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Reappointment and Retention

JET参加者の再任用と定着率



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ABSTRACT

Retaining and reappointing exceptional Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants benefits the contracting organisation, the workplace, community and the participants' experiences in Japan. As such, insight into how participants approach, weigh and resolve the decision to accept or decline reappointment may help contracting organisations find valuable solutions for retaining JET appointments for longer terms and for motivating JET participants to complete their terms. This Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) report seeks to identify those factors, requests and issues that influence this decision-making process, based on a survey conducted among current and former Programme participants. In addition to a focus on the decision process among participants, the survey results also consider the following evident trends:

- Aspects pertaining to the length of time that participants hoped to stay on the Programme and the duration of their actual appointment, and the decisions that affected these processes;
- Factors relating to mid-term resignation and how and why these decisions were made; and
- Participants' suggestions for ways to increase and maintain higher retention rates for future appointments.

Based on the above data and solutions discussed, this report aims to equip contracting organisations with the participants' perspective regarding reappointment and retention. Additionally, this report will present survey findings and conclusions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), in order to provide recommendations for keeping effective participants employed on the Programme longer and for motivating JET participants to complete their terms of appointment.

INTRODUCTION

Each winter, JET Programme participants face the decision of whether or not to accept reappointment. At its most basic layer, the decision is dependent on the length of time participants are permitted to remain within the Programme. Previously, the maximum total duration that a participant could be retained at a single contracting organisation was limited to three years. In 2006, this limitation was amended in order to extend reappointment offers to five years. According to CLAIR, contracting organisations were the driving force behind this major change in Programme regulations. However, in recent years, many contracting organisations have been forced to reconsider the merits of reappointing JET Programme participants due to their relatively high cost of employment when compared to private sector and other alternatives. These factors and more have come to influence the decision-making process by both participants and their contracting organisations regarding reappointment.

The purposes of this report are threefold. First, the report seeks to establish a ranked assessment of which factors contribute most to JET Programme participants' reappointment decisions. The report will assess the relevance of performance evaluations, Japanese language ability and other factors that may contribute to this decision.

Second, the report aims to identify strategies to increase the retention of motivated and capable Programme participants for longer periods of time. The retention of such participants may not only reduce costs borne by the contracting organisation, but also strengthen working relationships and improve participants' job performances.

Third, by analysing the responses from participants who chose to leave the JET Programme prior to the expected end of their annual appointment, the report will chart those factors which contributed most to this decision and suggest ways in which such occurrences can be reduced or even prevented in the future.

For organisational purposes, the report will first compare and address the aforementioned aims among current Programme participants before examining the respective responses among JET alumni, concluding with a comparison of the trends between the two surveyed groups.

SURVEY METHOD

This report based its analysis on data gathered in an online survey conducted in January 2013, targeting both current and former JET Programme participants. Survey questions focused on opinions of current and past JET participants' reasons for reappointment and retention.

Throughout the report, the following acronyms will serve as abbreviations of the stated common terms:

- ALT: Assistant Language Teacher;
- CIR: Coordinator for International Relations;
- JET: Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme;
- JTE: Japanese Teacher of English;
- SHS: Senior High Schools;
- JHS: Junior High Schools; and
- AJET: The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching.

Out of 929 total respondents, 458 (49 per cent) were current JET participants and 471 (51 per cent) were alumni. Of the current JET respondents, 398 (87 per cent) were ALTs and 56 (12 per cent) were CIRs. The highest number of respondents, at 195 respondents (43 per cent), were employed in their first year on the Programme, with 141 (31 per cent) in their second year, 63 (14 per cent) in their third year, 34 (7 per cent) in their fourth year and 25 (6 per cent) currently in their fifth and last year.

Out of the JET alumni who responded, 430 (91 per cent) had been former ALTs, while 56 (12 per cent) had been CIRs. As some respondents mentioned they held both positions, this might account for the discrepancy between total numbers who completed the survey, and number of responses. Of the alumni who responded, 82 (17 per cent) had elected to remain on the Programme for one year. The largest numbers of responses came from the 181 (38 per cent) alumni who stayed for two years and the 152 (32 per cent) current participants who were in their third year. There were 26 (6 per cent) respondents who spent four years on the programme and the remaining 30 (approximately 6 per cent) alumni reappointed for five years or more.

Survey questions consisted of multiple-choice, multiple-response and free-response items. The survey was distributed via email, the social networking sites Facebook and Twitter, AJET's website and word of mouth. For the purposes of this report, survey percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

CURRENT JET RESPONSE ANALYSIS

This report will first analyse and review responses received from current Programme respondents. In doing so, the report will address trends involving the planned time for which these respondents expected to be reappointed, factors influencing reappointment decisions such as workplace performance evaluations and Japanese language ability, as well as opinions on motivating current participants to accept reappointment and selecting future participants with a goal for retention for multiple years.

Factors Affecting Expected Time on the JET Programme

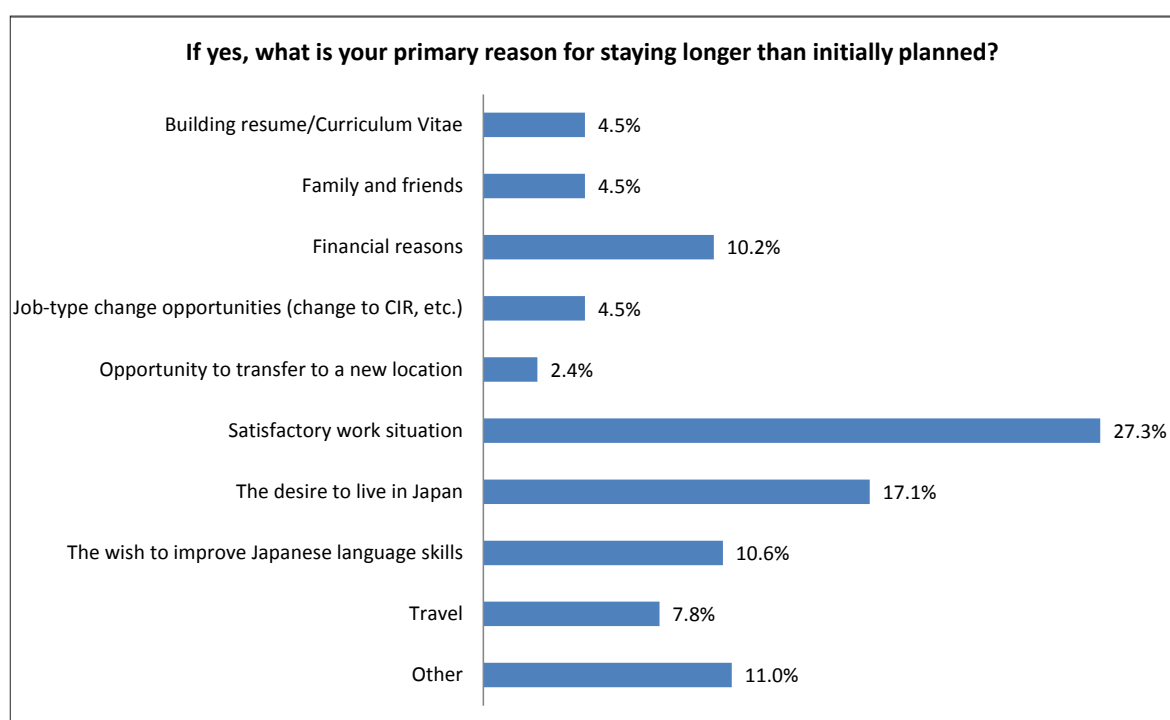
When asked about the number of years responding participants initially planned to spend on the Programme, the most popular answer was two years, with a total of 37 per cent. This compares to the fact that approximately 70 per cent of first year JET participants reappoint for a second year. Approximately 24 per cent of respondents hoped to spend three years on the Programme while just under 21 per cent said they hoped to stay only one year. Although almost 16 per cent of survey respondents hoped to spend five years on the Programme, only 2 per cent revealed they wanted to stay four years.

The survey also asked current JET participants whether they had been reappointed for longer than they initially planned. Responses were actually split down the centre between participants who stated they had been reappointed for longer and those who had ended their time on the Programme at the same time or earlier than planned.

When participants who were reappointed for longer than planned were asked to give reasons for doing so, respondents did not overwhelmingly choose a single reason (see Figure 1). Approximately 27 per cent of participants selected *'satisfactory work situation'* as their primary reason while *'the desire to live in Japan'* was the second most popular response (17 per cent). When given the opportunity to elaborate on staying with the Programme longer than planned, one survey respondent from Niigata expressed experiencing general satisfaction with the Programme experience:

Overall, I am very happy with my work situation, my living situation, my financial situation, my social situation, and my placement. It makes no sense to give up all this and go home, where I will struggle to get a job I will enjoy and where I will get paid so much. I have no desire to give up this lifestyle.

The *'other'* primary reasons included dedication to students, involvement in the community, the economic market in their home countries, or a combination of multiple factors. A Shimane JET participant stated, *'My students are the main reason for me staying longer than expected. They mean a lot more to me than the other teachers realise.'*

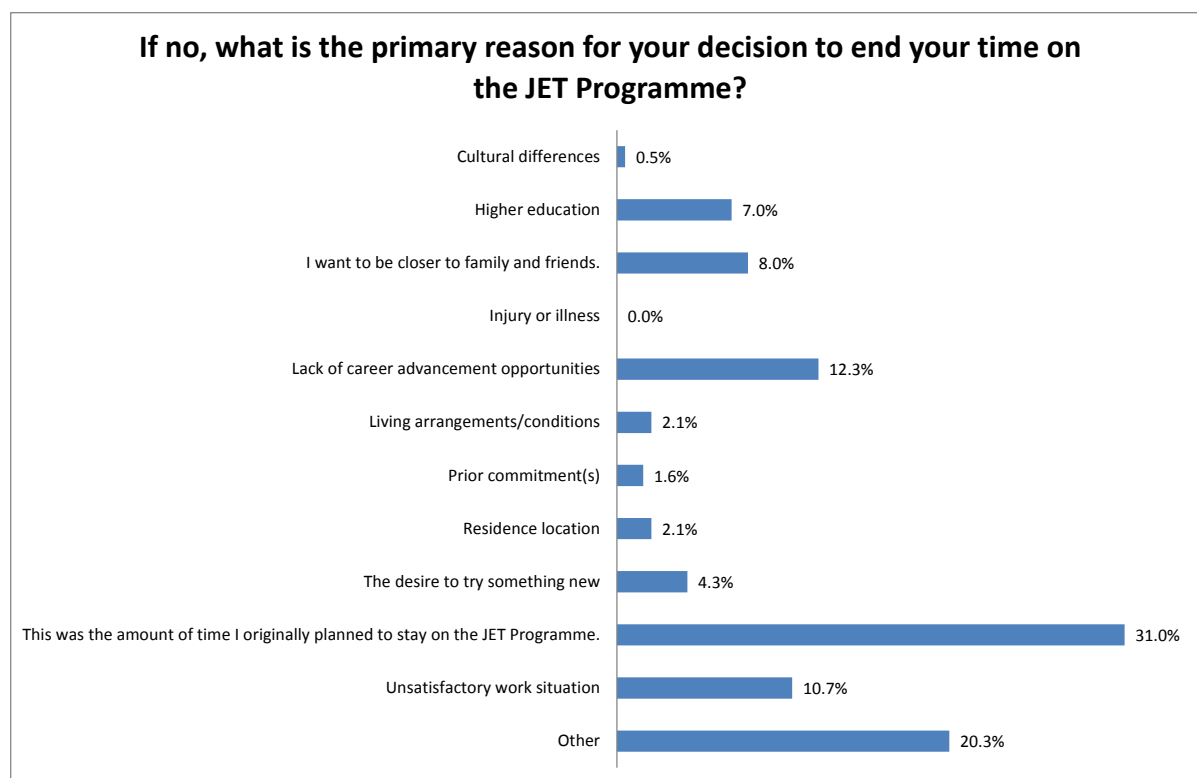
Figure 1. Reasons JET Participants Stayed Longer Than Expected

Precisely 31 per cent of respondents who were not reappointed for more than originally planned stayed for the exact number of years they intended. Several indicated that they had jobs waiting for them back in their home countries or that they had deferred graduate school for one year. Approximately 12 per cent of respondents cited a lack of career advancement opportunities as the main reason to not accept reappointment. As one Miyagi JET explained, *'I like the job, but it feels really stagnant. I don't plan to continue in the field of education, so I'm ready to move on with my life.'*

As evident in Figure 2 below, nearly 80 per cent of these respondents chose one of the following reasons for not accepting reappointment: cultural differences, higher education, a desire to be closer to family and friends, living arrangements/conditions, prior commitments, residence location, the wish to do something new and unsatisfactory work situation. Respondents who could not select reasons or did not select the ones mentioned previously indicated that they were fifth year JET participants, still within their planned time or still deciding on their length of stay.

In examining the reasons participants chose to leave the Programme earlier than planned, lifestyle differences and difficulties making meaningful connections in the workplace and community were highlighted as one common theme among these respondents. Another participant based in Niigata Prefecture explained the decision as one that came after not seeing satisfactory results to *'strong efforts'* to integrate with his or her assigned Programme placement and working situation.

Several respondents also noted a perceived under-utilisation in the workplace which motivated their decision to not accept reappointment. These survey respondents also identified similar themes of placement or workplace location dissatisfaction or a frustration with working within a different education system. For example, an Aomori JET participant who felt under-utilised stated making persistent offers *'to plan activities and lessons...[and meeting] before the lesson to discuss the plan, even offering to come in early'*, but was unable to reach a satisfactory level of involvement at this workplace. A Hyogo JET participant elaborated on this dissatisfaction in the workplace as *'difficult...to see tangible results with the students.'*

Figure 2. Reasons JET Participants Did Not Stay Longer Than Planned

Performance Evaluations

When asked if performance evaluations played a significant role in participants' reappointment plans, only 17 per cent of respondents claimed they did. Of the 83 per cent who were not influenced by this factor, only a few gave examples while a majority indicated that there had been no performance evaluations or that participants did not know if evaluations had or had not played a role. As one respondent in Hyogo explained, *'I don't know what my performance evaluations say, so I cannot comment on what role they play in my reappointment.'*

Those survey respondents who answered affirmatively elaborated on how such evaluations had factored into their reappointment on the JET Programme. One Mie participant simply said, *'I have received excellent evaluations and have been requested to renew my [appointment] for a fourth year based on my track record and ability.'* Another Hiroshima participant who worked proactively to receive an assessment of his or her working performance described the situation this way:

ALTs in my contracting organisation do not normally [receive] performance evaluations. However, around that time, the JTEs at my school were receiving their evaluations. I requested to have one as well. I believe this initiative has been well received.

Japanese Language Skills

Similar to the majority survey opinion that performance evaluations had not played a significant role in participants' reappointment, responses also revealed that the effect of Japanese language ability (or lack thereof) was not a major consideration. In fact, just under 75 per cent of respondents stated that Japanese language ability did not affect their reappointment decision while only 25 per cent said it did.

Specifically, survey respondents referred to how Japanese ability affected the personal decision to stay another year or how language skills affected their contracting organisation's decision to offer reappointment. Regarding

the latter, a few survey respondents mentioned Japanese learning requirements. One Shiga participant revealed, *'if I don't have Japanese language ability, the contracting organisation won't reappoint me,'* while another participant in Saitama elaborated, *'JETs [in my prefecture] are required to have at least a [Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level of] N4 to stay past the third year.'*

Other respondents discussed the more positive role Japanese language knowledge had played in the decision to stay longer on the Programme. Though some responses referenced instances of contracting organisations' JLPT requirements, many survey participants also expressed the desire to pass a certain level of the JLPT. One Miyagi participant acknowledged, *'I really want to pass JLPT N2, and I have the best chance of doing so while living in Japan and actually using the language on a daily basis.'* Other survey respondents described a general wish *'[to improve their Japanese skills]'*, which in turn affected their reappointment decisions. One Niigata participant summarised this desire as strong motivating factor to remain with the Programme, a reason that was shared by many survey respondents:

I came to Japan with no Japanese language ability. Over these two years, it has become better....I really want to improve my Japanese, so I want to stay here and keep studying it and working on it....My ability to communicate well with my coworkers and other people around me now really makes my life easier and more enjoyable. I've had lots of opportunities...to do interesting things because non-English speakers are less shy about talking to me.

The above response highlights the international exchange that can occur between JET Programme participants and the Japanese community when participants strive to improve their Japanese language abilities. Subsequently, such sentiments and motivations demonstrate how Japanese knowledge can enhance the JET experience, encouraging participants to stay for a longer period of time.

Thoughts on Increasing Retention of Highly Motivated JET Participants

A significant portion of the survey sought to ascertain what would increase the retention of highly motivated JET participants who make a positive impact in their workplaces and communities. In a multiple answer question, respondents were asked to identify which factors they felt would influence the decision to stay with the Programme, with choices ranging from *'clearer expectations of what is expected from JETs from the start'* to *'more professional development opportunities/training'*. Additional answer choices also addressed placement transfer options, restrictions and opportunities for JETs during school breaks, and other work-related factors. Survey respondents were also able to suggest other incentives they felt would provide motivated JET participants accept reappointment for another year or more.

The options *'clearer explanation of what is expected of JETs from the start'* and *'more professional development opportunities/training'* together claimed the majority opinion for motivating incentives, with 61 per cent choosing each respectively. Although several participants expressed a desire for additional training and support in the professional development arena, this report acknowledges that it is not the responsibility of the cooperating ministries or CLAIR to provide these. A relative lack of upward mobility potential is an inherent aspect of the JET Programme itself, due to the nature of the placements and appointments offered. It should be noted that some participants do utilise the opportunities for certain professional development trainings, such as the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) grants offered by CLAIR and also through AJET. Additionally, training for advancing skills for Coordinators of International Relations (CIRs) or providing language training are also organised, in addition to the Skills Development Conferences for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). However, the fact that most survey respondents desired more opportunities suggests a still unsatisfied yearning to enhance their professional skills in greater or more specific ways during their appointment.

Exactly 45 per cent of respondents chose *'greater willingness to allow Japanese study leave during extended school breaks'* as the second most popular suggestion for increasing ideal participant retention. This may reflect

the importance that participants place on improving Japanese language skills, as discussed in the previous section. Interestingly, just over 44 per cent of survey respondents chose *'pay raises based on performance'* as the second most popular incentive. Though this report understands that financial constraints are an omnipresent issue and realises that the JET Programme recently introduced a new pay scale structure, this data is available for future consideration of performance-based pay raises.

This report acknowledges that inter-prefectural and intra-prefectural JET participant placement transfers are usually only granted under certain circumstances. In spite of this accepted fact, both *'greater flexibility in allowing transfers outside of your prefecture'* and *'greater flexibility in allowing transfers within your prefecture'* received almost an identical percentage of responses from survey participants, with 37 per cent and 36 per cent of respondents choosing each, respectively. As such, it appears that JET participants do not significantly differentiate between the two types of transfers.

Finally, those respondents who provided additional suggestions for increasing retention of highly-motivated JET participants noted the following trends: better utilisation and management of JET participants in the classroom, more responsibility for JETs in the workplace and more training for Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) regarding more effective ALT utilisation in the classroom. A survey respondent in Gifu expanded on an initial response, explaining that

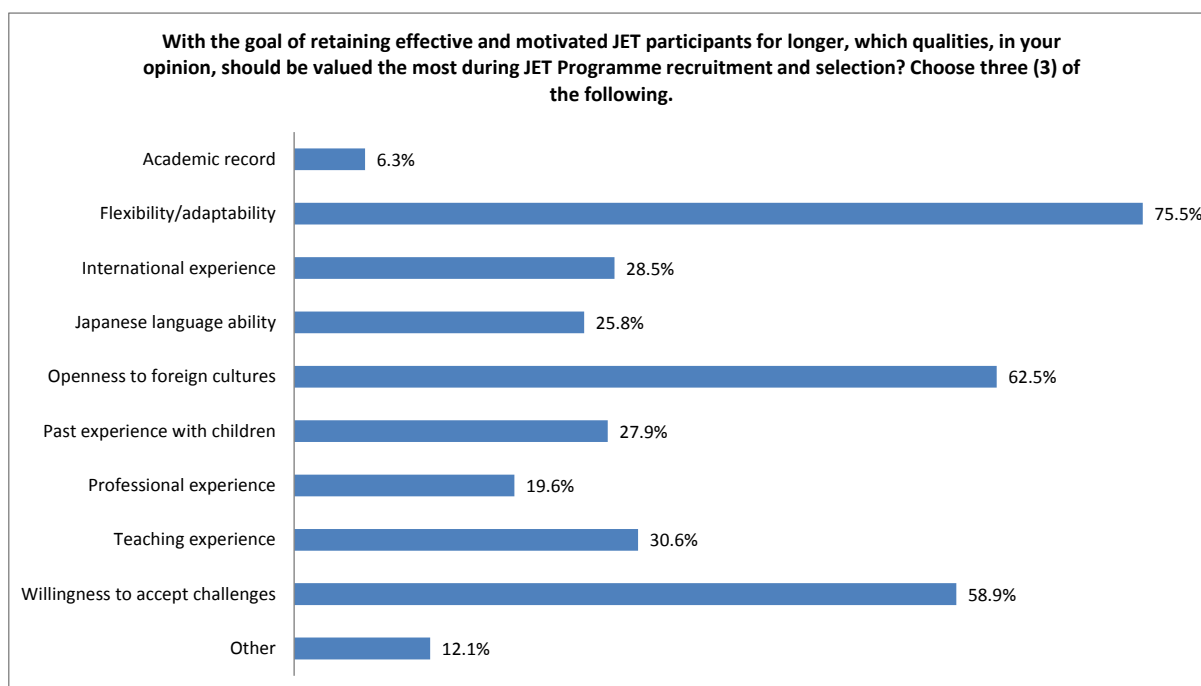
allowing JETs – particularly ALTs – to have a more substantial part of teaching[...] allowing ALTs to be real teachers and expecting more of them than to just be a tape recorder in class[, and] using the ALTs more effectively in the classroom and making it so that the ALTs could [not] be easily replaced by a CD player [all together could increase retention].

Several responses indicated a belief that JTEs are not adequately prepared for how to handle ALTs in and out of the classroom. Many JET participants expressed a wish for more support in this regard. One Miyagi survey respondent advised that *'training seminars for JTEs on how to use ALTs and what the ALT can and should be allowed to do.....allowing the ALT greater autonomy and a stronger role as [a]n educator'* would help increase the retention of highly motivated JET Programme participants. In this capacity of emphasizing how to best use ALTs, a survey respondent in Kagawa suggested *'making more use of ALTs as cultural ambassadors, at schools and in communities, and letting them [schools and communities] know this.'* A Hiroshima JET went one step further and recommended *'some training for teachers besides JTEs on cultural sensitivity,'* explaining that this may help ALTs feel more included within their schools, thus potentially increasing the likelihood of reappointment.

Valued Qualities for JET Participant Selection with the Goal of Retention

Another survey question asked respondents to consider which qualities *'should be valued the most during JET Programme recruitment and selection'* (see Figure 3). The most popular response, chosen by 76 per cent of respondents, was *'flexibility and adaptability'*. About 63 per cent of those surveyed chose *'openness to foreign cultures'*, while 59 per cent of respondents made *'willingness to accept challenges'* the third most popular choice.

Figure 3. Most Valued JET Participant Qualities with the Goal of Retention



Approximately 31 per cent of survey respondents selected *'teaching experience'* as one of the three qualities they thought should be valued most. A few other characteristics received a similar amount of support from those surveyed, notably, *'international experience'* (29 per cent) and *'past experience with children'* (28 per cent). A further 26 per cent of surveyed participants selected *'Japanese language ability'*, while just under 20 per cent favored *'professional experience'*. Finally, only 6 per cent cited *'academic record'* as key when aiming for increased retention rates of motivated JET participants.

When asked to give additional aspects to consider in the recruitment and selection process, several respondents identified social awareness, communicative problem solving skills, and professionalism as traits necessary for making successful Programme participants. Additionally, although *'flexibility and adaptability'* was one of the listed options in the survey, a few survey respondents made sure to emphasize that they felt this was the most important characteristic for a positive participant by far.

JET ALUMNI RESPONSE ANALYSIS

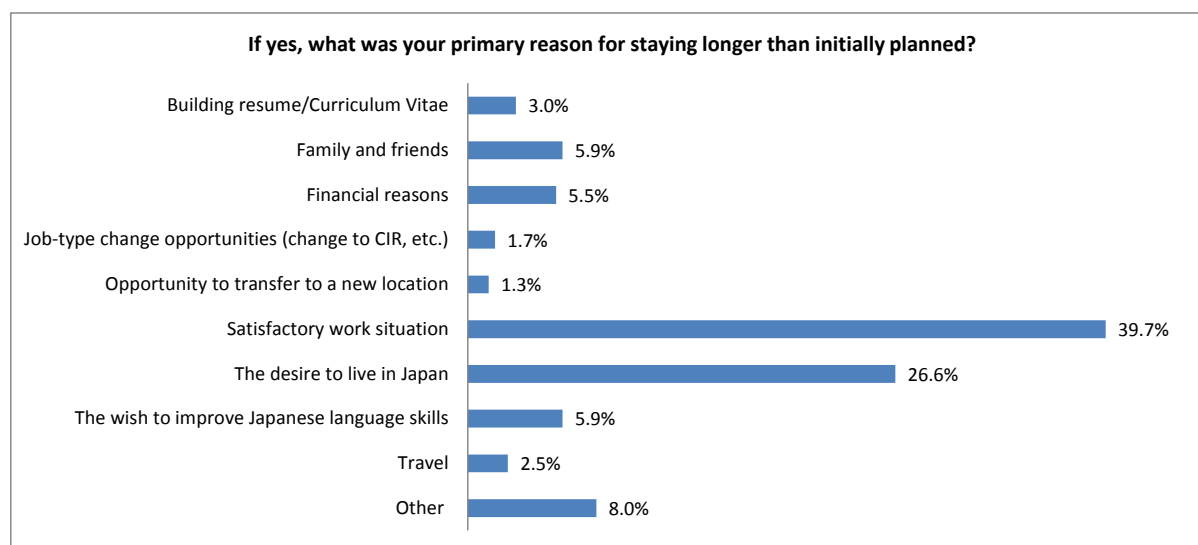
In order to gain a more holistic view of how former and current JET participants view the reappointment experience and goals surrounding retention of JET participants, this report also took into account survey responses from JET alumni. The following is that review, organised between a collective analysis of all responses and those instances when appointments were broken early.

Factors Affecting Number of Years on JET Programme

When alumni were asked about the number of years they had planned to spend on the Programme initially, the most popular answer was one year, with 40 per cent. Additionally, approximately 33 per cent of respondents had hoped to spend two years while 22 per cent selected three years. Less than a total of 5 per cent of alumni said that they had expected to spend a fourth (1 per cent) or fifth (4 per cent) year on the Programme, though this may be due to the change in the number of years participants were able to accept reappointment, which occurred in 2006.

Alumni were asked whether they had been reappointed for longer than originally planned. Responses were split evenly between those who had been reappointed for longer than originally intended and those who had not. Of the former group, approximately 40 per cent of survey participants—the highest proportion of respondents—selected *'satisfactory work situation'* as their primary reason, while *'the desire to live in Japan'* had motivated an additional 27 per cent of respondents. Other reasons can be seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Reasons Alumni JET Participants Stayed Longer Than Expected



Among those participants who indicated that they had not agreed to extend their time for more than originally planned, a little over 16 per cent said they had stayed on the Programme for the exact number of years that they expected. A further 17 per cent said they left due to a lack of career advancement. From the reasons provided, many respondents stated they would have accepted reappointment over more years if there had been opportunity for advancement, job change or the ability to transfer locations easily. As one former participant ALT explained, *'I would have loved for some program[me] that [would have] allowed me to get a teaching degree to become a full time English teacher in the Japanese school system, rather than just part time.'*

Others felt that they had come to Japan without a specific goal of number of years, but their situation helped them to make a decision. One Fukui JET alumni participant provided the following explanation of this decision process:

I [didn't] come onto JET with a specific number of year[s] I wanted to do. After my second year as an ALT, I felt ready to move on to something new and I hoped to do a CIR position as my Japanese is between JLPT Levels 1 and 2. [A] position was not open. I was disappointed that I could not stay on the JET Programme and transfer to another prefecture. This would not only save the JET Programme money, but allow motivated, dedicated workers like myself a better chance to work in their optimal setting.

Work conditions also played a part in the decision process, with 13 per cent of respondents stating unsatisfactory working conditions as their reason for deciding to leave. A second-year JET participant stated, *'I was under-utilised at my school and was very bored most of the time.'* Interestingly, this perceived underutilisation was shared by some CIR alumni participants as well. A former second-year Kyoto CIR explained, *"I felt I was not challenged, nor given any opportunities to demonstrate marketable skills and felt wasted in the position."*

Other reasons were of a more personal nature, with 11 per cent of alumni participants hoping to further their education, 10 per cent wanting to be closer to their families and 8 per cent ready to try something new.

When asked if performance evaluations had played a significant role in reappointment, 57 per cent of alumni participants responded negatively and only 8 per cent affirmatively. In fact, many alumni were either not given a formal evaluation or were unaware one existed. However, those who did receive formal evaluations identified a variety of reasons for their administration, including those that affected reappointment offers. As one former Kyoto-based participant said, *'[t]he Prefectural BOE held quarterly performance evaluations and those were a big factor in determining who was [reappointed].'* Another respondent stated that evaluations were only offered in some prefectures for participants seeking reappointments for a fourth or fifth year: *'To be offered 4th or 5th year reappointment [in Fukuoka], the JET must receive an exceptionally high evaluation in all areas assessed by the annual evaluation in addition to receiving the principal's endorsement.'*

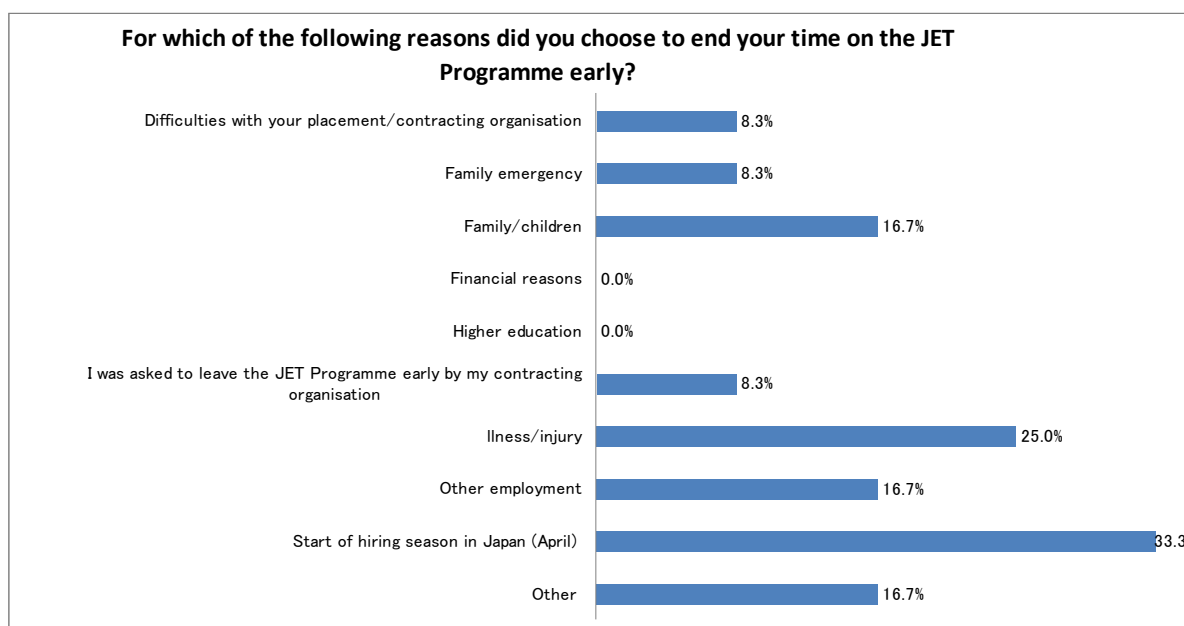
Alumni responses regarding the effect of Japanese language ability (or lack thereof) on their reappointment decisions also revealed that this had not been a major consideration. Specifically, approximately 72 per cent of respondents stated that Japanese language ability had not affected their reappointment decision while only 28 per cent said it had. Similarly, only 5 per cent of respondents who stayed three years or longer stated that Japanese study had been a reason for them staying.

When asked to reflect on which traits should be valued most during JET Programme recruitment and selection, 80 per cent of respondents chose *'flexibility/adaptability'*. Additionally, *'openness to foreign cultures'* and *'willingness to accept challenges'* were chosen by 68 and 60 per cent of respondents, respectively, while *'Japanese language ability'* received 24 per cent. However, alumni respondents did not see *'international experience'*, *'past experience with children'* and *'professional experience'* as very important factors, while *'academic record'* was only seen as an important factor by less than 5 per cent of alumni.

Appointment Non-Completion Among Alumni Respondents

The survey also collected responses from 14 alumni who had to leave their placement prior to the end of appointment. Of these, three left in their first year; five left in their second year; two left in their third year; and three left in their fourth year (one respondent declined to answer). Although this was a small cross-section of actual alumni who responded (comprising only 3 per cent), the survey identified the following important trends to determine reasons and influencing factors for this decision, which can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Reasons for Non-Completion



In analysing the responses, 58 per cent of these mid-term resignations left with just a short amount of time (one to three months) remaining in their appointment, while a further 33 per cent left with just four to six months left. Comparatively, only 8 per cent left the Programme within the first three to five months of arrival in Japan. When asked to provide reasons for early departure, 33 per cent stated they left because of the hiring season in Japan, which begins in April; 25 per cent left due to illness or injury; and the rest left due to a variety of reasons, such as family issues or emergencies, alternative employment and difficulties with placement. A further 8 per cent stated they had been asked to leave early by their contracting organisation.

Examples of the reasons given included a variety of the aforementioned factors:

- One Kagoshima survey participant cited personal reasons for leaving the Programme: *'[I had an] unfortunate social situation, and knowing that psychologically I needed more support than was available on my island.'*
- Another respondent from Hyogo identified employment dissatisfaction and a desire for other opportunities: *'[I] applied to the JET Programme because I wanted to work in an environment where I would be challenged and have at least some responsibility and expectations made of me. My CO did not supply this.'*
- Finally, another participant from the United Kingdom explained having frustration with the transfer of placement process: *'I was transferred, after [requesting reappointment] without my knowledge and kept in the dark until the very end.'*

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CURRENT AND ALUMNI SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Approximately 40 per cent of alumni respondents—the majority percentage of this group—had planned to stay for one year, while only 20 per cent of current participant respondents stated the same. Rather, the most popular answer for current JET participants was two years. This difference may suggest a possible pattern among more recently appointed participants intending to stay longer on the Programme than alumni participants in the past, in which the two year appointment appears to be preferred over the one year appointment. A future study comparing the maximum Programme length with the intended length of stay of current and alumni JET participants could provide more support for understanding this trend.

Both groups of respondents were evenly split down the centre regarding whether or not they had been reappointed for longer than initially planned. Comparatively, the majority of those who did stay longer than initially planned—whether alumni or current Programme participants—did so for the same reasons. Both of these observations suggest that this trend may be independent of when participants arrive onto or depart from the Programme. However, a much larger percentage of current Programme participants than alumni participants stayed for exactly as long as they had planned. A future study that could chart changes within the Programme, including support systems or other offers, alongside the duration of intended and actual appointment figures, could reveal more information in support of this difference.

Finally, neither performance evaluations nor Japanese language ability played a significant factor in the acceptance of reappointment by current JET participants or alumni. However, both alumni and current participants chose the same three qualities which should be valued most during recruitment: *'flexibility/adaptability'*, *'openness to foreign cultures'* and *'willingness to accept challenges'*.

CONCLUSION

A major aim of this report was to determine which factors contribute most to JET Programme participants' decision whether or not to accept a reappointment offer. Survey results show that having satisfactory work conditions is the leading factor in most participants' decisions to accept reappointment offers—more important than social or cultural factors. Many respondents stated that a commitment to improve working conditions results in the desire to remain with the Programme for a longer time. Overall report findings suggest that participants may be willing to invest longer with the Programme when they feel a sense of satisfaction and success in their day-to-day employment.

However, responses received regarding the reasons for ending time on the JET Programme were more evenly spread out between respondents. Each of the choices given were almost equally represented in the responses, with *'lack of career advancement'* slightly edging out the other choices. This trend suggests the diversity of experiences and goals participants may share during their Programme involvement. As such, and if the Programme goal is retaining quality participants, this report finds it could be more beneficial to invest in and improve upon the reasons that makes participants accept reappointment offers.

The second aim of this report was to identify strategies that would increase the retention of capable Programme participants for longer periods of time. Results show that the area in which to focus for such a goal is improving participants' satisfaction in the workplace. At least one tangible area for such improvement is performance evaluations: approximately 83 per cent of all respondents stated that performance reviews had played no part in reappointment decisions, suggesting a relatively large area for a future focus. This report concludes that the improved communication and the chance to define realistic, professional goals, which comes from routine work evaluations, could be used to improve participants' impressions of their workplace situations. Feeling more involved on the job and working on finding clear ways to improve could be highly motivating for many Programme participants. It seems likely that a large portion of JET participants would find such an investment beneficial to their overall time with the Programme and future reappointment decisions.

Finally, this report also sought to determine the major contributing factors regarding participants' choices to leave the Programme early and to suggest solutions for motivating JET participants to complete their terms of appointment. Personal issues cannot be helped, but the main factors appear to be JET Programme participants who wish to stay in Japan after their time on JET and those who leave early for other employment opportunities in Japan, generally offered in April. There may not be a solution to preventing people from leaving early for personal reasons; though this report does acknowledge that the Programme arrivals in April may provide an opportunity to reconcile some other common situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on respondents' feedback, Programme participants may choose to accept reappointment for longer if they can be provided career advancement or professional development. This report recommends opportunities such as more individualized teacher training, Japanese language support or opportunities to expand their work responsibilities as recommended by the utilisation report that was presented in December of 2012.

As a great deal of financial resources is allocated to the acquisition and training of JET participants, this report recommends that further research be conducted regarding the logistics of allowing JET participants to transfer for reasons other than those currently allowed. Some examples include: if transferring would allow greater content in personal or professional lives; if transferring would allow room for professional advancement; or if there were other reasons that could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Permitting JET participants to transfer may encourage them to stay longer, which could potentially cut costs incurred by hiring and training a new JET participant.

This report also recommends the better utilisation of performance evaluations. Surveyed participants overwhelmingly responded that these reviews played no part in their decision to accept or decline reappointment. Providing participants with such evaluations, constructive feedback or other gestures with regards to work performance could both challenge the participant as well as raise the overall attitude towards the working situation. This may include advising contracting organisations to initiate or include their appointed Programme participants in a pre-scheduled plan for performance reviews, giving current participants an official opportunity to receive feedback, improve professionally and relate their experiences to their colleagues.

QUESTIONS

1. A change in the Japanese “Revised Labour Contract Act,” (改正労働契約法) which was passed on August 3, 2012, stipulates that part-time or contracted employees who have been employed in the same workplace for more than five years may request an unlimited term of employment. (Source: Nikkei Shimbun 日本経済新聞 August 3, 2012 「改正労働契約法、勤続5年で無期限雇用 パート待遇改善へ道」) According to the Contracting Organisation Manual 4-18 footnotes, Oceania April arrivals are eligible to be employed for a total of 5 years and 4 months. AJET understands that Programme participants are employed in accordance with existing Japanese labour laws. In the event that an Oceania April arrival Programme participant wishes to receive unlimited period of employment, may AJET assume that his or her contracting organisation will be obliged to comply with this law in the future? (Law expected to go into effect in Fiscal Year 2013 with the first effects expected to be seen in 2018.)
2. Does CLAIR have any data from contracting organisations about performance evaluation? If they are utilised, how they are utilised?
3. Are there any plans to have more JET participants arrive in April to coincide with the start of the Japanese fiscal year and school year? How do CLAIR and the three ministries envision this will affect JET recruitment, selection, reappointment, and retention?
4. This is the first year of the new pay scale system. Do the three ministries or CLAIR have any indication that this affected the number of JET participants who are being reappointed? Is this something that the ministries would be interested in having AJET investigate further in the future?
5. The three most valued qualities during JET Programme recruitment and selection as indicated by both current JET participants and JET alumni are that flexibility/adaptability, openness to foreign cultures, and willingness to accept challenges, with the goal of retaining effective and motivated JET participants. Does MOFA provide recommendations to individual embassies and consulates regarding how to evaluate these characteristics? Has JET selection changed over the 26 years? If so, how?

摘要

優秀なJET参加者の再任と定着は、任用団体や職場、または地域へのメリットがあり、参加者本人が日本でより充実した経験が積めることも期待される。そのため、再任用を希望するか否かについて、参加者がどのようにこの決断に至るかを把握すると、任用団体が有能な参加者により長く定着してもらい、任用期間満了まで参加を促すソリューションに繋がる可能性が高い。JETプログラム参加者の会(以下AJET)による本報告書は、現役の参加者と元JET参加者を対象とした調査を経て、再任用に影響する要因・要望・課題を指摘することを目的とする。また、決断へのプロセスに焦点を当てると同時に、以下のテーマも取り上げる。

- 参加者が当初予定していた参加期間と実際の期間の比較や、それに関連する要因、またはこのプロセスに影響する意思決定
- 途中で辞任した場合、それに関連する要因と、決断するまでの流れ
- 今後の参加者の任用において、定着率をより高め、それを維持するための参加者による提案

以上のデータと提案を踏まえ、再任用・定着に関して、任用団体に参加者の考えをより把握してもらうことを目指す。さらに、AJETが、自治体国際化協会(CLAIR)・総務省・外務省・文部科学省に結果を公開し、実績のある参加者を定着させながら任用期間満了まで参加を促す提案を発表する。

はじめに

毎年冬になると、JETプログラムの参加者は再任用を希望するかどうかの決断に直面する。この決断のベースとなるのが、参加者が許されている可能継続年数である。かつて、一人の参加者が同じ任用団体に雇われる期間は上限3年間だったが、2006年に規則が変更されたことにより、5年間まで延長された。CLAIRによると、任用団体がこの重要な規則変更の原動力となったという。しかし、民間委託などと比べると、JET参加者を雇うにはより多くの資金が必要になるため、最近では、任用団体が再びJET参加者を活用するメリットを検討せざるを得なくなっている。従って、このような背景が、再任用を検討する参加者・任用団体に影響を与えているという。

本報告書には、三つの目的がある。一つ目は、JET参加者が再任用を希望するか否かに影響を与える要因に、順位を付けることである。同時に、仕事における評価や日本語能力など、再任用に影響する要因を探る。

次に、高度な能力やモチベーションを有する参加者の定着率を上げるために、有効な手段を提案することである。優れた参加者が定着するようになると、任用団体が負担するコストの削減の他に、職場における人間関係や参加者の業務遂行の改善も想定される。

最後に、任用の途中で辞任した参加者から集めた回答を分析することにより、要因に順位を付けて今後の途中辞任を減らす、または防止する方法を提案することである。

内容を整理するため、まずは現役のJET参加者から集めた回答を分析した後、元参加者の回答を考察し、二つのグループにおける傾向を比較検討する。

調査方法

本報告書の分析等は、2013年1月にインターネット上で実施したアンケートに基づいている。調査は、現役JET参加者と、元JET参加者を対象とし、「再任用」や「参加者の定着率」について対象者の意見を聞いた。

共通する語句の略称は以下のとおりとする。

- ALT: 外国語指導助手
- CIR: 国際交流員
- JET: JETプログラム
- JTE: 日本人英語教師
- SHS: 高等学校
- JHS: 中学校
- AJET: JETプログラム参加者の会

929人の回答者のうち、458人(49%)が現役JET参加者、残り471人(51%)が元JET参加者である。現役JET参加者のうち、398人(87%)がALT、56人(12%)がCIRである。参加年数順に並べると、195人(43%)が1年目、141人(31%)が2年目、63人(14%)が3年目、34人(7%)が4年目、そして25人(6%)が5年目である。

元JET参加者の当時の職種について、430人(91%)がALT、56人(12%)がCIRである。CIR・ALT両方を務めた回答者もあり、これが回答者数と回答数の相違を説明する。元参加者の参加年数について、1年だけ参加した回答者が82人(17%)である。もっとも多かったのは、2年が181人(38%)、3年が152人(32%)である。また、26人(6%)が4年、30人(約6%)が5年以上参加したという。

調査の質問は、複数選択式、複数回答式、自由回答式から成り、EメールやSNS(Facebook、Twitter)、またはAJETのホームページ、そして口コミを通じてPRした。本報告書では、%で表す数値は小数点第1位を四捨五入する。

回答分析(現役JET参加者)

まず、現役JET参加者の回答を分析することにより、「参加者が当初を予定していた期間」、勤務評定や日本語能力など「再任用の希望に影響する要因」、そして「再任用希望の促進」や「参加者の定着率向上」について、それぞれ報告する。

JETプログラム参加予定期間に影響する要因

当初予定していた参加期間について尋ねると、もっとも多かった回答は「2年間」(37%)である。CLAIRが別途で提供する情報によると、1年目の参加者のうち、70%が再任用されるという背景があり、本報告書の回答はそれを裏付けていると見られる。また、24%の回答者が「3年間」、21%が「1年間」と答えた。「5年間」の参加を希望する回答者は約16%となったが、「4年間」と答えたのがわずか2%となった。

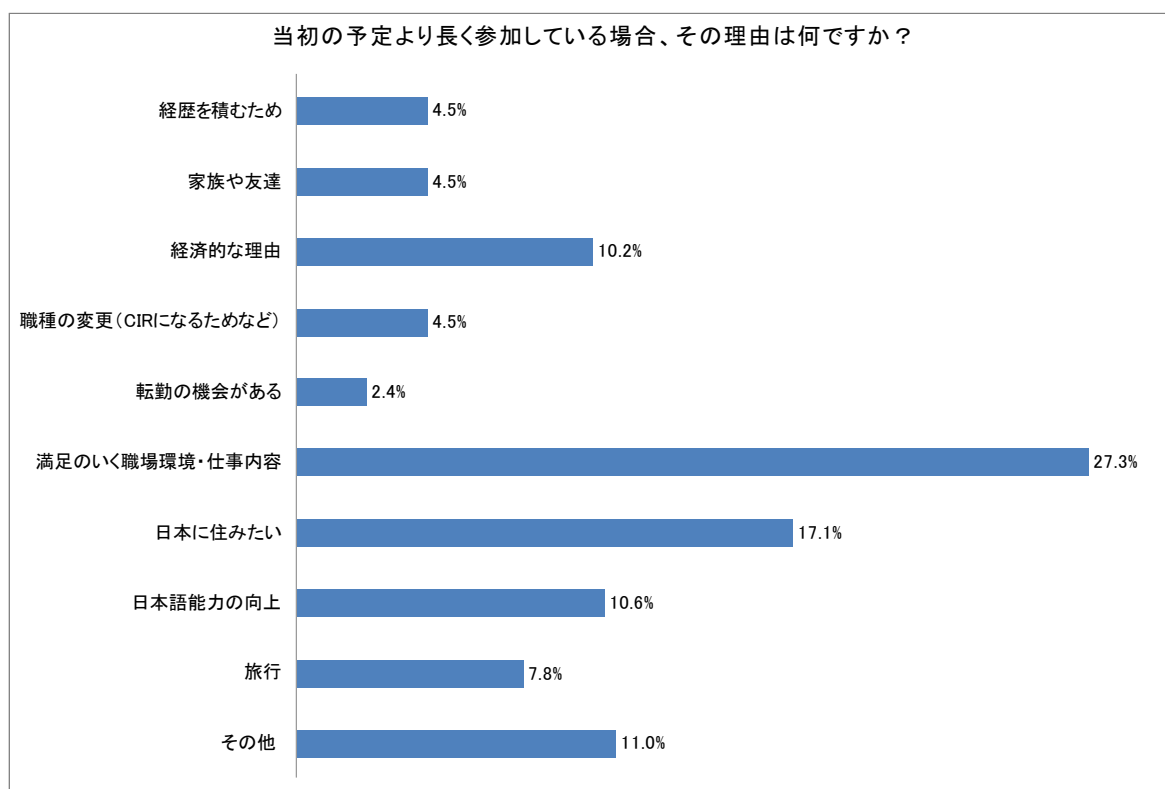
現役JET参加者に「当初の予定より長く参加していますか?」と尋ねると、答えはほぼ半々となった。

予定より長く参加している回答者のみにその理由を聞くと、答えは一つではなかった。約27%が「満足のいく職場環境・仕事内容」を主な理由とし、17%が「日本に住みたい」と答えた。長野県の参加者が以下のように、JETプログラム全体に満足していると説明する。

職場環境や生活環境、経済的状況、社会的状況、そして勤務地にも全体的に満足している。これらを手放して帰国する理由の一つもない。母国でやりがいを感じる仕事を見つけるのは大変だろうし、現在と同じ給与が貰えることを条件とするとさらに厳しい。今のライフスタイルをできるだけ維持したいと考えている。

その他の主な理由として、「生徒への責任感」、「地域とのつながり」、「母国の経済状況」、そして「複数の要因」などが見られた。島根県の参加者によると、「予定より長く参加しているのは教え子がいるからです。他の先生が考えているよりも、私にとって大事な要素です。」

図1 現役参加者が予定より長く参加している理由



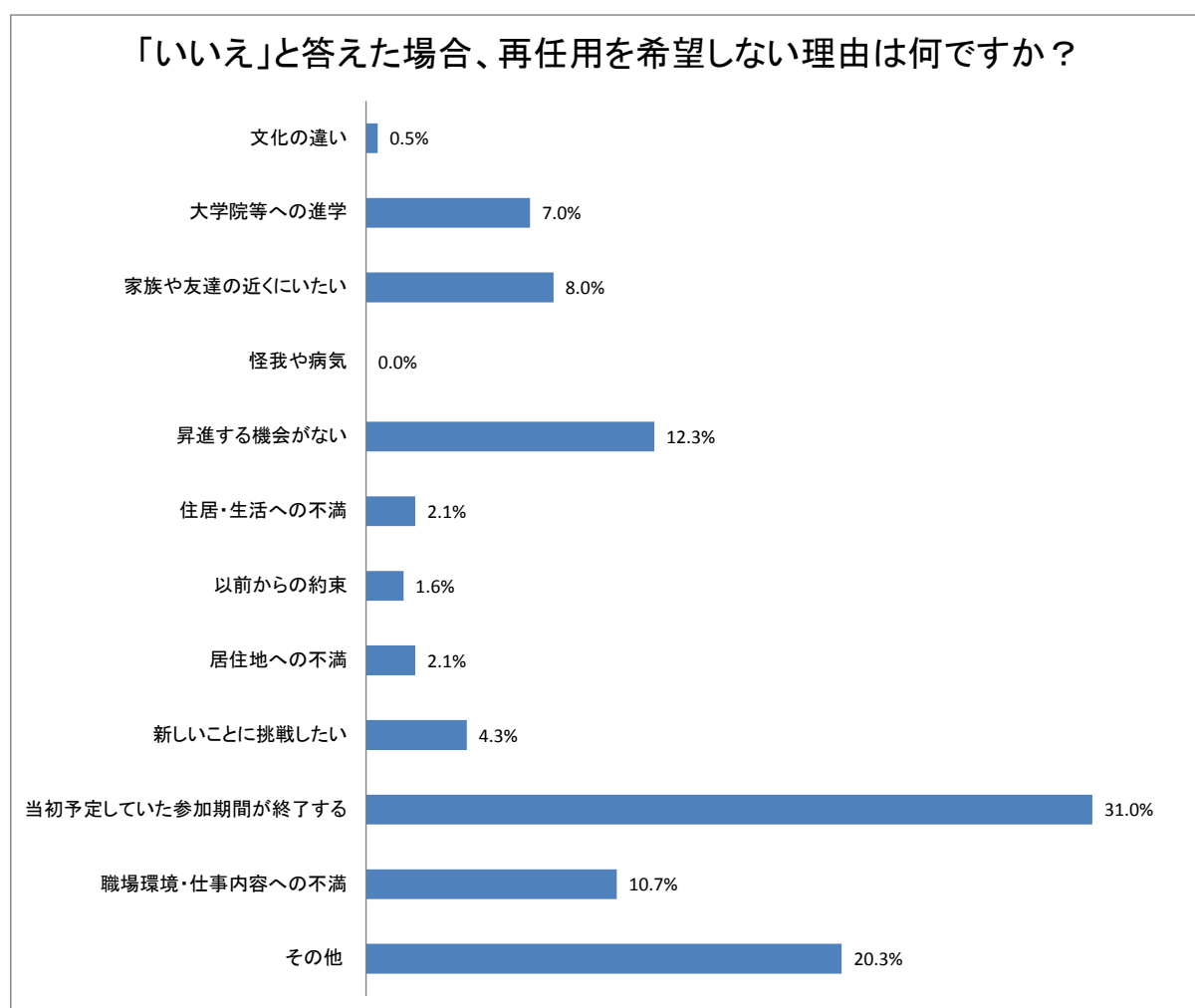
「予定より長く参加していない」と答えた人のうち、丁度31%の回答者が予定していた期間のみ参加したという。多くの人は母国における仕事があることや、大学院の入学を1年延期していたなどの理由を述べた。約12%の回答者は、「昇進する機会がない」ことが再任用を希望しない主な理由となった。宮城県の参加者がこのように説明する。「この仕事は好きですが、将来性があまりない気がします。私は教育の分野で仕事を続ける予定はないので、これからの人生を考えなければいけないと考えています。」

以下の図2から分かるように、この回答者の80%が「文化の違い」、「大学院等への進学」、「家族や友達の近くにいたい」、「住居・生活への不満」、「以前からの約束」、「住居地への不満」、「新しいことに挑戦したい」、そして「職場環境・仕事内容への不満」という理由のなかから一つを選択した。選択しなかった、あるいはこれらの選択肢以外を選んだ回答者は、「5年目の参加者である」、「まだ予定期間内である」、または「参加期間の予定はまだ決めていない」などと述べた。

予定より早く参加を終了させる理由については、ライフスタイルの違いや、地域と職場において意義のある人間関係を構築できなかったことが共通点の一つである。ある新潟県の参加者は、職場環境や勤務地に融合するように「かなり努力したが」、満足のいく結果が見られなかったと説明する。

その他、職場において自分は十分に活用されなかったと指摘し、これが再任用を希望しない理由となったと述べる回答者もいる。共通する理由に、勤務地や職場環境への不満や、母国と違う教育制度で働く困難などがある。ある青森県の参加者は、アクティビティや授業の計画を何度も作り、事前に打合せをしたり朝早くきたりしても、十分な活用に繋がらなかったという。また、「生徒の学力に具体的な結果が見られなかった」と兵庫県参加者が述べる。

図2 現役参加者が再任用を希望しない理由



勤務評定

勤務評定が回答者の再任用に影響を与えたかどうかについて、「はい」と答えたのはわずか17%だった。「いいえ」と答えた83%の人のなかで、具体的な例を示したのは数人だけで、過半数は「勤務評定は行われていない」、あるいは「影響しているかどうか分からない」と指摘した。「勤務評定には何が書いてあるか分からないので、再任用に関与するかどうかについてコメントできない」と兵庫県の回答者が説明する。

「勤務評定が再任用に影響している」と答えた人は、評定の役割について詳しく述べた。「毎年非常に良い評価をいただき、4年目からも再任用するように言われている」と三重県の参加者がいう。また、自分の仕事におけるパフォーマンスを評定してもらえるように努力した広島県の参加者は、次のように語る。

私の任用団体では、ALTの勤務評定を普段から行っていない。しかし、私の学校のJTEが評定をされていた頃に、私も評定してもらえるようにお願いしてみると、肯定的な反応があった。

日本語能力

過半数は勤務評定が再任用に影響しないのと同じように、日本語能力の有無もそれほど影響しなかったという。実際、「影響しなかった」と答えた人が75%弱で、「影響した」と答えたのは25%となった。

「影響した」と答えた参加者は、日本語能力の有無が、自分の再任用する意志をどう左右したか、あるいは任用団体においてどのように評価されたかについて述べた。後者について、日本語能力が必要な条件だったと説明する回答者もいる。「日本語能力がなければ、任用団体は再任用してくれない」と滋賀県の参加者がいう。さらに、「日本語能力試験(JLPT)N4以上の取得が一つの再任用の条件となっている」と埼玉県参加者が明かす。

他の回答者は、日本語の知識が再任用に当たって前向きな要因になったという。任用団体の条件の指摘がありながらも、それとは別に回答者自身がJLPTの資格を取りたいというケースも見られる。「JLPTのN2に合格したい。日常生活において日本語を使う機会が多いので、日本に住んでいる間に挑戦した方が有利だろう」と宮城県参加者が説明する。他にも、日本語能力を向上させたい思いがあり、それが再任用の希望に影響したという参加者もいる。この理由を共通する参加者が多く、ある新潟県の参加者が次のように自分の意図を説明する。

私は日本語能力がないまま来日した。この2年間、私の日本語は上達している。さらに上達できるように、もっと長く日本に滞在し勉強を続けたい。周りの人とコミュニケーションをとることで、さらに過ごしやすくなった。また、英語が話せない人が私にどんどん話しかけてくれるから、様々なことができるようになった。

以上のように、JETプログラムの参加者が日本語力を磨こうと努力することで、国際交流がより深められる。さらに、参加者の日本語能力が、日本における経験を豊かにし、より長く日本に滞在するモチベーションにもなるといえる。

高度なモチベーションを持つJET参加者の定着率向上

優秀で高度なモチベーションを持つ参加者は、職場や地域に良い影響を与える。この調査の大部分で、そういった参加者の定着率を上げるには、何が必要かについて参加者の意見を聞いた。複数選択式の質問では、「参加者が求められることについて、明確な説明が最初にある」、「資格を取得するための取り組みや研修の充実」などの選択肢から、再任用に影響すると思われる要因を回答者が選んだ。更に、勤務地変更の仕組みや休業中における制限、そして仕事に関連する要因もあった。また、他にも定着率を上げるインセンティブの提案もあった。

もっとも多かったのは、61%の回答者が選んだ「参加者が求められることについて、明確な説明が最初にある」、そして「資格を取得するための取り組みや研修の充実」という回答である。多くの参加者は、更なる研修やサポートを求めているものの、これらはクリア・各省の義務ではないとAJETは承知している。JETプログラムで昇進ができないのは、プログラムの固有の側面であり、任用の性質によるものだと考えられる。もう一方では、CLAIRやAJETが提供するTEFL資格の奨学金を利用する参加者もいる。さらに、国際交流員(CIR)向けの高度な研修や語学研修などが開かれるほか、ALT向けの「指導力向上研修」もある。しかし、過半数の回答者がこれ以上の機会を望んでいる事実は、仕事のスキルを更に磨きたいという参加者の要望を示している。

優秀な参加者の定着率を上げるために、次に多かった選択肢は、45%の回答者が選んだ「休校中、日本語を勉強するための特別休暇を許可する」である。これはこれまでに述べたように、参加者が日本語力の向上を重視していることを意味するだろう。興味深いことに、「評価に基づいた昇給」が二番目に多いインセンティブだった。予算の問題もあり、新しい給与制度が導入されたばかりであることを認識しているが、今後の提案としてこの統計を参考にしていきたい。

また、勤務地の県内・県外への変更について、特定の状況下で行うものとAJETは認識しているが、37%の回答者が「県外への転勤をより柔軟に行う」、36%が「県内の転勤をより柔軟に行う」を選んだ。従って、参加者にとって、県外・県内の転勤について、どちらも重視されているということである。

最後に、「その他」の自由回答枠で寄せられた意見のうち、「教室において有効なALT活用」や「JET参加者が職場で担う責任の増大」、または「ALTの有効活用をテーマにしたJTE向け研修の促進」に関する回答が多かった。岐阜県のALTはこう述べる。

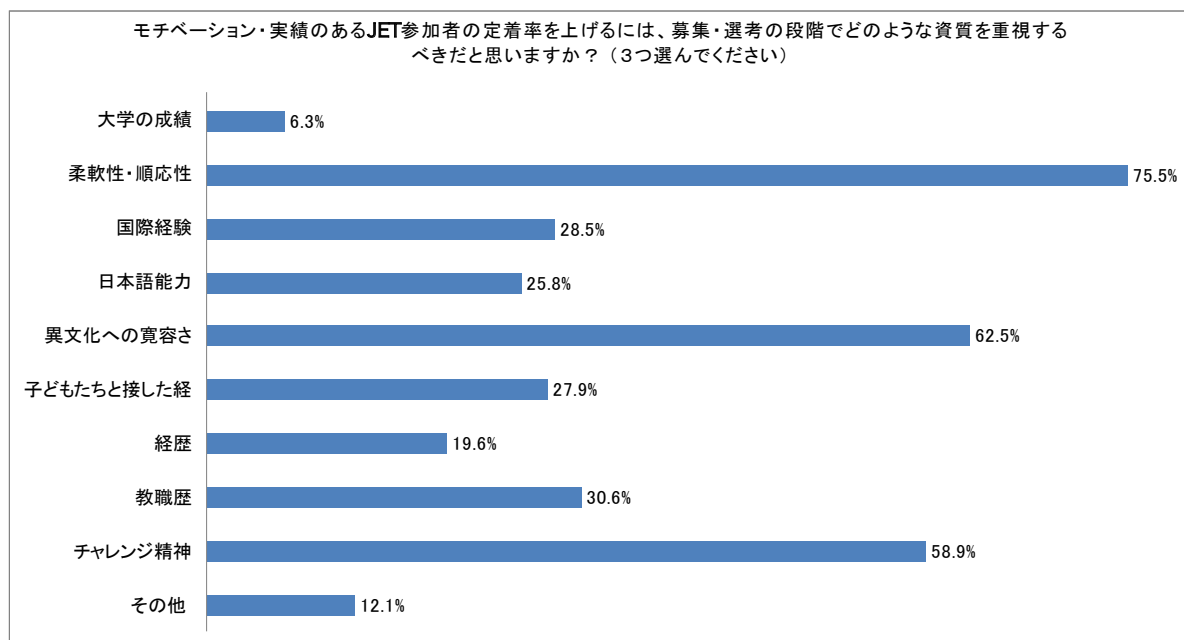
ALTの場合は特にそうだが、JET参加者が指導する機会を増やすこと、それからテープレコーダーとは違って本格的な指導力を発揮してもらい、CDプレイヤーの代用とならないようにALTの有効活用を促すことが定着率の向上に貢献するだろう。

教室内外におけるALTの扱いについて十分な対応ができていない意見があり、更なるサポートがほしいという声もあった。「ALTの活用、あるいはALTにできることやさせるべきことを取り上げるJTE向けの研修や、ALTをより自由に活動をさせ、教育者としての役割を強化する」ことが優秀な参加者の定着率に繋がると、宮城県の回答者が提案する。有効なALT活用について、香川県の回答者から「学校や地域において文化大使として活用し、その役割を広くPRしてみてもいい」という意見があった。また、ある広島県のJETによると、「JTE以外の日本人教師を対象に、文化的相違を尊重することを学ぶための研修」を実施すると、ALTと同僚の絆を強化でき、再任用の可能性が高まるという。

定着率を上げるために、選考の段階で重視すべき資質

「選考の段階で重視すべき資質」についても参加者の意見を聞いた(図3参照)。もっとも人気のあった回答は、76%の回答者が選んだ「柔軟性・順応性」である。それに次いで、「異文化への寛容さ」が63%、「チャレンジ精神」が59%となった。

図3 優秀な参加者の定着率を上げるために重視すべき性質



3つのもっとも重視すべき資質として、約31%の回答者が「教職歴」を選んだ。続いて、「国際経験」(29%)、子どもたちと接した経験(28%)などが選ばれた。また、26%が「日本語能力」、20%弱が「経歴」を選択し、「大学の成績」が最下位の6%となった。

これらの他にも重視すべき資質について尋ねると、多くの回答者が「社会的感受性」、「コミュニケーションによる問題解決能力」、「プロ意識」などを指摘した。また、以上述べた「柔軟性・順応性」がもっとも重要であると強調した回答者もいた。

回答分析(元JET参加者)

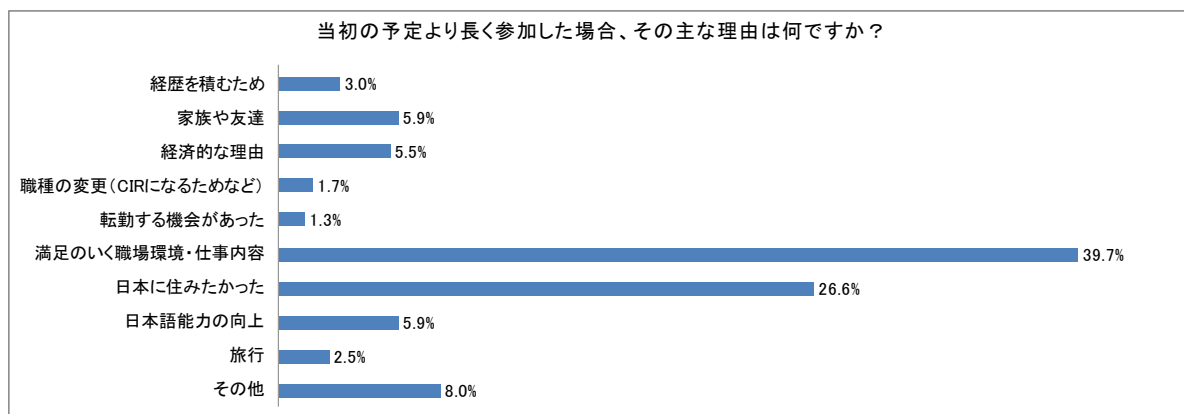
現役の参加者と、元参加者がそれぞれどのように再任用を希望するに至るかをより正確に把握するために、元JET参加者からも回答を集めた。以下の内容は二つに分け、総合的に分析をした後、任用満了前に退職した人のみの回答を分析する。

JETプログラム参加年数に影響する要因

元JET参加者に、当初予定していた参加年数を尋ねると、もっとも多かった回答は「1年」(40%)である。続いて、33%が「2年」、22%が「3年」と答えたものの、「4年」(1%)または「5年」(4%)の回答者は合わせても全体の5%弱しかなかった。しかし、これには2006年の参加年数規制の改正の影響があると考えられる。

元JET参加者に、当初の予定より長く再任用されたかどうかを尋ねたところ、答えはほぼ半々となった。予定より長く再任用された人のうち、最上位の40%の回答者がその理由として「満足のいく職場環境・仕事内容」を選んだ。続いて「日本に住みたかった」が27%の人の動機となったという。他の理由は以下の図4で示されている。

図4 元参加者が当初の予定より長く参加した理由



「予定より長く参加しなかった」という回答者の中、16%が予定どおり任用を終えたと答え、17%が「昇進する機会がなかった」を理由に任用を終えたという。詳しい理由を聞くと、昇進する機会や、職種や勤務地を容易に変えることができれば、もっと長くプログラムに参加したかもしれないと説明する回答者も多い。ある元参加者はこう語る。

「パートタイムではなく、フルタイムの英語教師になれる資格を取得するためのプログラムがほしかった。」

また、特に年数の目標を持たずに来日し、再任用するかどうか迷ったときは、その頃の環境が関わっていたという回答者もいた。ある福井県の元参加者は自分の動機をこう説明する。

「私がJETプログラムで来日したときは、特に年数の目標はなかった。ALTとして2年目が終ると、新しいことに挑戦したいと思い、日本語能力はJLPT1級～2級レベルだったため、次はCIRを努めたかった。しかし、空いているポジションがなく、プログラム上、他の都道府県に転勤できないことを残念に思っていた。これさえできれば、プログラムのコスト削減に繋がるだろうし、私のように意欲のある人間がより自分に適した仕事ができるようになる。」

職場環境も参加決定の要因となり、13%の回答者が「職場環境・仕事内容への不満」を、任用を終える理由として選んだ。2年参加した元参加者によると、「学校では私が十分に活用されず、つまらない日々を過ごしていた」。興味深いことに、活用不足について同じような意見を持つ元CIRもいる。2年参加した、京都府のCIRは自らの経験について「成長できる仕事なかったし、将来に役立つスキルを発揮できる機会も与えられなかった」と語る。

その他の理由は更に個人的なもので、大学院などに進学したかった人(11%)や家族の近くにいたかった人(10%)、そして新しいことに挑戦したかった人(8%)などもある。

勤務評定が再任用に影響したかを尋ねると、57%が「いいえ」、そして8%のみが「はい」と答えた。実は、多くの元参加者の場合は、勤務評定がなかった、もしくは勤務評定があることを意識していなかったと言う。しかし、正式に評定された元参加者は、再任用を含むそれぞれの評定の役割を指摘した。ある京都府の参加者によると、「府の教育委員会では四半期ごとに評定を行い、その結果が参加者の再任用を大きく左右した。」他の回答者によると、4・5年目の再任用を希望する人の場合のみに行われたという。「福岡県では、4・5年目の再任用オファーをもらうために、全面的に優れた評定だけでなく、校長の推薦も必要だった。」

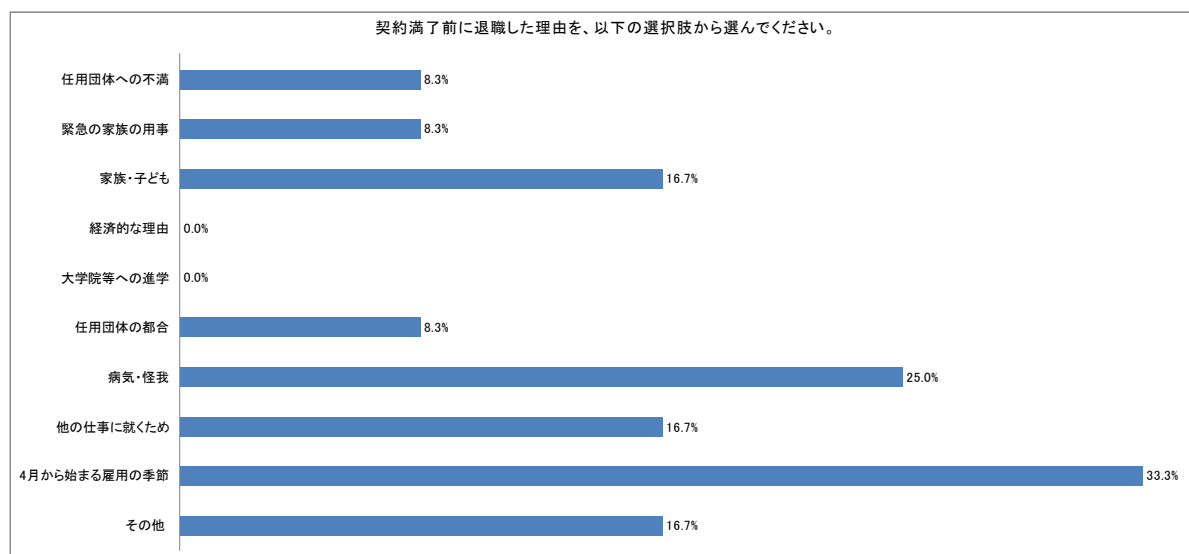
再任用の他の要因について、日本語能力の有無を選択した人が少なかったため、主な要因とは思われない。具体的に、「関係していなかった」と答えた人が72%、「関係していた」と答えた人が28%である。同じように、3年以上参加した回答者の中でも、語学が再任用される要因となった人はわずか5%である。

JETプログラムの募集・選考の段階でもっとも重視すべき性質については、80%が「柔軟性・順応性」と答えた。続いて、68%が「異文化への寛容さ」、60%が「チャレンジ精神」、そして24%が「日本語能力」を選択した。しかし、「国際経験」や「子どもと接した経験」、または「経歴」を選んだ元参加者はわずか5%で、「大学の成績」を重視すべきと答えた人は5%しか占めない。

元参加者回答者における任用期間中辞任

任用終了前に退職した14人の元参加者からも回答を集めた。14人中、3人が1年未満、5人が2年未満、2人が3年未満、3人が4年未満で退職した(1人未回答)。途中で退職した元参加者は全体の3%でしかないが、退職決定の要因には顕著な傾向が現れたため、図5にまとめている。

図5 元参加者が任用満了前に退職した理由



回答を比較すると、任用が終了するまで1～3ヶ月を残して退職したのが58%、4～6ヶ月が33%である。一方、来日してから3～5ヶ月以内で退職した人はわずか8%である。退職の理由について尋ねると、「4月から始まる雇用の季節」が33%、「病気・怪我」が25%、残りは緊急の家族の用事や、他の仕事に就くため、または任用団体・勤務地への不満を理由に退職したという。さらに、任用団体の都合で退職したのが8%となった。

詳しい理由については、参加者が以下のように語る。

- ・ 「不運な社会的状況に置かれたため、島である勤務地で受けられたサポート以上のものが必要だった」と、鹿児島県の回答者が個人的な理由で退職した。
- ・ 「ある程度の責任を持ってチャレンジできる仕事が見つかったからJETプログラムに応募した。しかし、私の任用団体ではそれができなかった」と、兵庫県の実験者が仕事への不満や更なるチャレンジ願望を語る。
- ・ また、「再任用を希望したら、最後まで何も知らないまま違う場所に転勤させられた」と英国出身の元参加者が勤務地変更のプロセスへの不満を表す。

現役JET参加者回答者と元JET参加者の回答比較

「1年」の参加を予定していた元参加者が最上位の40%に上ったものの、同じように答えた現役の回答者の場合は20%であり、むしろいちばん多かったのは「2年」である。この差は、最近任用された参加者が以前より長い参加を予定している傾向を示している可能性がある。今後の現役・元参加者を対象とする調査において、プログラム参加年数の上限と、予定する参加年数を比較する分析は、よりこの傾向を把握するために役に立つと思われる。

予定より長く再任用されたかどうかについて、現役・元参加者における差が見られず、どちらの答えも半々となった。また、予定より長く参加した回答者の中でも、現役参加者・元参加者を問わず、その理由の割合はほとんど変わらない。この統計を踏まえて、来日した時期は、参加の延長とは無関係である可能性が高い。しかしながら、予定どおり参加を終える回答者は、元参加者より現役参加者の方が多いのである。この違いへの理解を深めるために、サポート提供や他の支援における変化を測り、参加者の任務期間と比較することを今後の調査の課題としたい。

最後に、勤務評定と日本語能力は、現役参加者と元参加者の再任用について、どちらも大きな要因にはならなかった。また、選考の段階で重視すべき性質として、現役参加者・元参加者も同じ3つの「柔軟性・順応性」、「異文化への寛容さ」、そして「チャレンジ精神」を選んだ。

結論

本報告書の主な目的の一つは、参加者が再任用を希望する際に影響する要因を見出すことである。結果によると、再任用を希望する参加者にとっては、社会的、あるいは文化的な要因よりも、満足のいく職場環境がいちばんの影響力を持つという。職場環境の改善が、長期参加希望に繋がると多くの回答者が述べた。日々の仕事においてやりがいを感じると、参加者はJETプログラムにより長く力を投入することが、この調査の結果で分かった。

しかし、再任用を希望しない理由は様々であり、特定の要因に集中しなかった。各選択肢はほぼ同じ割合であり、「昇進する機会がない」がその他をわずかに上回った。この傾向は、参加者の経験や目的の多様性を示すものだと考えられる。もしJETプログラムにおいて優秀な参加者の定着率を上げる目的が存在するなら、再任用に繋がる要因を改善することが有効な手法と思われる。

二つ目の目的は、能力のある参加者の定着に繋がる方法を提案することである。結果によると、参加者の職場環境への満足度を上げることが重要な要素の一つであることが分かった。具体的な例として、勤務評定の改善を提案したい。約83%の回答者に言わせると、勤務評定は再任用に影響しないという。これを踏まえて、評定の更なる充実が、今後の注目すべき項目であると思われる。本報告書は、定期的を実施する勤務評定によるコミュニケーションの改善、あるいは実現できる目標の査定は、参加者の職場環境に対する考え方をより積極的にするために役に立つと結論づける。より仕事に関与できるようになり、具体的な成長が実感できるようになると、多くの参加者のモチベーションが大きく上がると考えられる。また、このような努力が、参加者のJETプログラムにおける経験の充実や、再任用の促進にも繋がる可能性が高い。

最後の目的は、任用満了前に退職する参加者から回答を集めることにより、早期退職に関連する主な要因を見出し、任用期間満了まで参加を促すソリューションを提案することである。どうしても個人的な理由がある場合は、それを防止することはできない。しかし、任用満了後も日本に住み続けたい参加者の場合は、退職の要因は4月から始まる雇用の季節が関係しているという。個人的な理由による退職は難しいが、4月から来日する参加者については解決できる可能性がある。

提案

回答者が寄せたフィードバックを踏まえて、昇進する機会や資格を取得する機会の増加が、参加者の再任用する希望に繋がることが分かった。このため、個人の指導力を向上させる研修の機会や、日本語学習のサポート、または2012年12月に発表した「職場におけるALTの活用」にて進言した職責の拡大をあわせて提案したい。

JET参加者の募集・着任研修などは膨大な資金が必要となることから、現役参加者の勤務地変更・転勤をより柔軟に行うことについて、更なる調査や検討を提案したい。例えば、勤務地の変更により参加者の私生活や仕事における満足度が上がったり、仕事面でスキルアップできたり、その他色々な面でより効率的な人材配置が期待できる。勤務地の変更を柔軟に許可することにより、参加者の定着率が上がり、新たな参加者の採用・研修に伴うコストの削減も可能になる。

最後に、勤務評定をより効率よく活用することを提案したい。本調査では、勤務評定が再任用の判断要素としては訳に立たなかったという回答者は圧倒的に多かった。評価や建設的なフィードバック、または勤務成績に関する資料などを参加者に提供すると、同時に参加者のモチベーションを促し、職場との絆を強化することができる。任用団体が自発的に参加者を既存の勤務評定制度に含めたり、それ以外のフィードバックも担当者から貰い、そして成長し、最後にその経験を同僚に伝えたりする機会にも繋がる。

質問

- 1 2012年8月3日に成立した労働契約法の改正により、同じ職場で5年を超えて働いている人が希望すれば、期限を定めない雇用契約に転換できるようになります(日本経済新聞2012年8月3日号「改正労働契約法、勤続5年で無期限雇用 パート待遇改善へ道」を参照)。任用団体マニュアル4-18の注意書きによると、オセアニア4月来日者の最大任用期間は5年4ヶ月となります。全てのJETプログラム参加者が、労働基準法など既存の法律によって採用されるとAJETは認識しています。今後、以上の条件を満たすオセアニア4月来日者から希望があった場合、任用団体側には無期限の雇用契約に転換する義務があると理解してもよろしいでしょうか？
- 2 CLAIRは、勤務評定に関する統計を任用団体から集めているのでしょうか？もしそうなら、集めた統計をどのように活用しますか？
- 3 日本では4月から始まる年度・学年に合わせて、4月来日者の人数を増やす予定はありますか？もしある場合、CLAIRや各省は、参加者の採用、選考、再任用、そして定着の面においてどのような影響を期待していますか？
- 4 報酬制度が新しく導入されて、今年が1年目です。新制度は再任用される人数に影響を及ぼしている気配はありますか？AJETが今後行う調査を通じて調べる価値があると思いますか？
- 5 募集・選考の段階において、優秀で高度なモチベーションを持つ参加者の定着率を上げる目的で、現役参加者・元参加者がもっとも評価すべきと答えた性質は「柔軟性・順応性」、「異文化への寛容さ」、そして「チャレンジ精神」でした。これらの性質を評価するために、外務省は各大使館・総領事館にガイドラインを提供していますか？JETプログラムのこれまでの26年間では、参加者の選考においてどのような変化が見られますか？