections which will examine the key areas and trends of the data:

- Current level of awareness of potential disasters
- Distribution and awareness of information on emergencies and disaster preparedness
- Awareness of contact procedures in the event of an emergency or disaster

Current Level of Awareness of Potential Disasters

Do you feel that you are adequately aware of potential disasters that could affect your local area?

When asked to determine their current level of disaster awareness, the majority of survey respondents (53% of total respondents) judged themselves as adequately aware and a further 38% judged themselves as somewhat aware of potential disasters affecting their local area. This level of awareness was fairly consistent, both between ALTs and CIRs, and regardless of the JET participant’s year on the Programme. While these figures do not tell us whether JET participants are truly aware of disasters and how to prepare for them, it does tell us that despite living in a country that experiences regular earthquakes and contains areas at the risk of volcanoes, tsunamis, typhoons and floods, most JET participants are fairly confident in their knowledge of possible natural disasters which may affect their local area.
When asked whether they consider potential natural disasters and prepare accordingly when travelling domestically, the majority of respondents (63%) indicated that they do not think about the possibility of potential natural disasters when travelling. Thus, while there may be a majority of respondents who are aware of potential disasters that could affect their local area, this result suggests that JET participants are unaware of disaster information relating to their travel destinations in Japan. These findings thus suggest that the information and advice currently received by JET participants is perhaps limited to a local level and does not translate to awareness when embarking upon domestic travel. In a situation where a JET Programme participant from an area of low risk (for example, Kyushu) has travelled to an area of high risk (for example, Fukushima) and during their period of stay a natural disaster or large-scale emergency occurred, the consequences of a lack of awareness and preparedness could clearly become an issue.
The most common source of information regarding emergencies and disaster preparedness among JET Programme participants was found to be from prefectural orientations (66% of respondents), closely followed by the internet (56%). However, there was no clear majority for any one source of information, with most sources being utilised by around 40-60% of respondents. This suggests that JET Programme participants use a variety of sources for this information, as opposed to one common or standardised source.

The low figure for neighbourhood associations (used only by 6% of respondents) suggests that even if neighbourhoods produce this information it may be in a form which JET participants are unable to understand and thus is not used as a source of information. This finding could also signify a lack of awareness of the existence of these associations among JET participants.

JET participants are often encouraged, through Prefectural Advisors (PAs), to introduce themselves and interact with their neighbours and local communities as these are important sources of assistance in the event of a disaster. It is possible that JET participants may be unfamiliar with their local community activities in relation to disasters, or that communication barriers are preventing this information from getting through. Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents who utilise friends/neighbours as a source of information on emergencies and disaster preparedness (43%) is reassuring. Since neighbours may be the nearest source of information and assistance or rescue in the event of an emergency or disaster, the value of establishing good relations with one’s neighbours cannot be underestimated.
As shown in the graph above, a large number of people are able to access information about emergencies and disaster preparedness through alerts to their mobile phone provided by their local emergency disaster centre (55% of respondents) and through clearly displayed signage denoting evacuation shelters and/or ground elevation (45%). There were also a few respondents who noted embassy email alerts and iPhone applications as ‘other’ sources of information.

However, a significant number of people (29%) were unaware of any information available to them in their area. These findings highlight a need for more information about emergency procedures such as disaster drills to be distributed among JET Programme participants. Furthermore, this also suggests a need for contracting organisations and PAs to direct JET participants to their local disaster preparedness channels upon their arrival, or directly distribute information such as the location of relevant signage.

The majority of people (73%) indicated that they had received information on disasters and emergencies in their native language. However, just over a quarter of people (27%) responded that they have not had any information of this kind distributed to them. This figure suggests that information on disasters and emergencies may have been distributed to them infrequently, for example only at Tokyo/prefectural orientation, or not at all. Thus, although most JET participants are receiving this important information in a format they are able to understand, more needs to be done to ensure that not only are all JET participants furnished with information in a similar manner, but that this information is also distributed to them on a regular basis, which is important for their on-going safety.
Awareness of Contact Procedures in the Event of an Emergency or Disaster

The largest proportion of respondents (49%) indicated that their first point of contact in the event of a disaster would be their supervisor. This is in line with the current JET Programme policy outlined by CLAIR in the General Information Handbook, which encourages JET participants to contact their supervisor first in the event of a major natural disaster. However, this finding also points to the fact that over 50% of JET participants are either not following or are unaware of this guideline. For example, a small number of people (8%) stated that their PA would be their first point of contact. In addition, a significant number (19%) were unsure of who their first point of contact should be. This data and the fact that the remaining results were spread equally among all the other categories suggests that there may be some confusion among JET Programme participants over who their primary point of contact should be.

There appears to be less confusion among PAs, of whom 70% listed their supervisor as their first point of contact and only 8% were unsure of who to contact. This finding reflects a general trend in this survey that the heightened awareness of disasters amongst PAs and the information they receive, is not being passed along to other JET participants. Perhaps making the information received by PAs and other JET Programme participants (from CLAIR) more consistent may reduce this disparity.

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Encouragingly, a large proportion of people (47%) said that they had received reminders about emergency procedures once or twice. However, a similar proportion (40%) has never received a reminder of this kind. In addition, only 12% of respondents have received regular reminders about emergency procedures. The overall lack of frequency in reminders about emergency procedures could be linked to the confusion among JET Programme participants over the first point of contact in an emergency discussed above. Given the importance of this information to the health and safety of JET participants, this result is of some concern.

The most common source of these reminders for JET Programme participants was reported to be PAs, with 58% of respondents having indicated that they received reminders from this source. If this is the case, it would appear that the provision of these critical updates and reminders is dependent on the local level, specifically the PAs and perhaps their personal choice as to whether to do so or not.

**Are you aware of a secondary system to confirm JET safety in your prefecture?**

- Yes: 31%
- No: 10%
- I don’t know: 59%

When asked about their awareness of a secondary system to confirm safety, such as those being run on the prefectural level by PAs and their prefectural JET Programme administrative office (for example, a check-in system with local RAs via Facebook), the majority of people (59%) were unsure of the existence of such a system. This could mean that these systems are few, or that awareness about them is low, even in areas where they occur. With 31% of respondents indicating that they are aware of a secondary system, the results show that these secondary systems do in fact exist in some areas, though awareness about them is generally fairly low.
As shown in the graph above, there is a significant difference between the awareness levels of PAs and other JET participants, with 55% of PAs aware of a secondary system, compared with a much smaller number of non-PAs (30%). The majority of non-PAs (61%) were unsure of the existence of these systems. This suggests that, generally, PAs are more aware of secondary systems to confirm safety, and as such need to spend more time promoting it or raising awareness in their community to increase awareness among the entire JET community.

In conjunction with the fact that PAs had a better awareness of who their first point of contact should be in the case of an emergency, this data also supports the idea that overall there is less confusion regarding emergency procedures among PAs. However the data again indicate that this information, training and general sense of awareness among PAs is failing to be transferred to the wider JET community.

Interestingly, the majority of people (62%) were satisfied with the amount of information on disasters provided by the JET Programme. Combined with the results discussed above, this general satisfaction from the majority of JET participants may in fact indicate that secondary systems do not exist for these people and that asking about them in this survey sparked the uncertainty about their existence or not. That is, until it was mentioned in the survey, a large proportion of people may never have heard of a secondary system if it does not exist in their prefecture, but upon hearing this term, they wondered whether their lack of knowledge was due to its non-existence or purely a lack of information about it, leading a large number of people to answer ‘I don’t know’, when in fact there is no such system in their prefectures.

When asked to explain the reason they feel dissatisfied with the amount of information being provided to them, the majority of people (54%) responded that they would like more information on disasters and many would prefer this information to be sent to them via email or post.

With one respondent commenting that “there seems to be conflicting information, even from one CIR/PA to the next”, AJET feels that in the future, further updates and dissemination of information relating to disasters, potentially through the PA system, may reduce the level of confusion and increase the level of both awareness and satisfaction among JET Programme participants over the amount of disaster-related information being distributed to them.
Disaster Preparedness

This section will analyse the extent to which JET Programme participants are prepared for potential disasters through prior training and steps taken by JET participants to secure their own safety in the event of a disaster. This section will also look at the efficacy of the current communication methods accessible in the event of a disaster. The section will be split into four subsections which will examine the key areas and trends of the data:

- Disaster preparedness and training
- Knowledge of where to go in the event of a disaster
- Current disaster preparedness measures taken by JET Programme participants
- Communications in the event of a disaster

Disaster Preparedness and Training

Are you confident in your Japanese language ability in the event of a disaster?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALT</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIR</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A large proportion of ALTs (40%) were somewhat confident in their Japanese ability in the event of a disaster, and this was closely followed by a significant number of ALTs (36%) who identified themselves as not confident in their Japanese ability in the face of a disaster. This was in stark contrast to the CIR responses which indicated that 85% of CIRs have confidence in their language skills.

These data suggest that in contrast to the confidence of the CIR population, 76% of ALTs are not entirely prepared to deal with a disaster if it requires using their Japanese ability. This problem ties into the data regarding ‘Distribution of Information on Disasters and Emergencies in Native Language’ in the previous section of this report which noted that a reasonable proportion of JET Programme participants had not received information pertaining to disasters in their native language. Together, these results indicate that a lack of Japanese language skills are a potential barrier to JET participants being adequately informed about and prepared in the event of a large-scale disaster.

In addition, the majority of people (63%) indicated that emergency drills in their local area were provided in no language other than Japanese. This finding is pertinent when considered in light of ALTs’ overall lack of confidence in their Japanese ability in event of a disaster. Together the data collected suggest that opportunities to participate in emergency drills provided in participants’ native languages may increase preparedness among JET Programme participants.
In terms of whether JET participants have participated in emergency drills in their local area, the majority of people (59%) indicated that not only had they never taken part before, but that they were also unaware of disaster drills in their areas. When these results were analysed by the JET participants’ year on the JET Programme, an even larger proportion of first-year JET participants (73%) were unaware compared with those on later years on the Programme, which suggests that this could be in part a timing issue, with first-year participants having only arrived around two months ago. However, more than half of the respondents in every year group were similarly unaware of disaster drills; even those in their fifth year on the Programme.

In contrast, only a small proportion (12%) of respondents are aware of drills in their locality but have not actually participated in them. This suggests that on the whole, JET participants are not intentionally avoiding participation in disaster drills, but rather have a very limited awareness about how or where to get involved.
Of the respondents who have previously taken part in a natural disaster emergency drill, the majority (54%) cited their workplace or school as the organiser of these drills. A significant proportion (28%) were unsure of the organiser of past drills, which is indicative of the general confusion over emergency and disaster information discussed in the previous section on Disaster Awareness. However, it is encouraging to note that over 50% of drills were organised by the JET participants’ workplace or school, suggesting that there are workplaces that proactively encourage disaster awareness and preparedness of their employees.

A positive result was that a clear majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they would like to participate in a natural disaster emergency drill in the future, with a further 24% indicating that they might be interested. This finding suggests that there is a real desire for such drills among JET Programme participants.

Somewhat surprisingly, only a small portion (10%) of respondents indicated that they would like to participate in a drill but not if the instruction is conducted only in Japanese. This suggests that despite a general lack of confidence in their Japanese abilities in the case of a disaster, as noted earlier in this report, JET participants would still like some kind of preparation and training, regardless of whether they can fully understand all that is said during the process. Indeed, perhaps just the knowledge of where to go and what to do (which can be ascertained by following others and using gestures) may be enough to ease the minds of these JET participants who otherwise feel very unprepared in the absence of such training or disaster-related materials in their native language, as discussed earlier in this report.

By providing more information about opportunities for JET Programme participants to participate in disaster/emergency drills in their prefecture, whether at their school/workplace or in the local community, JET participants would both be more prepared for potential disasters and feel more aware of what could occur in their locality.

There may be a need to encourage contracting organisations to put their JET Programme participants in touch with emergency drill opportunities in their local area; this report’s findings suggest that this approach would be positively received by the JET community.
Knowledge of Where to Go in the Event of a Disaster

Awareness of Location of Nearest Evacuation Shelter

As with other findings in this report, there is a great contrast between the awareness levels of Prefectural Advisors (PAs) and other JET participants (Non-PAs) in relation to their nearest evacuation centre, with the majority of PAs (83%) aware of the location, but only (43%) of Non-PAs having a similar awareness. Overall, results show that more than half of the survey respondents (55%) are unaware of the location of their nearest evacuation shelter, which should be cause for concern.

In addition to their copy of the General Information Handbook, upon commencement of their role, PAs also receive a specific handbook relating to their role as PA which contains emergency procedures. They are expected to act as key components of a prefecture's safety confirmation system, be familiar with disaster protocol for their region in Japan, and also be available to answer questions from JET participants in their community about disaster preparation. The data suggest that the extra information PAs are required to be familiar with as part of their duties has resulted in greater disaster preparedness, and it can be inferred from this that providing JET Programme participants who are not PAs with similar expanded material and knowledge of disaster protocol would foster similarly heightened awareness and preparedness.

Awareness of Nearest Tsunami Shelter among Coastal JET Participants

As shown in the above graph, the majority of JET Programme participants who live in a coastal area and are PAs are aware of the location of their nearest tsunami shelter. However, only a minority of Non-PAs are aware, highlighting the importance of expanding this knowledge to all JET participants.
nearest tsunami shelter (a total of 69% of respondents). However, a large percentage of coastal JET participants who did not identify themselves as PAs were unaware of their nearest tsunami shelter (54%). It is understood that not all coasts are at risk of tsunamis, but these data nevertheless suggest that the general awareness of tsunami shelters and the difference between a tsunami shelter and a general evacuation shelter may need to be improved among coastal JET participants who are most at risk of facing a tsunami. This graph also confirms the trend discussed above of PAs being more aware of disaster facilities, with only non-PAs unsure of what a tsunami shelter actually is.

**Disaster Preparedness Measures Taken by JET Participants**

**Do you have enough emergency food and water to last three days following a disaster?**

- Yes: 28%
- No: 57%
- Unsure: 15%

**Do you have an emergency supply of cash in your home in the event ATMs and banks are inaccessible?**

- Yes: 40%
- No: 60%

**Do you have an emergency kit and/or first aid kit?**

- Yes: 20%
- No: 30%
- Partial: 50%

The above graphs highlight some important issues regarding disaster preparedness amongst current JET participants. Over half of the respondents do not have enough emergency food, water or cash on hand in the case of a large scale emergency or natural disaster. This could be a huge problem for people affected as ATMs, banks and grocery stores may be inaccessible in the event of a large-scale disaster or emergency.

In addition, nearly half of the survey respondents (47%) know where to purchase an emergency kit but only 20% have actually purchased or prepared a full kit. This implies that although people are aware of where to buy emergency kits they may not see the need of owning one. Generally, the majority of people appear to have very little information about how to equip themselves adequately for a large-scale disaster event.

Overall, the data indicate a strong correlation between the level of awareness about local evacuation shelters and general disaster preparedness. That is, people are generally both aware and prepared, or neither of these. Specifically, respondents who are prepared with emergency kits also tend to know where their nearest evacuation shelter is. Conversely, respondents who are under-prepared, that is with no emergency supplies, are also generally unaware of evacuation shelters in their area.

When these results were compared by geographical location it was not surprising to find that respondents in Kyushu and Shikoku were more unprepared than people in higher disaster-prone areas in the north of Japan. Thus, although the overall results suggest that many JET participants...
are under-prepared for disasters or emergencies, the reality is that a lack of preparedness is only of major concern in those areas that are more prone to natural disasters. For example, a large proportion of respondents based in areas such as Okinawa, Kyushu and Shikoku said that they did not know where their local shelter is located. However, perhaps a more alarming finding is that 15 people from Fukushima prefecture do not know the location of their nearest tsunami/evacuation shelter. In light of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the high risk of tsunamis in this area this should be a cause for concern.
When asked to identify the sources they would choose to find the most up to date information in the event of a disaster, a large proportion of respondents cited smartphone applications (56%), social media (53%) and television (47%) as the main sources they would use. A small minority (5%) considered CLAIR to be a source of this kind of information. This suggests that the majority of JET Programme participants find information through a variety of channels; especially non-governmental sources. This heavy reliance on information from unofficial sources could mean that there are instances of misinformation spreading through the JET community during a disaster which could be both counterproductive and dangerous to JET participants’ safety.
This finding also supports a key trend in this report: language barriers to disaster preparedness. One quote was seen as summarising well the problem a sizeable proportion of JET participants seem to encounter: “[since available options] will all be in Japanese, … I will have to always ask someone to translate the alerts until my language ability improves.” Again, this shows that although JET participants may (try to) make use of local sources of information, they may still be unable to completely understand the content, which is still a concern.

The largest proportions of both PAs and non-PAs indicated that they would typically contact others during an emergency by phone, email or social networks (via the internet). Indeed, only a small number by comparison would use the NTT 171 Emergency Message Dial System or other disaster message boards provided by their mobile phone carrier. This suggests that for JET Programme participants, their preferred method of contact in an emergency is via more direct and less formalised methods than those specifically created for the purpose of emergency contact situations.

In contrast to non-PAs, there is a slight increase in the use of these specific disaster communications contact methods when considering the responses of PAs. This suggests that PAs may have a better understanding of these methods, if only slightly. It may also indicate that these methods are being used by some prefectures as part of their local safety confirmation systems, while not in others. Perhaps by increasing the understanding of this system among PAs, there would be an increase in the relaying of this information to the entire JET participant community and thus greater awareness of its uses and benefits in an emergency.
The majority of people answered all three of the questions above regarding awareness of the NTT Emergency Dial Message System 171 and access to mobile phone disaster features with a negative response. This indicates that not only do the majority of people (90%) lack of understanding of how to use disaster communication tools such as the NTT Emergency Dial Message System 171 but a significant number (78%) lack any awareness of its existence.

However, in the case of a major disaster where people have neither access to their mobile phone nor the internet, a landline-based system like NTT 171 could become vital to confirming JET participant safety. Yet most JET participants seem to be unaware of the system and how to use it. In addition, as previously indicated, most respondents have neither emergency cash at home (which could pay for a public phone call) nor a hard copy of their important contact lists. This is a concern and it may suggest a need to promote NTT 171 or similar landline-based message systems, and their benefits, as well as the importance of having contact information and cash at home in a worst-case scenario.

In general, the findings of this section indicate that much more is needed to be done to increase JET Programme participants’ awareness of disaster communication tools.
Impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake

This section of the report will seek to analyse what effect, if any, the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake had on the disaster awareness and preparedness of JET Programme participants. This section will focus both on JET Programme participants who were living in Japan during the disasters, as well as those who arrived after. In this section of the report, the term 'disasters' will be used to refer to the earthquake and ensuing tsunami, as well as the associated nuclear disaster that occurred on 11 March 2011 in north-eastern Japan. For the sake of brevity, in graph titles these disasters will be referred to simply as ‘3/11’.

JET Participants Living in Japan during the March 11 Disasters

Do you feel that you were sufficiently prepared and/or aware of natural disasters in your area prior to 3/11?

- Yes: 37%
- No: 48%
- Somewhat: 15%

Of all the survey respondents who were living in Japan during the disasters, a small percentage (15%) indicated they were sufficiently prepared and aware of natural disasters in their area before the disasters occurred. However, among JET participants living in areas directly affected during the disasters, none indicated they were sufficiently prepared. This is to be expected due to the unprecedented scale of the disasters. However, the general lack of awareness and preparation for disasters of any scale across the JET Programme population (both prior to and subsequent to the disasters) is cause for concern, especially in relation to JET participant safety and security.

Disaster Awareness Since 3/11

- More aware: 66%
- Unchanged: 34%

A majority of all respondents (66%) indicated being more aware of potential natural disasters in their area since the disasters occurred. In addition, 59% indicated they were now more prepared for a natural disaster in their area. For JET participants living in the affected Tohoku region during the disasters, 100% indicated they were now more aware, and 75% indicated they were more prepared, which is no doubt a positive result.

Disaster Preparedness Since 3/11

- More prepared: 59%
- About the same: 40%

Overall, 84% of total respondents around the country indicated that their experience during the disasters had influenced their awareness of and
preparation for natural disasters in some way. This is not surprising given the scale and impact of the events, but it is also a positive increase suggesting that the provision of information to JET Programme participants (particularly in the key affected areas) has been increased in the aftermath of the disasters.

Do you feel that disaster preparation and awareness helped you during 3/11 and the aftermath?

- Yes: 56%
- No: 33%
- I don't know: 11%

For JET participants living in Tohoku during the disasters, more than half (56%) indicated that their own preparedness and awareness helped them during the disasters, as shown in the graph above. Of these respondents, the majority received their information about disaster preparedness predominantly via unofficial channels, with 100% nominating the internet as a primary source of information. Only one respondent mentioned information received from Tokyo orientation as a resource they made use of in dealing with the disasters. A full breakdown of the sources of disaster-related information amongst JET participants in Tohoku is shown in the graph below.

Sources of Disaster-Related Information Amongst JET Participants in Tohoku

- Own research
- Military
- TV/Radio
- Internet
- Friends/Neighbours
- Prefectural Advisors
- Contracting organisation or supervisor
- Prefectural orientation
- Tokyo orientation

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
During and following the disasters, the resource most commonly utilised by respondents was their local supervisor (used by 89% of respondents), followed by emergency information in Japanese (78%) and the computer or internet (78%). Only a small number of people (11%) nominated either their Prefectural Advisor or information from CLAIR as resources they made use of.
A significant majority (71%) of respondents indicated that they wish emergency information in English had been more available to them following the disasters, with 80% of those who indicated the internet as a source of disaster information responding as such. However, since electricity and other utilities such as internet access may be unavailable immediately following a major disaster, it is of key importance that a system be in place prior to a disaster, so JET participants know where and how to obtain information once electrical utilities are restored.

A significant proportion of respondents also indicated emergency petrol (43%) and emergency cash (29%) as resources they wish had been more available. These figures contrast with the large number of respondents who indicated they had made use of emergency food and water resources during and after the disasters (67%), suggesting that respondents were not as prepared for shortages in petrol and the unavailability of bank services during the disasters as they were for other aspects such as food and water shortages.

These results reflect those described in the ‘Disaster Preparedness’ section of this report, where the majority of survey respondents indicated not having these kinds of emergency supplies on hand in the event of a natural disaster or emergency.
JET Participants Living Outside Japan During the March 11 Disasters

**Are you more aware of disasters which may occur in Japan or your prefecture since 3/11?**

- Yes: 42%
- About the same: 48%
- No: 10%

**Are you more prepared for a disaster since 3/11?**

- Yes: 22%
- About the same: 56%
- No: 22%

For JET participants who arrived in Japan after the March 11 disasters, a large number (42%) indicated that the disasters in Tohoku had increased their general awareness of natural disasters which may occur in Japan. For those placed in Tohoku, 65% indicated the disasters increased their awareness.

However, only around one-in-five respondents (22%) indicated they were more prepared for a disaster since learning about the March 11 disasters in Japan. This suggests that while the March 11 disasters raised general awareness among incoming JET Programme participants from 2011 onward, it did not necessarily impact their level of preparedness, which is somewhat concerning given the frequency of potential natural disaster events such as earthquakes and typhoons across large parts of the country.
Of those who indicated that the March 11 disasters increased their general awareness of natural disasters in Japan, 29% cited their own personal experience as the main factor influencing their decision to come to Japan, while a significant number (19%) indicated information from friends or acquaintances as the main factor. In contrast, only 2% indicated information from the Japanese government, or CLAIR as being the main factor influencing their decision. Additionally, the data suggest that, in the wake of disasters or major events in Japan, prospective JET Programme participants outside Japan are actively consulting with people currently in the country when making their decision to come to Japan, many of whom may be current JET participants. Therefore, it is essential that the information JET participants receive and promote be uniform and correct.

A reasonable number of respondents (13%) indicated ‘other’ factors as having influenced their decision to come to Japan, with around half of these indicating that the March 11 disasters in fact had no impact on their decision to come to Japan (about 6% of the total survey respondents).
A large majority of respondents (73%) who arrived in Japan following the March 11 disasters indicated that the disasters had no impact on their interest in the JET Programme, which is somewhat surprising and very positive in terms of Japan’s and the JET Programme’s image around the world, especially in the period immediately following the disasters. However, it must be noted that for those whose interest in the Programme was severely impacted (in a negative sense) by the disasters, they may in fact have chosen not to apply and participate, and thus would not be included in this data sample, which only applies to current JET Programme participants.

For those JET participants who responded that their interest in the Programme was affected in some way (that is, 27% of those who arrived in Japan subsequent to the March 11 disasters), the majority (66% in total) indicated that either family or friends were consulted the most in making their decision to come to Japan. When asked what they felt would have eased their own minds or those of their friends and family before coming to Japan, most requested was a “transparent” and “honest” (the two most common terms used among 310 responses) letter from the JET Programme administration or the government. Most described the document they would have liked to receive as containing clear, direct data about the disasters and current status of the area, and outlining the JET Programme’s official stance on the matter. As one respondent commented, 

*There is no information regarding the nuclear disaster whatsoever distributed from [the JET Programme] in English. This disaster affects all of Japan. Particularly, many people are concerned about food safety as the situation gets worse.*
When asked what information the Japanese government could provide regarding the situation in Fukushima, the most common response (42% of respondents arriving in Japan subsequent to the March 11 disasters) was about information in English on airborne radiation and levels of radioactive material in the prefecture. Comparatively, 61% of those living in the directly affected areas in Tohoku requested that such information be provided, and this figure did not really change when comparing JET participants living inside and outside the directly affected region, which indicates that these concerns are shared by JET participants around the country. A quarter (25%) of all respondents indicated they would also like information about the current state of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

In general, these results suggest that most JET Programme participants are not aware of how to access this information, or would like it provided directly from a trusted source. If this information were provided, 62% of respondents indicated that it would ease their anxiety regarding the Fukushima nuclear incident.
Despite overall interest in the JET Programme apparently not being affected by the disasters, of the respondents who applied to the Programme following the disasters, 24% indicated they had made placement requests specifically to avoid Tohoku. Of those, a total of 76% indicated they consulted with either their family or friends before making their decision.

If you made placement requests to avoid Tohoku, with whom did you consult the most when making your decision to come to Japan?

- Family
- Friends
- Teachers
- Other

If you made placement requests to avoid Tohoku, what was the main factor that influenced your decision to come to Japan?

- News reports in home country
- News reports from Japan
- Information released by the Japanese government
- Information released by home country’s government
- Information released by CLAIR
- Personal experience
- Information from friends or acquaintances in Japan
- JET participants already in Japan
- Other
Those who made placement requests to avoid Tohoku nominated personal experience (28% of respondents), people already living in Japan (a combined total of 32%) and news reports in their home country (16%) as the main factors in their decision to come to Japan. Only 7% indicated that either information provided by the Japanese government or news reports from Japan was the main factor in their decision, possibly because this information was not readily available to them.

Regarding information provided by the Japanese government to JET participants, 79% of respondents who made placement requests to avoid Tohoku said information on Fukushima would have eased their anxiety or maybe changed their opinion.

**The Role of the JET Programme**

### Are you satisfied with current information provided by the JET Programme on disasters and preparation?

- **Yes**: 69%
- **No**: 31%

Among all survey respondents who were present in Japan during the March 11 disasters, the majority (69%) indicated they are satisfied by the current information provided by the JET Programme on disasters and preparation, with 40% of those indicating they were now more prepared for a disaster.

However, almost one-in-three respondents (31%) indicated that they were not satisfied with the current information provided. Of these, 69% indicated that they think the JET Programme could have done more to prepare JET Programme participants for a large-scale disaster, with a significant proportion of these respondents (32%) requesting more information in the *General Information Handbook* (GIH), or more information at Tokyo orientation (28%). ‘Other’ suggestions included receiving specific information from their contracting organisation or prefecture (stated by 20% of respondents). These results are shown in the graphs that follow.

### Do you think the JET Programme could have done more to prepare JET participants for a large-scale disaster like 3/11?

- **Yes**: 69%
- **No**: 14%
- **I don’t know**: 17%
In terms of the specific information contracting organisations or prefectures could have provided, primarily requested was information in English regarding the JET participant’s specific region and disaster-specific hand-outs or pamphlets (to be provided before and during their tenure). Combined with the large number of respondents who indicated they had not received any reminders about emergency procedures (40%) or had only received reminders once or twice (47%), as discussed earlier in this report, it may be best to distribute such information on a more regular basis.

Of all respondents present in Japan during the March 11 disasters, 41% indicated they felt the JET Programme now offers more information on natural disasters compared to prior to the March 11 disasters occurring. Of those, 51% said they were satisfied with the preparation and awareness of JET Programme participants who arrived after 2012.

In summary, this section shows that while the number of JET Programme participants who are aware of potential disasters has increased subsequent to the March 11 disasters occurring, this has not necessarily affected the number of JET participants who are prepared for disasters. Major factors in this lack of preparedness include the absence of an official, centralised source of information or a direct, unified stance on the state of disaster-affected regions. Many JET participants indicated that they sought information through local contacts or personal research, rather than through official channels (such as the Prefectural Advisors), and very few indicated that resources provided by the JET Programme increased their levels of awareness or preparedness.

The findings of this report would suggest that contacting JET Programme participants directly via an official channel regarding disaster awareness and prevention, both before and during their tenure on the Programme, would have a significant impact on possible anxieties and unify the information JET participants receive. This could be further strengthened by including detailed and clear information on how to prepare for specific disasters in the General Information Handbook or other materials distributed to all JET Programme participants. As indicated by this report, very few JET Programme participants were prepared for a disaster on the scale of the March 11 disasters in Tohoku, and many feel that it is the responsibility of the JET Programme administration to take steps prior to another large-scale disaster to ensure JET participants are adequately aware and prepared.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this report respondents were asked to provide information on their awareness of and their preparation for different disaster and emergency situations which could occur during their time in Japan.

The findings of this report show that respondents want more information distributed to them regarding what to do in an emergency and that many respondents who do have access to emergency information or resources cannot understand it because it is in a language that is foreign to them.

In addition, while 29% of respondents were aware of information in their local area regarding natural disasters and safety procedures in the event of an emergency, it was concerning to find that when asked if they had ever received information on disasters and emergencies in their native language, more than a quarter of JET participants reported not having received such information. This figure suggests that information on disasters and emergencies may have been distributed to them infrequently, possibly only at Tokyo or prefectural orientation, or not at all. Overall, this indicates that more needs to be done to push this information on emergencies and disaster preparedness through to JET Programme participants in a language they can understand.

Another finding of the study worth noting is that a quarter of respondents reported that they did not know the phone numbers for the fire service, ambulance service or police in their area. The report also found that in the event of an emergency, 19% of respondents do not know who they should contact first in the case of an emergency. While just under 40% of respondents responded that that their first point of contact would be their supervisor, there was a good deal of confusion amongst the other respondents about who they should contact first, despite JET Programme resources stating that: “In the event that an emergency occurs, please call your contracting organisation supervisor immediately.”

As such, although a large proportion of JET participants would apparently follow these guidelines, greater consensus in the community that their supervisor is their first contact may help to speed up the process of safety confirmation in an emergency situation. This would not only be beneficial locally but also to those overseeing the JET Programme on a national scale during a disaster.

It was encouraging to find that almost half of respondents had received reminders about emergency procedures at least once or twice since they arrived in Japan. However, unfortunately, 40% of respondents reported never having received a reminder of this kind. The overall lack of frequency in reminders about emergency procedures and opportunities for JET Programme participants could be linked to the confusion among JET participants throughout Japan.

Positively, over half of the respondents to the survey indicated that they would like to participate in an emergency drill if it were available to them in their area; this was despite a large proportion of respondents having not taken part in one before because they were unaware of drills in their area. AJET would like to encourage this type of positive action in the JET community to empower JET participants in case they should ever experience a natural disaster, and recommend that contracting organisations be encouraged to provide JET participants with more information about where and how they can participate in drills.

An additional finding of this report was that in the unfortunate event of a natural disaster, over half of the respondents living in coastal areas are not likely to know where their nearest tsunami shelter is, with some not even knowing how a tsunami shelter differs from a normal evacuation shelter. While it is understood that not all coasts are in danger of experiencing a tsunami, it is felt that this is an important finding about safety and awareness and raises concern about the preparedness level of JET Programme participants. There is also concern that half of the respondents do not know if there is a secondary system in place in their prefecture to confirm JET participant safety in the event of a natural disaster or large-scale emergency.

Overall, the data in this report show a trend that suggests that many JET Programme participants are aware of potential disasters in the area in which they live but are also relatively unprepared if a disaster were to actually occur. There was also felt to be a lack of flow and synchronisation of the disaster and emergency information being passed down from the central JET Programme administration to the individual contracting organisations and Prefectural Advisors, and subsequently on to all JET participants. Only one-in-five respondents in the Tohoku area indicated they were more prepared for a disaster since the March 11 disasters occurred in Japan. This suggests that while the March 11 disasters raised general awareness amongst incoming JET Programme participants, it did not necessarily impact their level of preparedness.

In response to these findings, the AJET National Council would like to make the following recommendations.

- There is a strong need for the current bilingual emergency system to be updated and promoted to the (JET) community at large and locally, which provides accessible information in both English and Japanese. AJET recommends that there are clear instructions, specific to each region, on what to do during, and how to prepare for, the various emergency situations that could arise.
- Creating a unified voice from CLAIR down to contracting organisations and PA’s on disaster preparedness is seen as essential to supporting the health and wellbeing of JET participants, especially in emergency and disaster awareness and preparedness.
- AJET recommends that updated information on emergency procedures be provided on a regular basis in English and Japanese to all JET participants. The findings indicate that the most effective way to communicate this information would be to use a medium that the JET participants use regularly and effectively, such as email.

4 http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/current/support/emergency.html
• AJET would also like to recommend adding comprehensive information to the General Information Handbook on natural disasters, similar to what is provided to the Prefectural Advisors; or issuing either a pamphlet or document as a reminder of basic safety procedures and disaster preparedness. Sending out reminders to the contracting organisations across the country to encourage more drills within each prefecture and to relay important information on disaster awareness and preparedness to all JET participants may also help save lives in a disaster.

• In relation to the above point, it is AJET’s recommendation that contracting organisations encourage JET participants to get involved in safety drills within their prefecture and local area.

• Finally, AJET recommends that contracting organisations develop a proactive strategy to deal with an emergency situation, such as setting up emergency contact trees or other forms of communication to use in the event of a disaster.