

Life after the JET Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As every year passes more and more Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants are leaving their appointed positions in Japan and moving on to the next chapters in their lives. With the JET Programme now surpassing its 27th year and exceeding 55,000 JET alumni, it has become imperative to examine this ever-growing community.

This report examines some of the ways that JET alumni are and will continue to contribute to Japan after their appointments end, as well as how the JET Programme has influenced the lives of JET participants and JET alumni regarding their plans for the future.

The findings of this report show that JET alumni make a large contribution to the Japanese economy via tourism, and that there is great potential for growing the number of exchange activities between JET participants and their Japanese communities if support systems are put in place or made more widely known. Membership of JET alumni associations should be encouraged, as they assist JET alumni in maintaining their ties to Japan and greatly increase the chance that JET alumni will contribute to Japan via volunteer work and charity.

In addition, this report found that social media is by far the most popular method of sharing information about Japan and keeping in contact with past JET communities. With an average of around 272 social media connections per JET participant, social media has the potential to connect Japan with overseas communities on a massive scale and spread awareness of Japan and its culture worldwide. However, despite the clear importance of social media in the lives of JET participants and alumni, there was also found to be ambiguity in terms of using social media for career advancement.

Several aspects of the JET Programme are seen as strong assets to the professional development of JET participants and alumni, and fostering these aspects could lead to stronger, lasting professional connections between Japanese communities and future global leaders and proponents of Japan. With this in mind, this report recommends that the JET Programme administration work to support JET alumni and participants' professional support networks on social media.

Furthermore, about a quarter of JET participants indicate that they are considering staying in Japan after their appointment ends, making them ideal leaders for a multi-cultural Japan. Therefore, this report also recommends that JET participants and alumni be granted more and greater professional development opportunities so that they may continue to contribute directly to the prosperity of Japan after their appointments end.

