



GENERAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

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Introduction

The General Activities Report outlines projects and events that AJET has or is currently undertaking. This report describes the current status of these projects, highlights areas where improvements can be made, and further identifies new directions AJET can take. Additionally, it helps to disclose all these affairs to CLAIR, the Ministries, Contracting Organisations, and to fellow JETs.

AJET Teaching and Internationalisation Awards

During February this year, AJET conducted the Teaching and Internationalisation Awards Programme. This year's award conditions were adjusted so as to recognise and reward a greater number of successful nominees.

Nominated teachers who clearly demonstrated any or all of the judging criteria received a certificate of achievement along with a letter of recognition sent to the principal of their respective schools by National AJET announcing their nomination by a JET Programme participant. The judging criteria for the Teaching Awards included:

- The use of activities that motivate students to communicate in another language;
- The use of activities that promote international understanding;
- The demonstration of excellent team teaching practices so as to effectively utilise the JET within the classroom.
- Level of creativity used by the Japanese teacher;
- The extension of second language education into other areas of the school curriculum.

For the Internationalisation Awards, nominees who clearly demonstrated any or all of the judging criteria received a letter of recognition, announcing their nomination by a JET Programme participant. The judging criteria included:

- The initiation of activities to promote international awareness/understanding;
- The support and promotion of a JET Programme participant's grass-roots internationalisation activities;
- Personal commitment to being internationally aware, and the ability to work well with people of different cultural backgrounds;
- The integration of international affairs and the international world-view into multiple aspects of work or daily life.

16 English language teachers along with 12 other citizens received AJET acknowledgement letters for their outstanding contributions. Reasons cited for their excellence under the teaching criteria included and were not limited to their:



- true dedication, enthusiasm, inspiration and respect (*Mr Furuta – Ama JHS – Shimane, Mr Yanaihashi – Kanzawa Nishiki Gaoka HS – Ishikawa, Ms Morishita– Okaharu JHS – Kumamoto, Ms Aiba – Tohoku Higashi JHS – Aomori, Ms Arakawa – Kitakata JHS – Fukushima, Ms Kasai – Ominato SHS - Aomori*)
- collaborative efforts with the ALT to plan lessons, exceptional team-teaching skills (*Ms Hasebe – Nakatsugawa Elementary/JHS – Yamagata, Mr Murai – Gifu-Kakamino HS, Mr Kurita – Taragi JHS - Kumamoto*)
- creative lesson planning using a large variety of genre and mediums (*Ms Matsumoto – Horyuji International HS – Nara, Ms Kawakami – Kawaii Daiichi JHS - Nara*)
- use of practical English within the classroom (*Ms Ono – Omura Kogyo HS – Nagasaki*)
- creation of a comfortable mistake-friendly learning environment (*Mr Ogawa – Ikura JHS – Okayama*)
- enthusiastic interactions with students at every opportunity (*Mr Yamakura – Koriyama SHS – Nara, Mr Takahashi – Yokote Minami JHS – Akita*)
- effective use of the textbook (*Ms Uto – Kasasa JHS – Kagoshima*)

The internationalisation entrants were recognised for their:

- efforts to promote peace through international understanding (*Ms Akamatsu – Yamaguchi*)
- promotion of intercultural and international understanding (*Ms Kagiya – Gifu, Ms Takuwa – Shimane, Ms Karasaki – Hiroshima, Ms Oki – Kumamoto, Mr Sawada – Fukui, Ms Mogi – Yamagata and Ms Yamaguchi - Fukushima*)
- compassion, respect, extreme interest in international affairs, and cultural awareness (*Ms Fujita – Fukuoka*)
- organisation of international events (*Ms Fujihara – Osaka, Mr Matsuyama - Wakayama*)

National AJET believes these are worthy awards and request the assistance of CLAIR and the ministries in their promotion to ensure the longevity of this project.

Conference for Returning JETs – Information Fair

The AJET Career and Information Fair for Returning JETs was held as part of the Conference for Returning JETs. 29 of AJET's Group Associate Members (GAMs) participated, with representatives from universities, recruitment agencies, and post-JET services. AJET was pleased with the offering of the GAMs and the fair's overall set up.

Feedback, (courtesy of CLAIR) saw over 74% of the 372 JETs attending the Information Fair finding it useful.

“Great variety of opportunities and helpful information”

One major criticism from JETs though was with the unfortunate early departure by many companies before the advertised finish time. In the future, National AJET will be strongly enforcing the closure time for the fair. A break during the middle of the fair will also be offered to GAMs whilst workshops are taking place. AJET endeavours to work closely with



CLAIR's schedule so as to provide JETs with a greater opportunity to spend quality time at future fairs.

National AJET also took the opportunity to use this conference as a physical meeting point for its National Council members. On the weekend prior to the conference, National AJET Council convened, at their own expense, for a general council meeting giving all council members the opportunity to examine recent AJET projects, give prefectural updates and discuss future projects.

AJET National Council Elections

On April 1st the 2009-2010 council was announced, and the members are as follows:

Chair - Jennifer C. Park, Gunma
Vice Chair - Joseph Schott, Hyogo
Treasurer - Martin Nash, Nara
Block 1 Representative - Alisa Tobin, Aomori
Block 2 Representative - Kaleb Uri-ke, Miyagi
Block 3 Representative - Andrew Heffernan, Gunma
Block 4 Representative - Vicki McCann, Shizuoka
Block 5 Representative - Ian Matthews, Aichi
Block 6 Representative - Brandon Kramer, Hyogo
Block 7 Representative - Kathryn Kovacs, Nara
Block 8 Representative - Daniel Patterson, Kagawa
Block 9 Representative - Caroline Ideus, Shimane
Block 10 Representative – Jesse Welty, Saga
Block 11 Representative - Suzanne Lee, Kumamoto
SEA Representative - Christine Wegner, Nagasaki
CIR Representative - Vanessa Abel, Mie
Translator/Interpreter – Adam Tsai, Chiba
PSG Coordinator – Emily Collins, Kagoshima
Webmaster – Goran Seletkovic, Hyogo

Nationwide elections for new council members were held in early March, with 33 JETs from around the country submitting platforms for consideration. 615 JETs voted in these elections, showing that AJET is gaining more visibility and support within the JET community. The new council contains seven members from the previous council.

Survey Incentives with White Rabbit Press

In an effort to encourage more JETs to voice their opinions, along with further expanding the Group Associate Members (GAM) Programme, the AJET corporate team in collaboration with White Rabbit Press created a mutual incentive project. The AJET goals for this project were to:

- increase response rates for National AJET surveys
- encourage JETs to further study Japanese by offering discounted study materials



Once the survey is completed, the JET receives a coupon code offering 15% discounts on certain White Rabbit Press products, including which includes study materials like the popular kanji flashcards.

AJET saw the survey response rate, unfortunately, stay the same as previous year's and is working towards using these, plus other initiatives, to further encourage JET participation in relation to information gathering.

Prefectural AJET Chapter Highlights

National AJET is proud of the achievements and successes of their local chapters. Highlights for the last six months for AJET prefectural chapters include:

BLOCK 1

Akita

- Akita organised a **Weekend Ski Trip** to Appi for 21 JETs during February with ¥133,000 donated to their charity group, Room to Read. JETs from Akita, Aomori, Iwate and Miyagi attended

Aomori

- Aomori hosted the inaugural **Namaste Art Exhibition** showcasing artworks by JETs and local artists raising ¥240,000 for the charity group, Everest of Apples. Six JETs organised the event with a large number of the general public visiting over the three day event (JET Effect winner)
- Held a **Casino Night** where ¥90,000 was raised for the charity group Everest of Apples with over 30 JETs attending the event
- Organised the 5th Annual Charity **Futsal Tournament** with 16 teams competing. Over 100 participants including JETs and local citizens, helped to raise ¥100,000 for the charity group Everest of Apples

Hokkaido

- Hokkaido AJET hosted their annual Sapporo **Yuki Matsuri Tour** in February bringing 90 JETs from all over Japan, raising over ¥540,000 towards their English Home Stay Competition
- Conducted their **Hokkaido English Challenge Cup** competition for Junior High and High School students throughout Hokkaido with over 50 prize winners from 130 entrants. First prize for both divisions is a two week home stay in the English speaking country of their choice. The next 48 winners receive an invite to a five day English summer camp hosted solely by ALTs with all expenses paid on arrival. This is Hokkaido AJETs biggest event involving over 60 JETs participating in activities from training students, to judging, to organising and running the camp

BLOCK 2

Miyagi

- Held the **MAJET Art Show** offering free art-related workshops in Sendai. Over 140 JETs attended the three day event with the majority of workshops attracting 30-50 Japanese locals, over 150 people attended the opening night. This event gleaned much publicity on local television, radio and numerous publications
- Hosted their first **St. Baldrick's shaving event** held in Japan. St. Baldrick's is the world's largest volunteer-driven fundraising event for childhood cancer research.



Volunteers shave their heads in solidarity with children with cancer, while requesting donations from the community, friends and family. This event was publicised in a local newspaper with eleven participants shaving their hair (a mix of JETs and locals), together raising ¥218,000 for the Children's Cancer Association of Japan

Yamagata

- Inspired by their schools, Yamagata AJET ran a **T-shirt design competition**. They created a Facebook page for ALTs to post their creations and later, to vote. Submissions and votes were opened to all citizens with a Yamagata address. More than 175 shirts of the two most popular entries were printed and sold. The community at-large were encouraged to participate, with not just JETs showing pride in wearing JET created Yamagata T-shirts

BLOCK 3

Nagano

- Nagano AJET organised a mallet **golf tournament** with more than 50 players, which preceded their annual Thanksgiving dinner last November
- Planned '**Christmas at the Cabins**', complete with a Christmas feast, carols and of course, presents
- Held its annual **ski trip** to Nozawa Onsen in February with over 55 JETs
- Conducted their infamous **talent show**, "Naga-show" for charity which features a variety of plays, bands, and improvisational acts. 30 JETs alongside 30 local Japanese took part in the proceedings.
- Organised the all ALT **soccer tournament** in April, teams from all over Japan play in the scenic and lush hills of Sugadaira, proceeds for this tournament donated to PEPY, a non-profit organization that promotes education and environmental awareness in Cambodia. Over 300 ALTs in Japan combine to form 30 teams

Gunma

- Gunma AJET held a **Thanksgiving Dinner**
- Organised a **Christmas Party** at the beautiful Lake Haruna enjoying a true Japanese holiday experience in a ryokan
- Conducted an **organised tour** to Jigokudani Monkey Park and Zenkoji Temple in Nagano City for JETs

BLOCK 4

Chiba

- Chiba's AJET chapter was revived this spring. There was a planning **meeting** in mid-March where several individuals committed to organising events, with a camping trip already planned

Yamanashi

- Organised a **ski and snowboard trip** to Nagano-ken
- Hosted the 'Nashi 500 **scavenger hunt** bringing teams together from all over the prefecture
- Maintains a **bi-weekly newsletter** with articles, classifieds, and information

Shizuoka

- Sponsored many events in the prefecture including **mountain biking, white water rafting, and open mic night**
- Organised a **Yuki Matsuri tour** to Sapporo during the snow festival



BLOCK 5

Gifu

- Gifu hosted a **Tri-Prefectural Winter Event** bringing Japanese and JETs together from Fukui, Aichi, and Gifu for skiing, onsening, and socialising

Fukui

- In May, 20 Fukui AJET members hosted the **FJET International Talent Show** for over 120 people including JTEs, JETs, and other foreigners. Categories included performance, visual arts, writing, and cooking, with proceeds going to a charity in Thailand
- Fukui has continued to organise volunteer trips (**Orphanage Volunteer Project**) to two local orphanages where 72 JETs and 7 Japanese community members organise events, craft activities, English games, and spend quality time with the children (JET Effect winner)

Toyama

- Each year, members of both the Japanese community and the JET community come together to create a talent variety show with a combination of Japanese and Western cultural acts. The **Charity Variety Show** donates 100% of the proceeds to one local charity (Toyama-shi Aikuen, an orphanage), one national charity (Second Harvest Japan), and one international charity (Heifer International)

BLOCK 6

Hyogo

- Lead a **ski trip** to northern Hyogo, and conducted a **rafting trip** to Shikoku Island
- Organised a large **cherry blossom viewing** event at Himeji Castle, with 40-50 JETs attending
- Hosted a **pub quiz** for charity in Sannomiya
- Hosted a Valentine's Day prom for JETs
- Held the **TAJ Ultimate Frisbee Tourney** – in Spring

Kyoto

- Hosted a **Fuji hike** that included t-shirts and granola bars for all members, including six other prefectures & Japanese friends
- Conducted semi-frequent **cooking classes** in Central Kyoto

Shiga

- Hosted a **Book swap** with all money donated to charity
- Organised a bike ride around Lake Biwa with donations going to AJET's special interest group, Bicycle for Everyone's Earth (*BEE Japan*)
- In collaboration with BEE Japan, held the "Clean-Up Biwa" Day event for Earth Day
- Held a St. Patrick's Day Party with games that raised money for charitable organisations
- Organised a charity trip to India

BLOCK 7

Nara

- Implemented a **scholarship programme** this year, raising funds to assist three successful Nara High School students, towards studying abroad. The ¥100,000 scholarships were awarded in February to a first year student spending three weeks in America, a second year student spending two weeks in England, and a third year student spending one year in America. All will participate in registered English study



programmes. Fundraising for this event included a Halloween party, pub quizzes, a book sale, “Mo”vember and a T-shirt design competition

- Nara JETs also sent 30 JETs to both the **Ultimate Frisbee tournament** and the **Tokushima Touch tournament**

Osaka

- Held a **monthly pub quiz**, as well as a party for mixing with hearing impaired people
- **Seasonal events** included an end of year party, a trip to Yoshino to view Cherry blossoms, spring and summer barbecues, and watching sumo

Wakayama

- Co-ordinated the Koya-san **sleepover**, which hosted 50 JETs from across Japan to stay at Koya-san temple in November
- Participated in the **soccer tournament** in Awaji, Hokkaido’s `Yuki Matsuri`, along with sumo and kabuki watching in Osaka

Mie

- Events have included a **Valentines Ball** with 38 JETs attending, a monthly stitch group, visits to sumo and baseball and organising things with their "Nagoya friends" group

BLOCK 8

Tokushima

- Tokushima JETs produced, directed and performed the **musical**, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory with free admission, in five locations throughout the prefecture for the local Japanese community

BLOCK 9

Shimane

- Conducted the Shimane AJET **Scholarship Fund**, which awarded English scholarships to four students totalling ¥400,000. Money is raised through donations from Shimane JETS who promote the Scholarship Fund in their high school classes and encourage students of every inclination to apply. Over 40 JETs plus 40 people from the local communities contributed. Due to the scholarship fund’s increasingly positive reputation, applications have now been extended to third-year junior high school students.
- Shimane AJET hosted the annual AJET Prom in February with over 65 people in attendance; just under half of these were JETs with the remainder citizens from the local community. All funds raised went to the scholarship fund

BLOCK 10

Saga

- Helped run Saga City's Annual Charity **Christmas Party**, which raises money for local orphanages

BLOCK 11

Kumamoto

- JETs alongside their JTEs and students collect **unused school supplies** to send to less fortunate schools in Zimbabwe. Between 100-200 kg has been sent so far. The Tamana International Society, the Kumamoto Shinbun, and the Asahi Shinbun have also gotten involved with the project (JET Effect winner)



Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Projects that SIGs have successfully initiated include:

Bicycle for Everyone's Earth (BEE Japan)

- Organised a bike ride around Lake Biwa to enjoy the cherry blossoms and collect rubbish
- Planned a Nagoya rubbish scavenger hunt to help clean-up the city. Prizes were awarded for the largest amount of rubbish, most interesting piece, and biggest piece collected

Go Make A Difference (GO M.A.D)

- Arranged a pen-pal exchange between Japanese students and students from the Baan Dada Boy's home in Thailand
- Conducted five different education-based fundraising events for international charities that provided JETs with resources to teach Japanese students and community members about global issues in the developing world
- GO M.A.D. volunteers have organised several volunteer service trips for JET programme participants assisting orphanages and community development projects in Thailand, India and Cambodia

PEPY Ride

- Ran an educational volunteer trip to the PEPY Ride School in Cambodia during Golden Week, to work at the school and help in constructing new schools in the area

JET Christian Fellowship

- Held a spring fellowship retreat for JET and Japanese Christians in Nagano during March
- Organised a Golden Week trip to build houses in the Philippines with NAJET's Habitat for Humanity SIG

Room to Read

- JETs in Akita prefecture have held several community events including a Halloween Dance Party, Sumo Tournament, Ski/Snowboard Trip and in-school coin drives to raise money toward their goal of ¥1,200,000 to build three school libraries in Vietnam, Sri Lanka and India
- Oita prefecture has also organised several fundraising events working towards their goal of sponsoring the building of a school in Laos
- To date, JETs have raised over ¥4,000,000 for Room to Read projects and have sponsored the building of 3 schools
- In addition, JET volunteers have worked in their schools, holding book drives and incorporating lessons about global issues such as poverty and literacy using Room to Read materials (particularly in conjunction with the lesson on Nepal, where Room to Read started, in the 3rd year New Horizons textbook - Unit 3 "Our Sister in Nepal")
- The JET Alumni Association has also been involved in supporting Room to Read through various events throughout the world



JET Effect

Since the last Opinion Exchange, AJET have featured numerous community involvement projects instigated by JETs:

- a community-based, JET-organised Cricket club (Sendai)
- a charity art exhibition featuring the works of local Japanese and Western artists (Aomori)
- an illustrated English book on a Himeji Castle legend by students and then later read to tourists at the castle (Hyogo)
- a collection of surplus school materials sent to less fortunate Zimbabwean schools (Kumamoto)
- an international sumo tournament where a local sumo association and JETs combine for an hilarious intercultural exchange (Akita)
- an English Challenge competition culminating in an English camp (Akita)

AJET's goal is for JET Effect to be an invaluable resource and inspiration. These articles are maintained online in a resource archive to assist JETs kick starting their own community-involvement projects. AJET have already begun receiving e-mails from JETs interested in starting spin-off projects of their own.

Further, after being promoted nationally in November's 2008 JET Effect, the Fukui Orphanage Project has snowballed. Through AJET contacts, the organiser has started a website with assistance from the Hokkaido AJET webmaster to expand the project to other prefectures. Additionally, the organiser, Michael King, will also be sharing information on starting similar community volunteer projects with new JETs at the AJET Info Fair during this year's Tokyo Orientation.

AJET Online

The administration team has been very busy this past year organising and updating the data on the AJET website, clearing and fixing dead web links and verifying e-mail addresses. On top of maintenance the administration team have been striving to make the website easier to use and to allow more information viewable to the public in relation to National AJET. National AJET also has been working towards getting more JETs to visit their website. In an effort to do this we have been making sure information is updated and current. The website is becoming more user-friendly allowing JETs easier access to useful information and to our biannual reports.

The E-Bulletin is a useful information source with over 80% of JETs subscribing. The E-Bulletin provides JETs with information regarding the JET community, Japan, and opportunities for ALTs and CIRs. AJET's advertising team are continually attracting new GAM's to invest and advertise in the E-bulletin. We have received positive feedback from JETs as well as eager SIGs and GAMs to advertise in the E-Bulletin. The E-Bulletin team will continue to find new ways and information to ensure it is providing the JET community with relevant and unique information.

The social networking application, *Facebook* is also proving to be a useful means of communication between National AJET and its constituents. Currently there are over 425



JETs receiving AJET information through the free-access social networking website, *Facebook*.

April Orientation

This year AJET sent Chair, Sarah Lineker, to represent AJET at April Orientation. After Ms. Lineker's National AJET introductory speech, over half of the 73 new JETs signed on as National AJET members. A number of the participants also signed up for Tatami Timeshare – National AJET's travel network. It is hoped that these new JETs will be warmly welcomed by the other JETs in their prefectures. We would like to thank CLAIR for their assistance and cooperation.

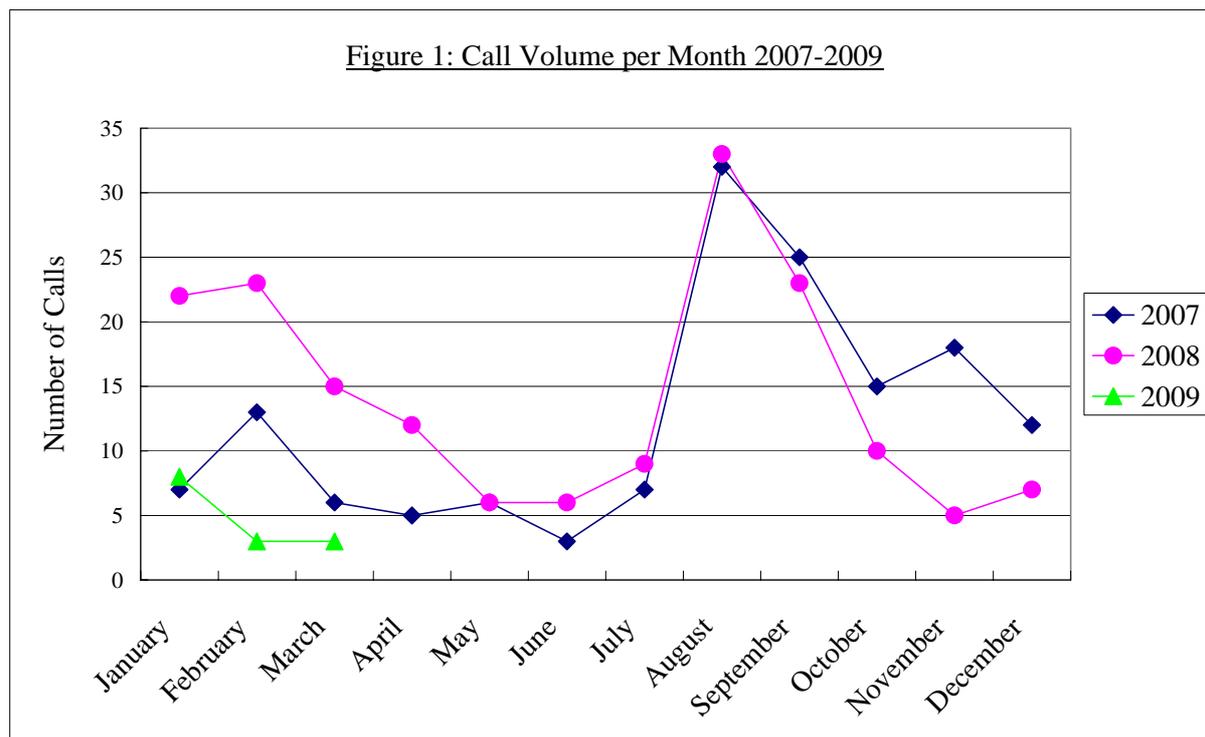
Tokyo Orientation

AJET is looking forward to working with CLAIR in the upcoming orientations. Last year the Tokyo Orientation Assistant (TOA) application form was changed to include a section for potential TOAs to select which AJET workshops they would like to present. This year we have worked with CLAIR to improve this by setting the workshop topics in advance and by changing the wording on the application form. We hope this will result in more TOAs being interested in presenting quality AJET workshops which will help in providing better information to new JETs. It should also make the workshop planning process easier. Last year we encountered many problems because we weren't able to meet with TOAs, as we were in the past, and we hope that these difficulties will be rectified for this year.

Peer Support Group (PSG)

Recruitment for PSG volunteers was finalised in early April. This year, to reduce the workload, the number of required volunteers has increased from 30 to 32. The leadership team will also increase, with two volunteer co-ordinators this year.

For the previous six months, October 2008 to March 2009, PSG received less calls than average (refer to Figure1). There was however two instances of severity '4' call (suicidal intent or other serious emergencies such as injury, poisoning, etc). Where possible the PSG National coordinator did check with the Prefectural Advisor(s) that the situation had been resolved. In all cases the Prefectural Advisor(s) were aware of the situation and appreciated PSG's involvement.



The new PSG wiki is expected to be finished prior to the next JET intake. The currently piloted new Skype-based message system may also involve a change for the PSG contact number. We will inform all interested parties (CLAIR, PAs, and SGLs) as soon as the new systems have been tested and are operational.

National AJET would like to thank CLAIR for the assistance they have given PSG and hope that this assistance will continue for the incoming PSG team.

Publications

Our sales for both NAJET publications, Planet Eigo and Foxy Phonics, have increased from previous years. Both of these publications have been well received with close to a combined total of 1000 copies sold within the last 12 months. Increasing interest has also been shown by JTEs purchasing copies at prefectural mid-year conferences.

National AJET is currently researching the method of obtaining an ISBN number so copies can be sold more easily online and to increase our market base.

JALT

National AJET will present at the JALT Nakasendo conference later in June in Omiya. The relationship between National AJET and JALT is constantly being strengthened. This is the second year AJET has been asked to submit a presentation and is looking forward to publicising our efforts outside of JET circles and further promoting the JET Programme. There are two AJET presentations scheduled, AJET publications and the JET perspective on the new elementary curriculum.



Questions

1. National AJET has altered its methods of selection for the recipients for their Teaching and Internationalisation Awards. Is there anything further CLAIR would like AJET to do in order to ensure the longevity of this project?
2. National AJET is constantly employing new methods to ensure a greater majority of JETs are represented through their online surveys, information gathering and information dispersal. Do CLAIR and the ministries have any suggestions for ways in which National AJET can be effective for more JETs?
3. At the last Opinion Exchange meeting, CLAIR made some suggestions about how they could help promote JET Effect (i.e. placing a link on the CLAIR homepage, telling local governments about the JET Effect activities during visits, possible inclusion in the JET Journal or CLAIR News, etc.) What kind of progress has been made in regards to these suggestions and do you have any other suggestions about how AJET or CLAIR could further promote these case studies to a Japanese audience, especially Contracting Organisations? Is it possible to promote JET Effect to Contracting Organisations through something similar to this promotional handout (JET Effect 2008-9 Ed)
4. How many participants are expected at the Tokyo Orientations this summer?