



# OPINION EXCHANGE MEETING

**JET INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM  
AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

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MIC • MOFA • MEXT • CLAIR • AJET



# JET INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although grassroots internationalisation is one of the primary objectives of the JET Programme, this report explores another aspect of the impact JET Programme participants have on Japan: their contributions to tourism and the economy. This report is based upon the results of an Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) survey distributed to both current and alumni JET Programme participants.

The scope of the survey includes:

- attendance of and participation in public events
- visits to and recommendations of local attractions and tourist sites
- influence on visitors to Japan
- levels and types of direct involvement in tourism and economic activities
- involvement and contributions of JET Programme alumni

The survey found that while a minority (31%) of current JET Programme participant respondents reported direct involvement in tourism and economic activities, a majority (84% of respondents) would be willing to participate in such enterprises. Additionally, while only 16% of alumni respondents indicated that they were currently involved, 93% believed that they could contribute to tourism and economic activities in one way or another.

The survey also revealed that more than half of participants have visited local attractions in their municipalities (66%) and prefectures (79%), while the same is true for 85% and 97% of alumni respectively. A majority of respondents (74% of current participants and 83% of alumni) indicated that they had also recommended them to other people. Finally, of the 53% of current participants and 89% of alumni who indicated that their friends and/or family had visited Japan based on their recommendation or presence in Japan, 83% of current participants and 94% of alumni believed that their visitors would not have come without their own involvement.

This report concludes that:

- JET Programme participants, both current and alumni, are capable of contributing to tourism and economic initiatives in Japan and willing to do so, representing a possibly untapped resource. Such possible contributions include things such as a non-Japanese perspective, knowledge of local areas, and language skills.
- JET Programme participants contribute to the promotion of local attractions and tourist sites through their own visits to such sites and recommendations to others, in addition to promotion through work and volunteer activities.
- JET Programme participants can have a direct influence on the number and destinations of visitors to Japan by motivating those who may not have come otherwise to travel to the country.



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# INTRODUCTION

Although the main objective of the JET Programme is to promote grassroots internationalisation through assistance with foreign language education and international exchange, participants also affect their communities and Japan as a whole in many other ways as well. As a complement to a previous report examining JET involvement in their communities and in response to discussions held at the summer 2014 Opinion Exchange involving the Ministry of Internal 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), this report examines another aspect of JET Programme participants' impact: their contributions to tourism and other economy-related areas.

The first section of the report examines the types of indirect impact JET Programme participants may have on tourism and the economy.

To begin, the report seeks to determine how often participants attend and participate in public events such as festivals, exhibitions, and concerts, to provide a general background of their community involvement and possible contributions to local economies.

This is followed by an analysis of whether or not participants have visited local attractions and tourist sites in their municipalities and prefectures and whether those visits were followed by recommendations to others. The report then examines the numbers and motivations of guests that participants have welcomed to the country in order to determine how the presence of JET Programme participants can encourage visitors from abroad to travel to Japan.

Next, the report assesses the direct involvement of JET Programme participants in tourism and economic activities. It details factors influencing levels of involvement and also discusses what forms this involvement takes.

The final section analyses JET Programme alumni, comparing their responses with those of current participants and examining whether they are involved in Japan-related tourism or economic activities and the nature and possibilities of such contributions.

## METHODOLOGY

The data used in this report came from two surveys conducted by the Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) over the period from September 26, 2014 to October 13, 2014. These surveys were distributed to current and former JET Programme participants using an online survey development tool. The surveys consisted of 27-32 questions in a variety of formats including 'Yes' or 'No', multiple choice, and free response, all of which were written in English.

The surveys were divided into 4 main sections, with one additional section in the survey for alumni JET Programme participants: participation in and attendance of local events, whether or not participants had visited local attractions and/or recommended them to others, JET involvement in tourism and economic activities, and how many visitors had come to see them in Japan. For alumni participants, in addition to the four sections listed above with respect to their time on JET, an additional section covered their current post-JET involvement in tourism and economic activities.

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
- AJET: The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching
- JET: Japan Exchange and Teaching (Programme)

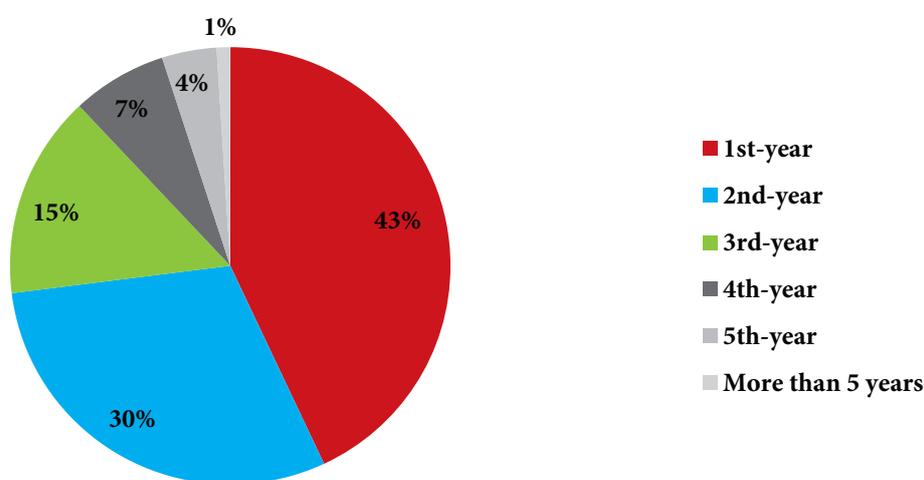
For the purposes of this report, survey percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Survey Sample

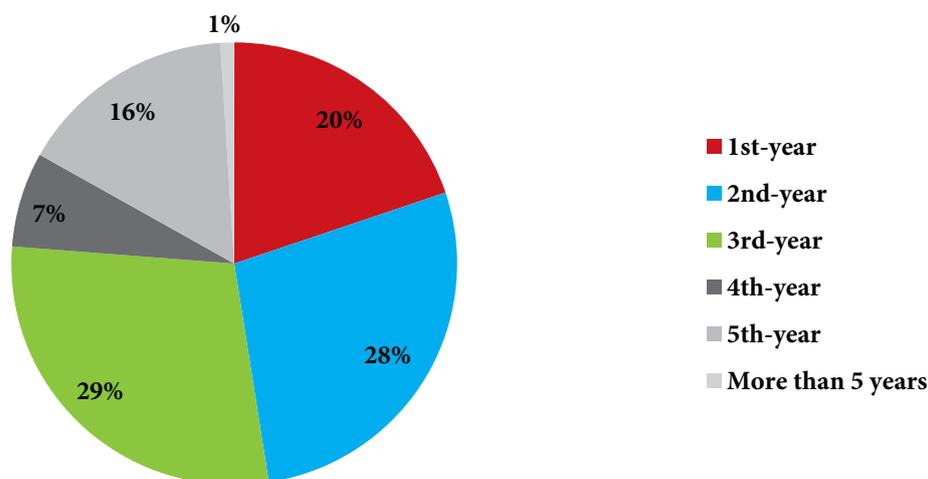
These surveys collected responses from a total of 1,121 JET Programme participants, which is approximately 25% of the total current JET Programme population in Japan, as well as 335 JET alumni.

Among current JET Programme participants, the largest proportion of respondents identified themselves as being in their first year on the JET Programme (43%), with second- and third-year participants being the next most populous groups (30% and 15%, respectively). Among alumni, the largest proportion of respondents had participated in the Programme for 3 years (29%), followed by two years (28%) and one year (20%). The graphs below show the complete breakdown of respondents by year or number of years spent on the JET Programme.

### Year on JET (Current Participants)



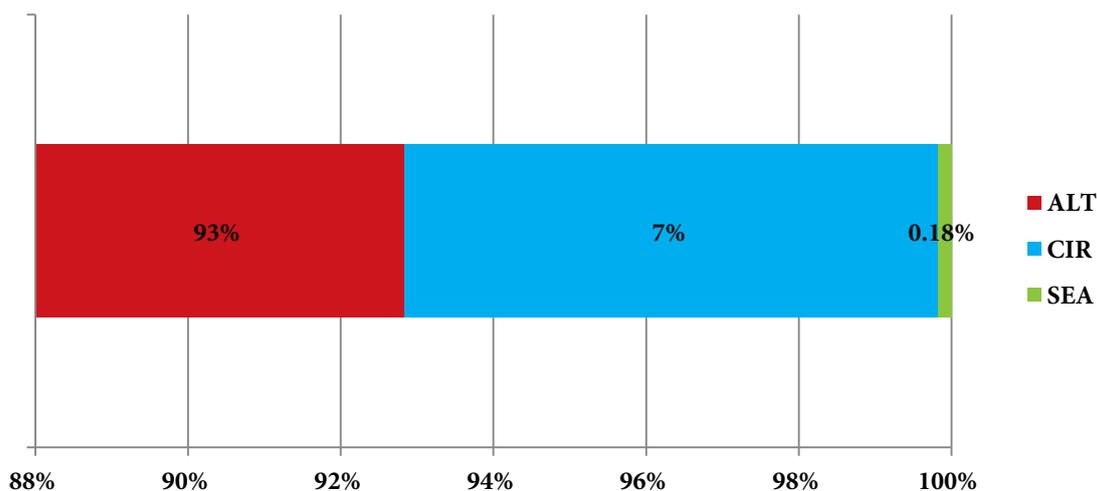
### Years on JET (Alumni)



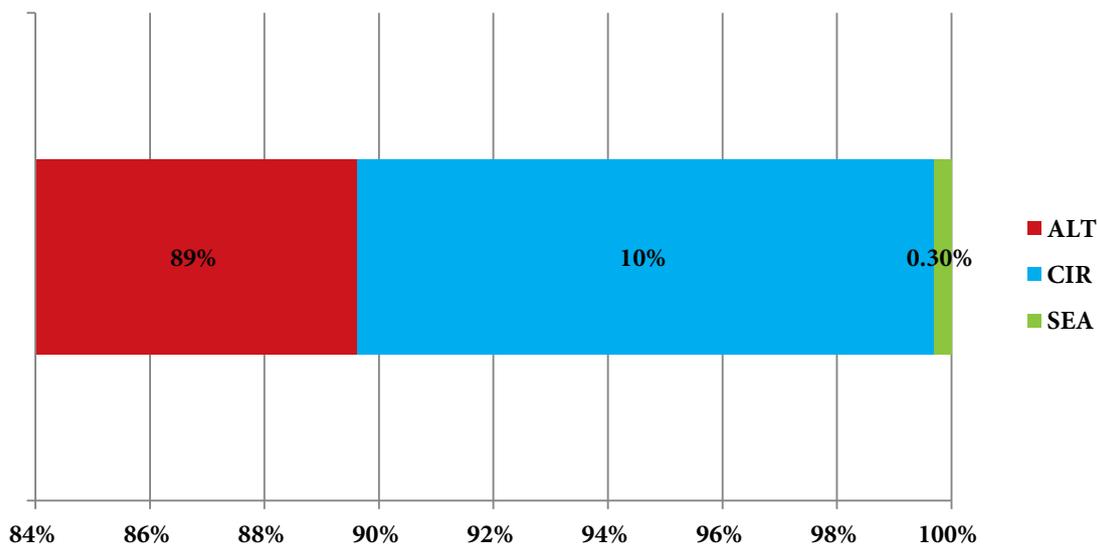
*Note: Although the current maximum JET Programme tenure is 5 years, 'More than 5 years' is used to denote JET participants who have a combined total of more than 5 years over 2 or more separate appointments.*

The majority of respondents (93% of current participants and 89% of alumni) are or were Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) accounted for 7% and 10% of current and alumni respondents respectively, and the remaining survey respondents were Sports Exchange Advisors (SEAs), though at a total sample size of 3 people among two surveys, they represent less than 1% of the total respondents. These figures closely mirror the demographics of the JET Programme population as a whole, in which 91% are ALTs, 8% are CIRs, and 0.25% are SEAs. The graphs below show the breakdown of respondents by job type.

### Position on the JET Programme (Current Participants)



### Position on the JET Programme (Alumni)



*Note: With respect to the sample sizes of survey respondents in comparison with the total number of JET Programme participants and alumni, it should be noted that as the current number of JET alumni totals over 60,000 participants since the Programme's inception, this survey sample is by no means representative of all alumni; however, it helps provide additional insight on some JET Programme participants' activities beyond their contract terms. Additionally, while the sample size for ALTs and current JET Programme participants as a whole are statistically representative, there is not a representative sample size for CIRs or SEAs. Therefore, while job type will be used throughout the report to clarify observations and inferences, it should not be considered representative of JET Programme participants in these positions unless additional research is performed.*

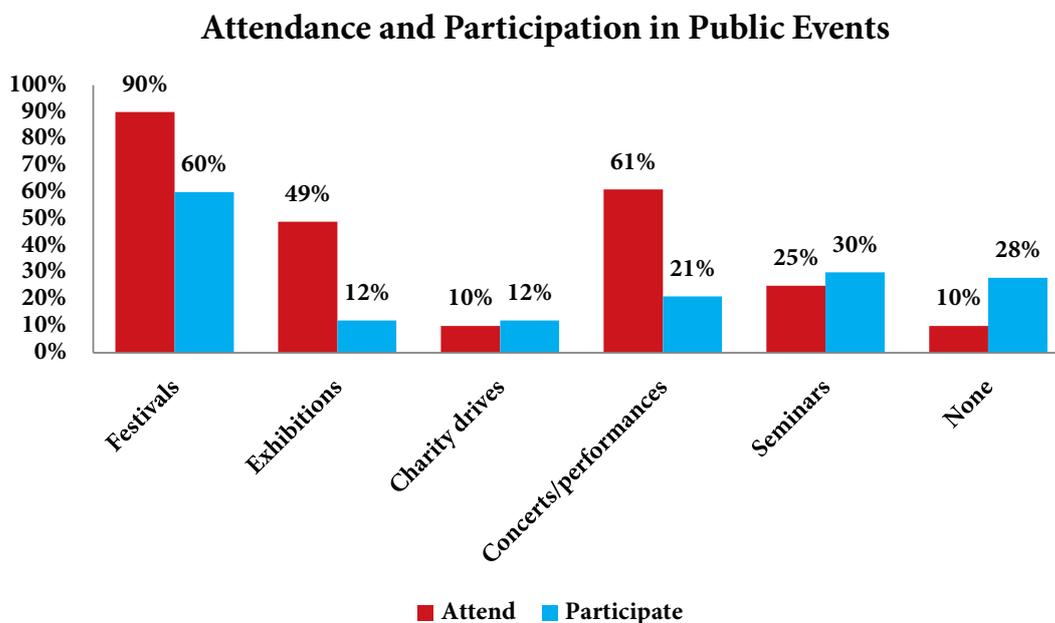
# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## JET Impact on Tourism and Economy

This section seeks to explore possible ways in which JET Programme participants indirectly impact tourism and local economies in Japan. First, it provides an overview of how often participants attend and/or participate in public events such as festivals and concerts. Next, it will examine participants' visits to and recommendation of local attractions and tourism sites. The final section details the influence that JET Programme participants' presence can have on visitors to Japan.

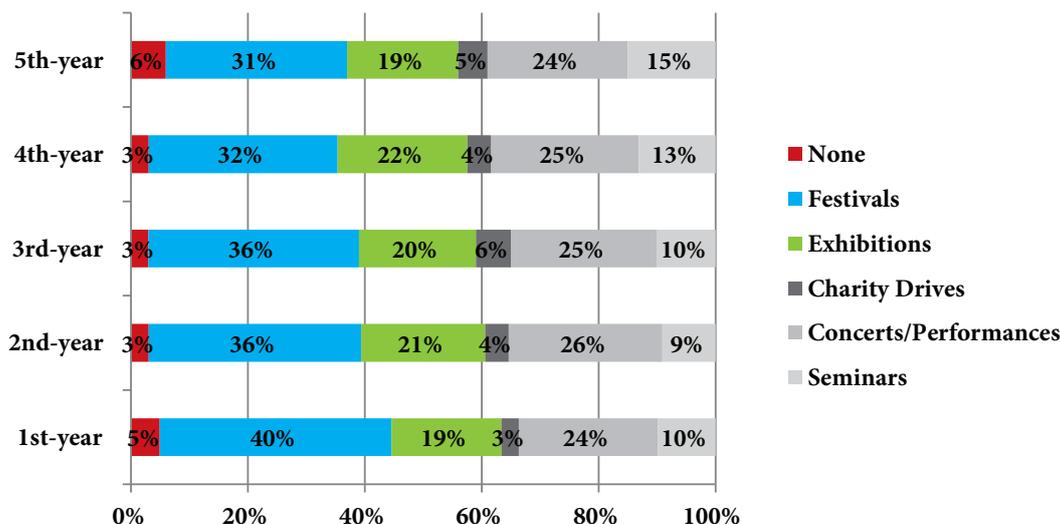
### Public Event Participation and Attendance

To gain a general idea of JET Programme participants' involvement in their communities, survey respondents were asked about their participation in and attendance of public events.



Overall, the data shows that JET Programme participants are active in attending public events, with only 10% and 28% of respondents respectively indicating that they do not regularly attend or participate in public events.

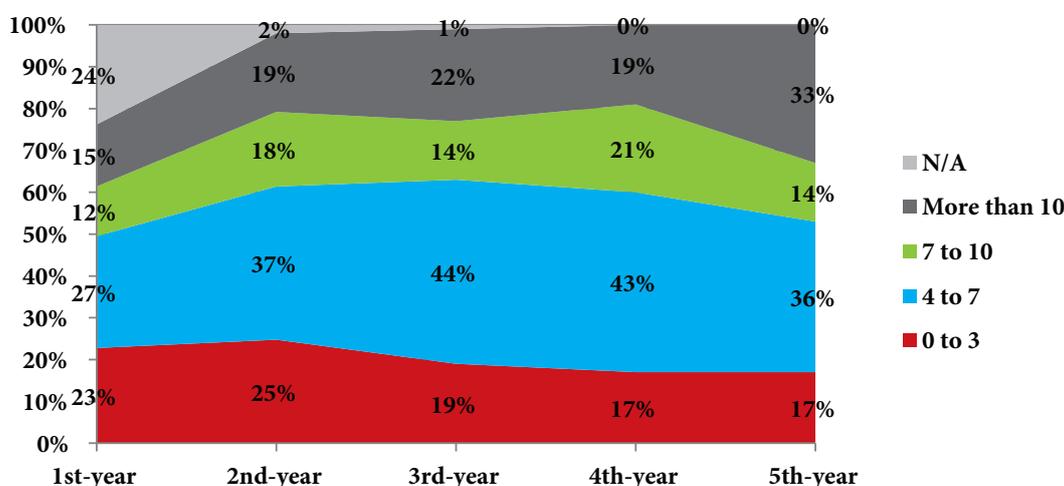
## Public Event Attendance By Year



Despite the fact that most first-year respondents had only been in Japan for a few months, they attended community events at approximately the same rate as participants who had been in Japan longer. Festivals attracted the most attendance, with at least 30% of respondents from each year indicating attendance, as well as the most participation, with 40% of first- through fourth-years and 32% of fifth-years. Charity drives had the lowest attendance and participation, and although the causes are unclear, one responded noted that, “I haven’t seen many charity drives in my area. We do volunteer work more often.”

Respondents also listed a variety of other examples of community and school involvement. For community involvement, respondents participated in marathons, local sports competitions, *yosakoi* dance teams, cooking classes, *taiko* drumming groups, NPO radio shows, salsa classes and many more events, whereas for school involvement, respondents mentioned activities such as school summer festivals, school sports festivals, rice harvesting events and prefectural football tournaments.

## Average Yearly Participation in Public Events By Year



The data also shows that as JET Programme participants spend more time in Japan, they tend to participate in more events per year. The percentage of respondents participating in 0-3 events per year decreases slightly as

they spend more time in Japan, from 23% of first-year participants to 17% of fifth-year participants, while the percentage of respondents participating in 4-7, 7-10 and more than 10 events per year increases the longer they have been in Japan: 36% of fifth-year respondents participate in 4-7 events per year and 33% indicated that they participate in more than 10 events per year, compared with 27% and 15% of first-years, respectively.

In addition, despite some first-year participants stating that they were unaware of local events, the data actually shows that the largest percentage of first-year respondents participate in 4-7 events per year and 15% said they participate in 10 or more events in their communities.

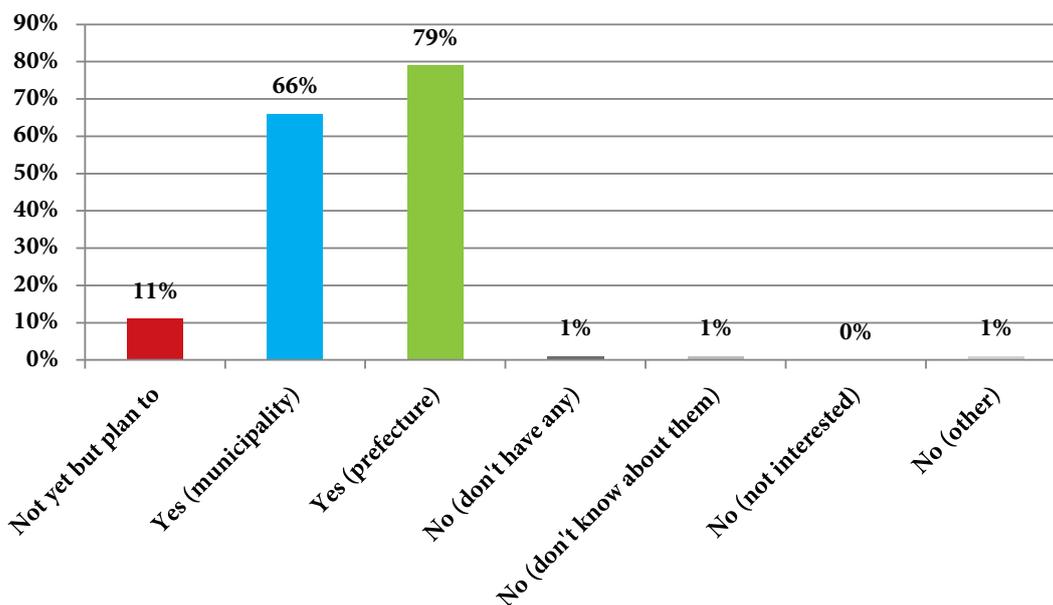
In addition to indicating the high level of JET Programme participants' involvement in their communities, these results also imply that their attendance and participation contribute to their local economies.

## JET Visits to and Recommendations of Local Attractions

### Visits to Local Attractions/Tourist Sites

The majority of respondents have visited local attractions and tourist sites in their municipalities (66%) and in their prefectures (79%), and overall, less than 3% of total respondents reported that they had not visited such places and did not intend to, citing reasons such as a lack of tourism sites or lack of interest.

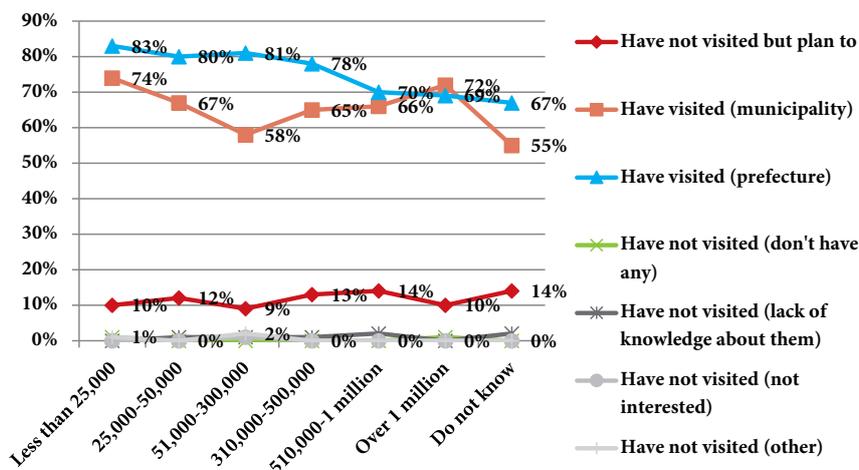
### Have you visited the local attractions/tourist sites in your municipality/prefecture?



Additionally, 11% of respondents reported that they have not been to local attractions yet but plan to do so in the future.

Of these, a large number (84%) were first-years; this relative enthusiasm for local tourism is reflected in some written responses, such as one respondent who asserted, "Only visited some so far, but plan on visiting more soon!" Similarly, most of the respondents (64%) who indicated that they had not visited such places because they did not know about them were first-year participants. It is worth noting that at the time of this survey, most first-year participants had only been in Japan for approximately 2-3 months. Results showed that most JET Programme participants, regardless of number of years on JET, visit tourist sites and other local attractions in their town and prefecture.

### Visits to Local Attractions By Municipality Size

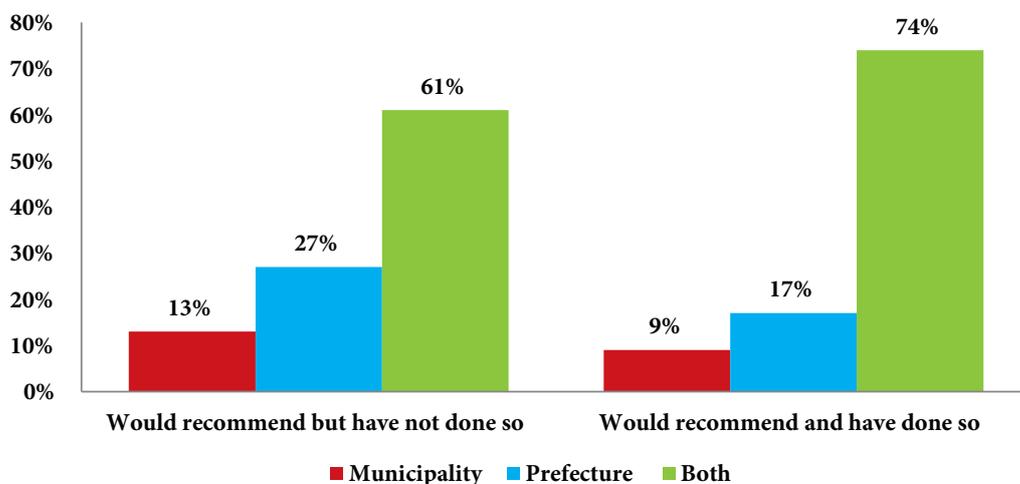


A high proportion of JET Programme participants reported having visited tourist sites in their municipalities and prefectures, ranging from 55% to 83% of respondents across all municipality sizes, including those who were not sure how large their municipality was. This indicates that a majority of participants will visit local attractions and tourist sites regardless of the size of their municipalities.

### Recommendations to Others

Almost all survey respondents reported either having recommended local attractions to others or being willing to do so. The 3% of respondents who indicated that they would not recommend local attractions to others cited reasons such as “There isn’t really much that is exciting in my town or prefecture,” “The city in which I live in is not very friendly to foreigners,” and “I would recommend them to those who are in the area, but they are not worth travelling to from far/outside the area.”

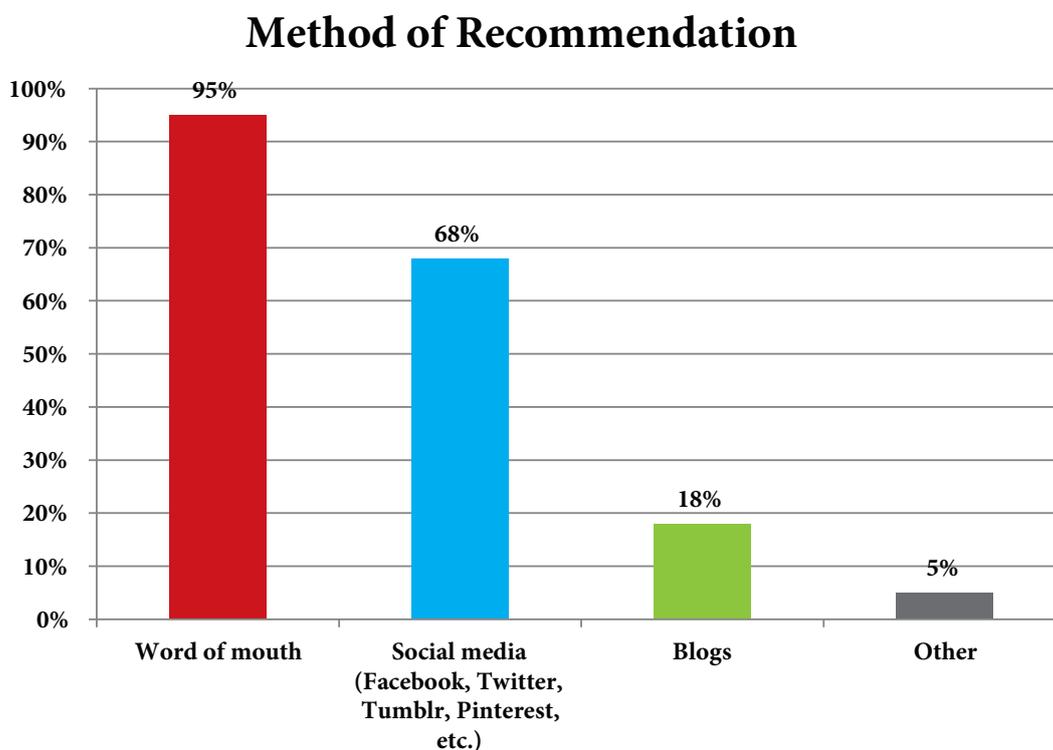
### Recommendations of Local Attractions/Tourist Sites to Others



As for the nature of the recommendations themselves, 74% of those who have made recommendations did so with respect to both their municipality and their prefecture, in comparison to 9% who had recommended only their municipalities and 17% who recommended only their prefectures. Of respondents who reported that they would recommend sites but had not yet done so, the numbers were similar, with 61% of respondents indicating they would recommend both their municipality and prefecture, in comparison with 13% and 27% respectively of municipality and prefecture alone. This remained consistent across all municipality sizes, meaning this effect is not limited to larger and more well-known cities.

From this, it can be concluded that the majority of JET Programme participants visit local attractions and tourism sites in their municipalities and prefectures, and subsequently make recommendations of those places to others, thereby contributing to the promotion of those areas.

## Method of Recommendation



A majority of survey respondents (95%) said they would make or have made recommendations by word of mouth. Social media was the next most popular approach to make recommendations, with 68% of respondents answering this way. An additional 5% of respondents specified “other” methods, which included two main lines of activities, the first being work activities such as creating newsletters, working on their local area’s tourism web page, giving presentations to foreign representatives, and putting on tours for foreign residents to encourage blogging in their native languages. Some examples are listed below:

- *“I work in the Industry and Tourism department in my town hall, and part of my job is actively marketing my town to foreign destinations. I help create targeted newsletters for 3 foreign country [sic] and call tour operators in the UK, Singapore and Hong Kong.”*
- *“City’s webpage (I’m a CIR, so it’s my job).”*
- *“Part of my job is promoting tourism through email newsletters, presentations to foreign dignitaries and representatives, and prefecture-sponsored tours for foreign residents (“Ambassadors”) to see the prefecture and blog about tourism in their native languages.”*

- *“Through work -- at places like Travel Mart (industry oriented) and through the “regional presentation and discussions” I plan and hold at prefectural orientation for new JETs.”*

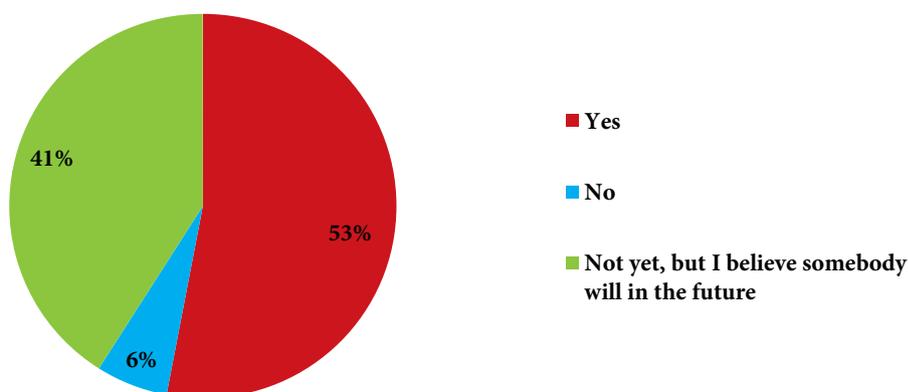
The second main line of activities focused on travel writing and other forms of journalism such as travel videos on YouTube. This included contributions to prefectural publications, showing visitors around in person, hosting people on couchsurfing.com, and writing articles on travel websites such as Japan Travel and Trip Advisor. The quotes below represent a sample of such responses:

- *“I have written articles for Yoka, the Kumamoto ALT newsletter. I have also written for the website Japan Travel.”*
- *“I run a page I made called KagoshimaVision to spread awareness about Kagoshima.”*
- *“Youtube travel videos”*
- *“I wrote a review of some of the Ski Resorts around our City.”*
- *“Adding information to articles on Wikis such as Wiki Travel.”*

From these results we can see that, while current JET participants conduct most of their recommendations of local events using word of mouth, many other mediums are used such as social media and travel websites. The results also serve to highlight the significant contribution of JET Programme participants who work for local governments. From this we can suggest that local governments that do not have JET Programme participants working in their tourism departments could appeal to them to assist with promoting events if they are not already doing so.

### JET Influence on Visitors to Japan

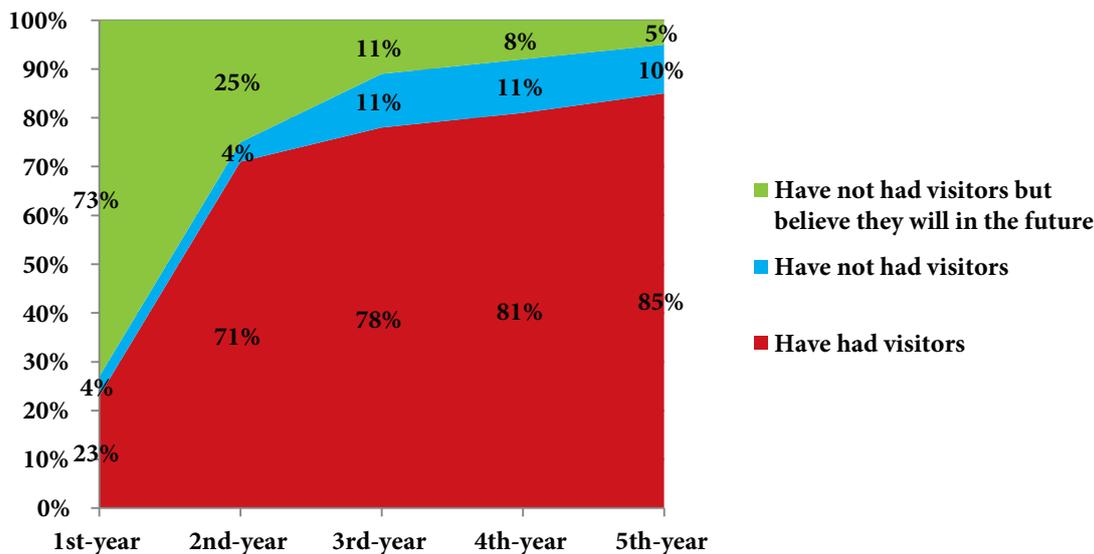
**Have any of your family/friends/acquaintances visited Japan because of your recommendation or due to your presence in Japan?**



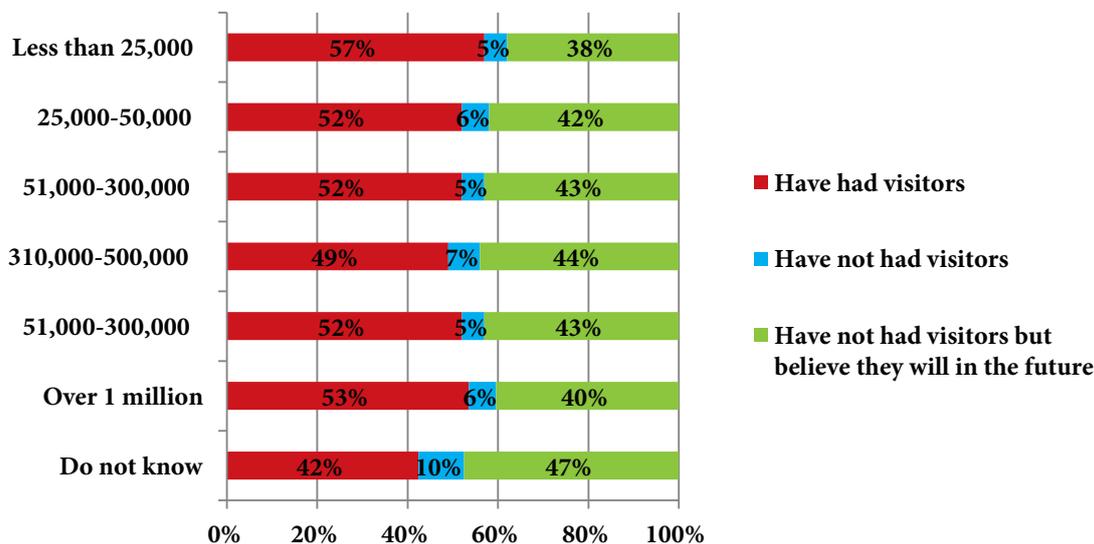
When it comes to visitors to Japan, 53% of survey respondents indicated that their families and/or friends visited Japan based on their recommendation or because of their presence in Japan, in addition to another 41% of respondents who believed that people would visit in the future. Only 6% of respondents said they had no visitors and were not expecting any, demonstrating that JET Programme participants help attract visitors to

Japan. Additionally, the longer the JET Programme participants had been in Japan, the more likely they were to have visitors. When this survey was done, most first-year participants had been in Japan for a period of only 2-3 months. Despite this, 23% of them had already had visitors and another 73% were expecting some during their time in Japan. The number of respondents who had already had visitors saw a sharp increase from the second year onward (71% for second-year respondents, 78% for third-years, 81% for fourth-years and 85% for fifth-years).

### Visitors By Year

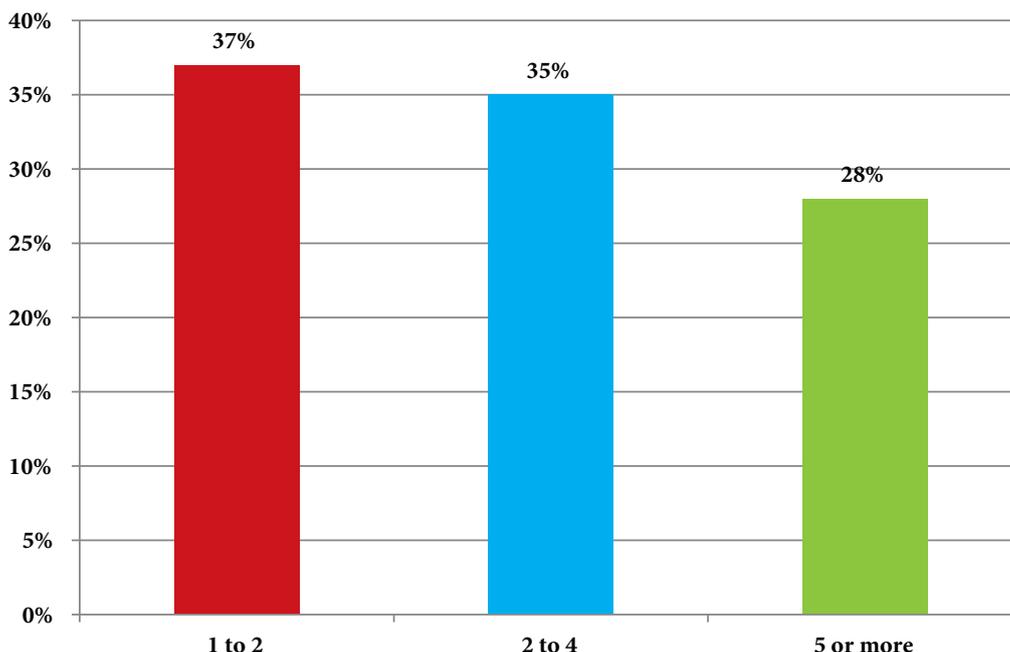


### Visitors By Municipality Size



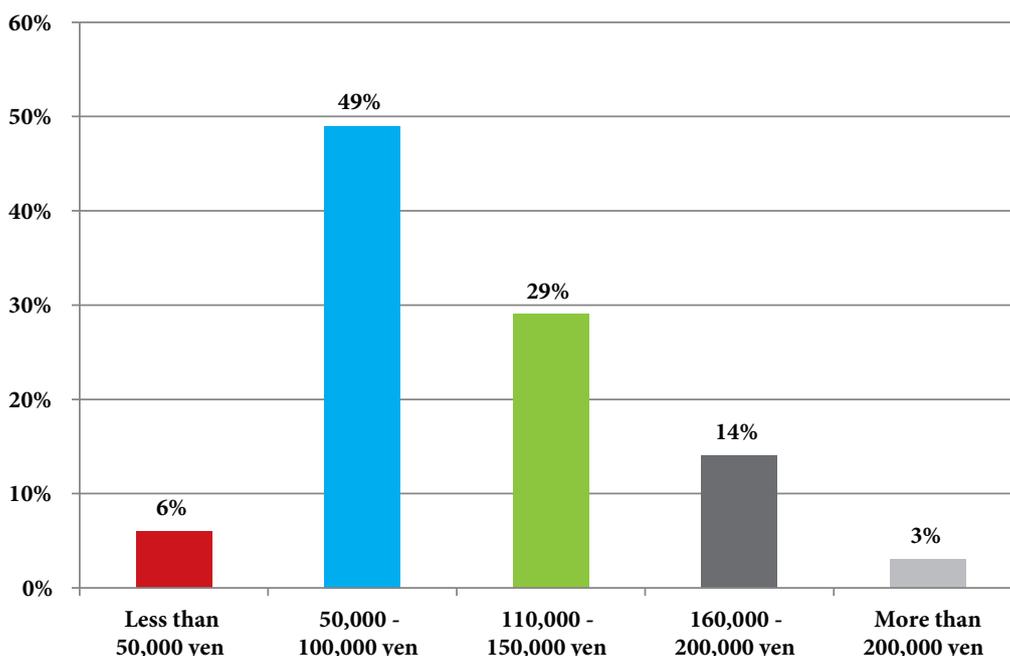
Municipality size did not significantly impact the responses, with 42-57% of respondents of all municipality sizes reporting having had visitors and approximately 38-44% indicating that they were expecting some in the future. However, it is interesting to note that 57% of respondents in municipalities of less than 25,000 people reported having visitors, the highest percentage among the municipality sizes.

### Number of Visitors



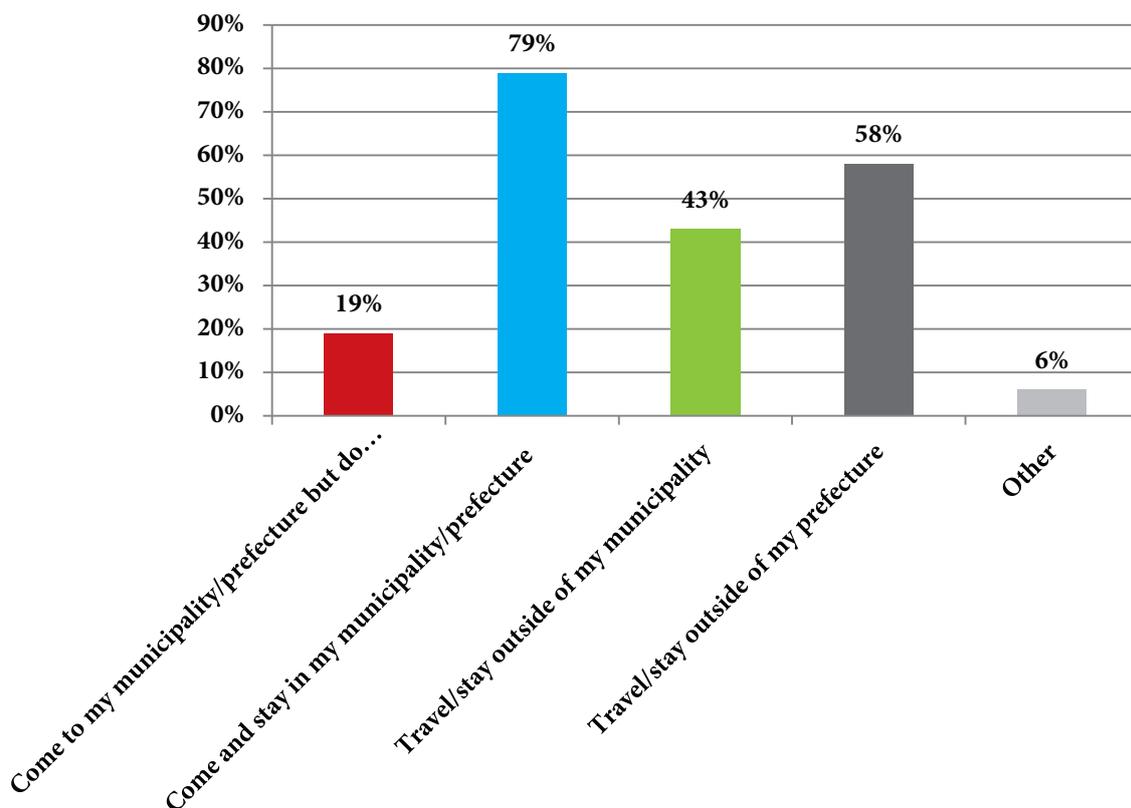
In terms of how many friends or family members were likely to visit or had visited, the number varied between one to four people (35-37% of respondents), with a slightly lower percentage of respondents indicating that 5 or more people would visit Japan (28%). The majority of respondents (76%) stated that those who visited them in Japan stayed for 1-2 weeks, while 8% of respondents said less than a week and 12% indicated stays of 3-4 weeks. Only 2% of respondents had guests stay for a period longer than 4 weeks. Some respondents have indicated that their significant other has moved to Japan with them, in addition to those who mentioned that friends and family living in other parts of Japan have visited and stayed with the JET participant.

### Average Spending Per Visitor



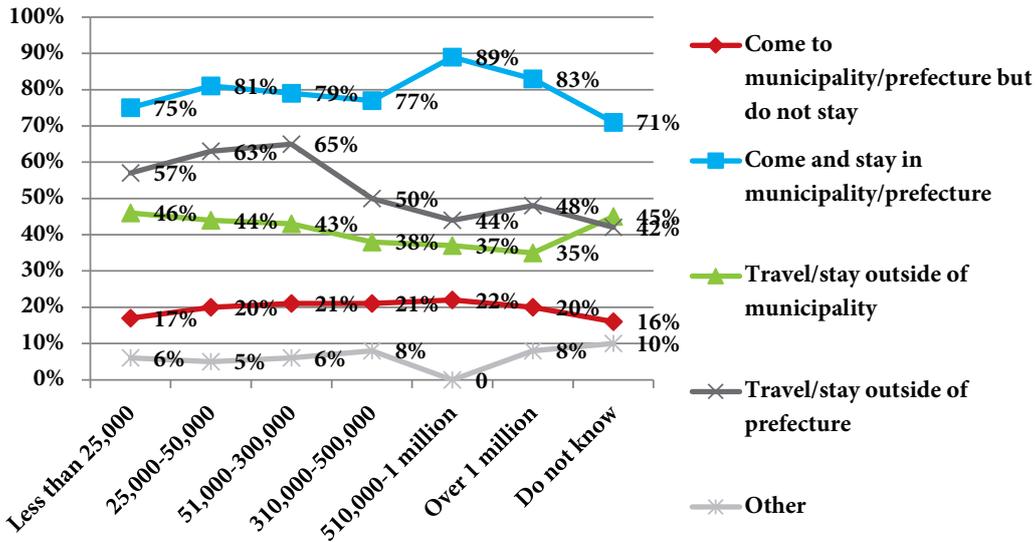
When asked about how much their visitors spent during their stays, about half of the respondents (49%) reported that they thought their guests spent between 50,000-100,000 yen while only 6% estimated the expense at less than 50,000 yen. The remaining respondents reported their visitors spending amounts from 110,000-800,000 yen. If each JET Programme participant had an average of 2 guests who spent 100,000 each, it would equate to a tourist revenue of roughly 8.95 million yen per year. Considering the range of the average number of guests and estimated spending, this could be a very conservative estimate.

### Do your visitors usually come to stay in your own municipality/prefecture or do they travel?



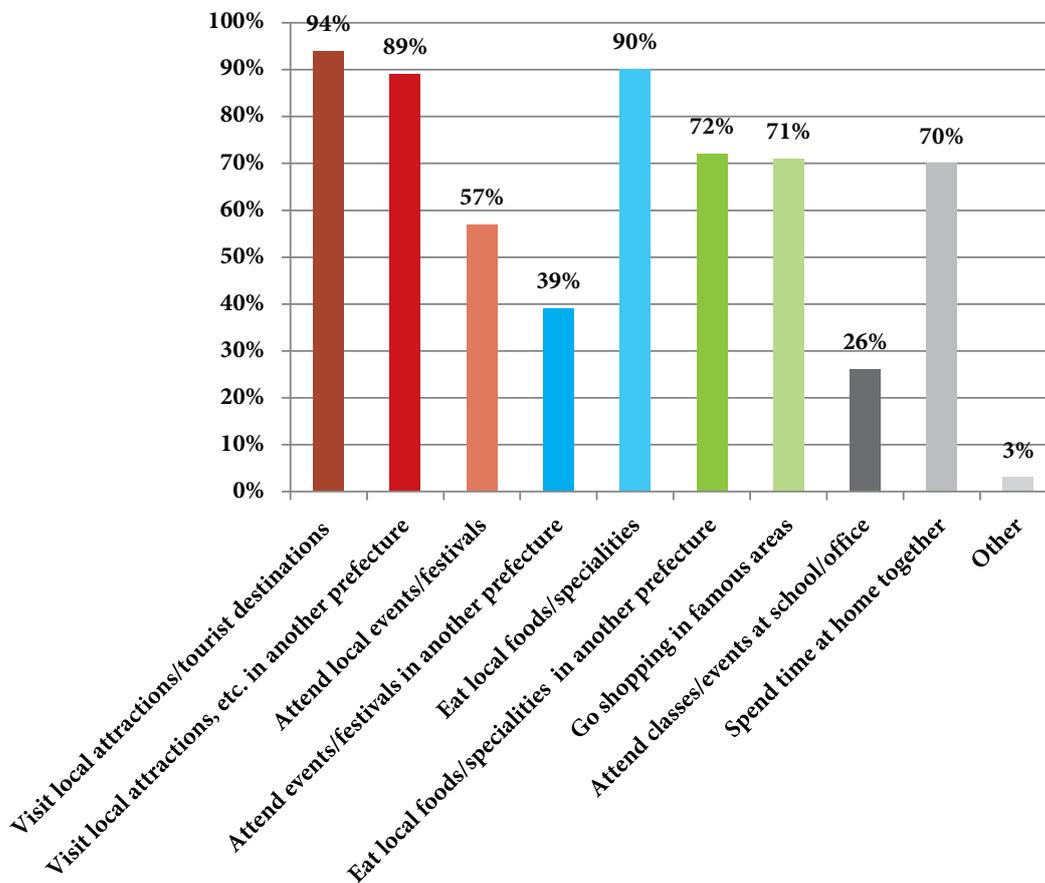
Only 19% of respondents said that their visitors came to their municipality/prefecture but did not stay, indicating that the majority of JET Programme participants bring in guests who stay in their local areas. At the same time, almost half (43%) indicated that their guests travelled and/or stayed outside of their hometowns, while over half (58%) also indicated that they did so outside of the prefecture in which the JET lived. This indicates roughly half of JET visitors to Japan both visit the participant’s local areas and travel to other destinations, widening their economic impact.

### Visitor Lodgings By Municipality Size



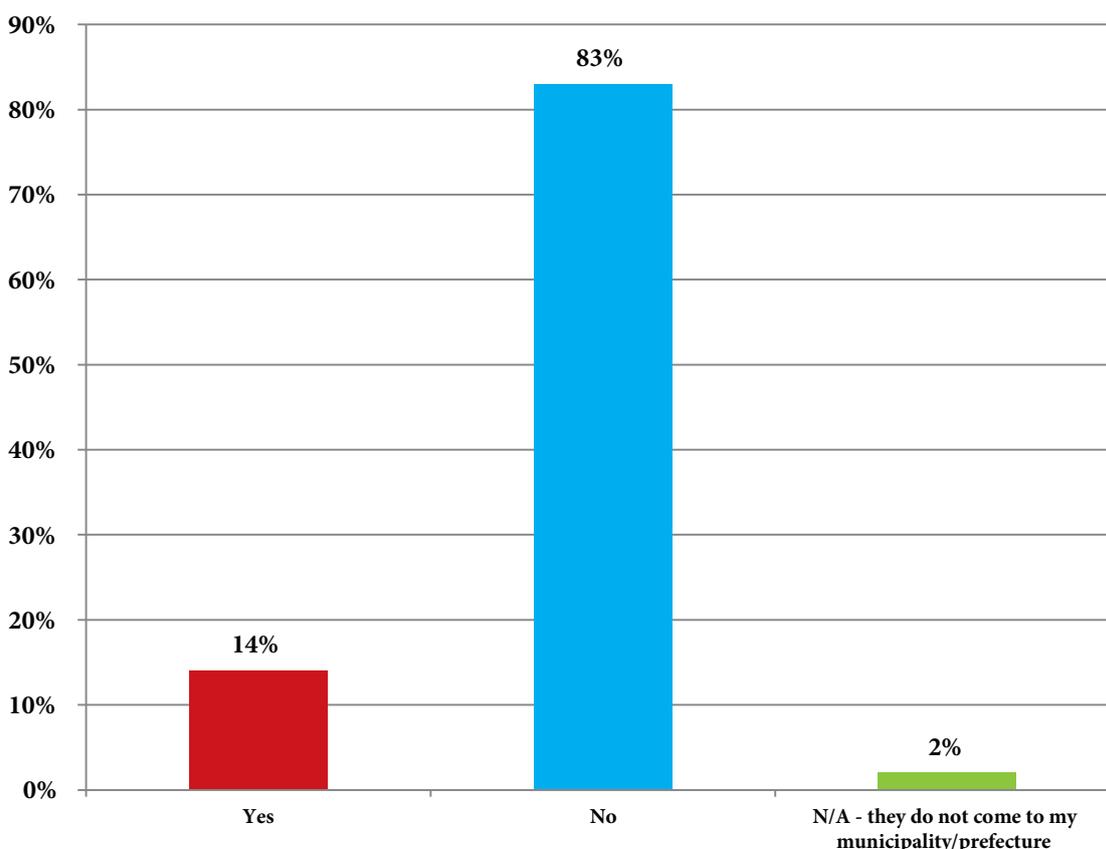
Municipality size did not seem to have much of an influence of whether or not people stayed in JET Programme participants’ local municipalities and prefectures, with approximately 71-89% of respondents from all municipality sizes reporting that their guests stayed in their town and/or prefecture.

### Types of Activities



The most common activities done together included visiting local attractions/tourist destinations (94%), eating local foods/specialties (90%), and visiting attractions/tourist destinations in other prefectures (89%). This indicates that many visitors experience not only local attractions and foods but those in other areas as well. Conversely, the most uncommon activities undertaken by visitors were school and class visits. Municipality size did not have a significant influence on whether or not guests saw local attractions/tourist destinations, with 92-98% of respondents from all city sizes reporting that they did. This suggests that even in smaller municipalities, guests will visit local tourist sites.

### Do you think your guest(s) would have come to your municipality/prefecture if you were not living there?



The majority of participants (83%) believe that their guests would not have come to their towns/prefectures if they themselves had not been living there. There were 346 comments written by respondents to explain this, the majority of which gave reasons why visitors would make a point to visit the JET Programme participant’s placement.

The most common reason that respondents cited for believing that they were the cause for their visitors’ arrival in Japan was that that their municipalities were not otherwise well-known outside of Japan. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of those who wrote responses indicated that their placement is not somewhere a tourist would typically visit. The following is an example of such comments:

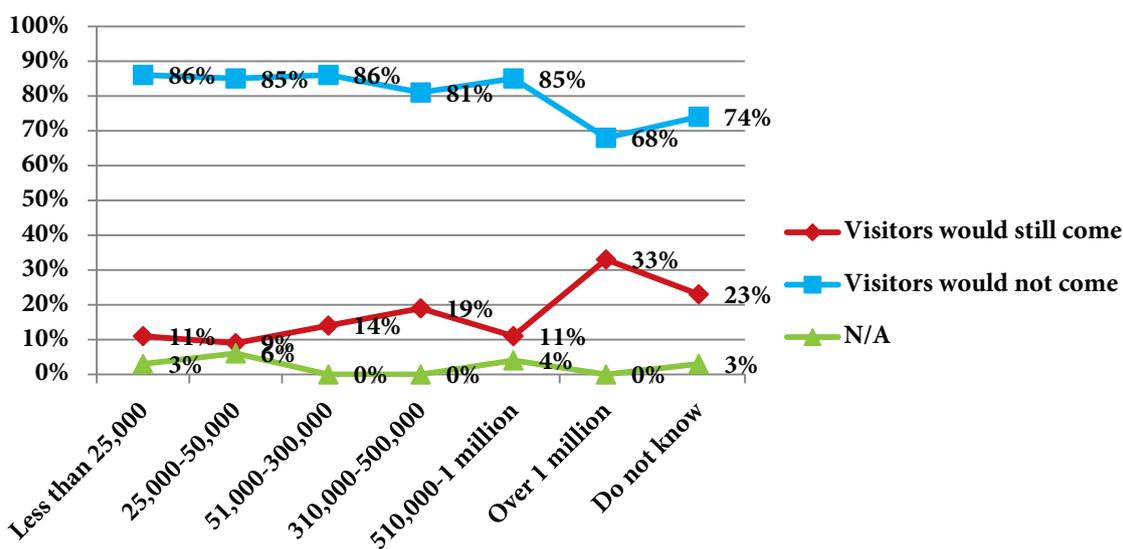
*“Most people generally stick to the main tourist cities/attractions (e.g. Tokyo, Kyoto, ski resorts, etc) when visiting Japan. There are generally time and money constraints when you travel, so unless they’re visiting someone, it’s unlikely that they’ll go to a place that isn’t considered a tourist attraction.”*

Other reasons given were that their local area was remote or hard to access, and that the main purpose of the visit was to see them. Other reasons included concerns with the language or the fact that local areas did not have many attractions that would draw visitors otherwise.

*“...the fact that none of my guests speak Japanese, and you would have to speak at least a little Japanese to enjoy it here/get what’s going on around you.”*

The percentage of respondents who believed their guests would not come to their municipalities and/or prefectures if they had not been there generally decreased with municipality size, with 86% of those living in municipalities of less than 25,000 residents believing this to be true, as opposed to 68% of those who lived in municipalities of over 1 million. In other words, only 11% of those living in municipalities of less than 25,000 thought their guests would have come to their town anyway, whereas 32% of those in municipalities of over 1 million did.

### Visitor Predictions By Municipality Size



This indicates that JET Programme participants are a direct cause of a certain amount of tourism to Japan, especially smaller areas that are less well-known abroad. The following quotes from respondents also demonstrate that the presence of JET Programme participants can serve as the motivation for people to visit Japan and even change their perceptions of the country for the better:

- *“I was the reason my friend came to visit. She had an interest in Japan before, but she wouldn’t have come if she didn’t already have a friend here.”*
- *“I am in my second month in JET and only had one visitor so far, but she did not intend to come to my city/prefecture until she learned that I was living here. I also know of other friends who intend to come visit me in the future only because they’ve heard how wonderful my prefecture is.”*
- *“None of my guests have been to Japan before I lived here. Most didn’t even have an interest in Japan before I lived here. One was actually STRONGLY against Japan before I moved here. After visiting me in Okinawa he now loves it very much and speaks about it often to his coworkers back home.”*

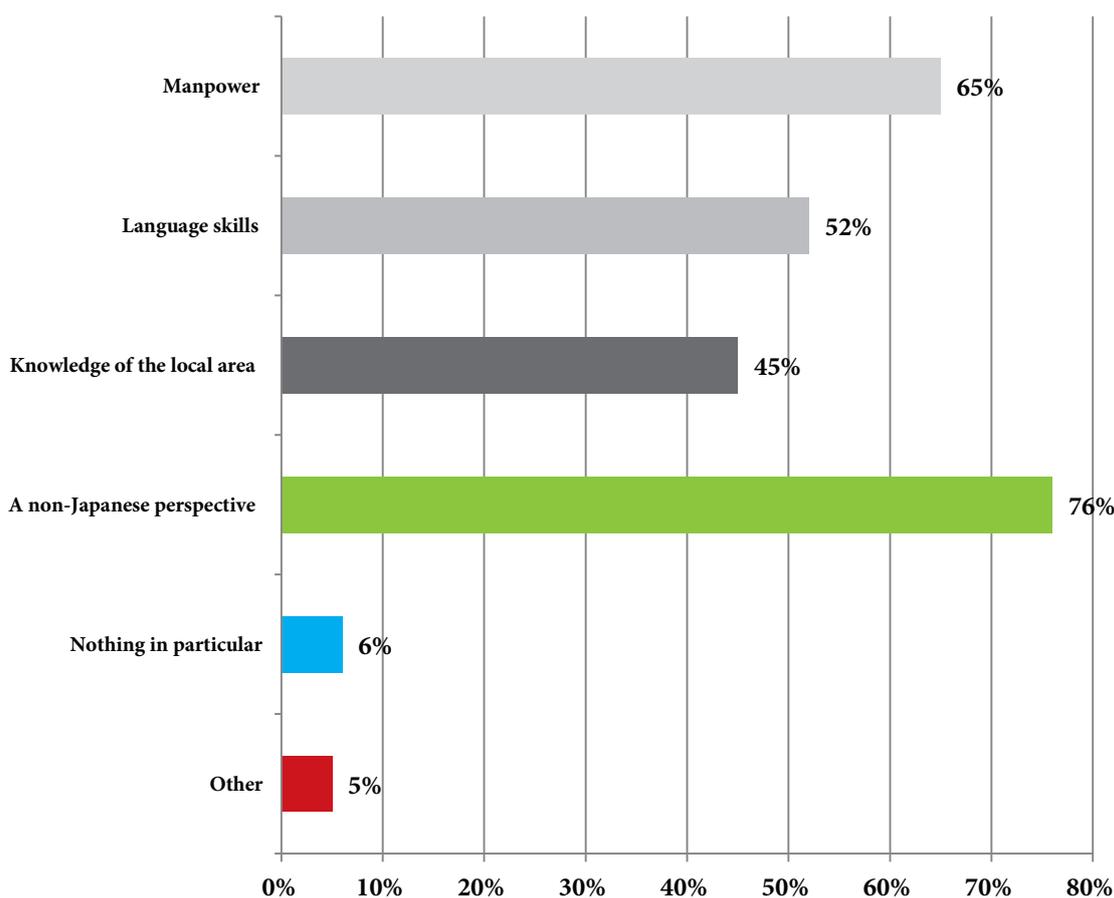
## JET Involvement in Tourism and Economic Activities

This section examines the more direct impact JET Programme participants are making on tourism and economic activities in Japan, by assessing what participants believe they can contribute to such activities, types of involvement, and barriers to involvement.

### Possible Contributions

When asked what they could contribute to tourism and economic activities in Japan, a majority of respondents indicated that they had something to contribute. Less than 9% of total respondents skipped this question, and those who responded “Nothing in particular” represented less than 7% of the total responses.

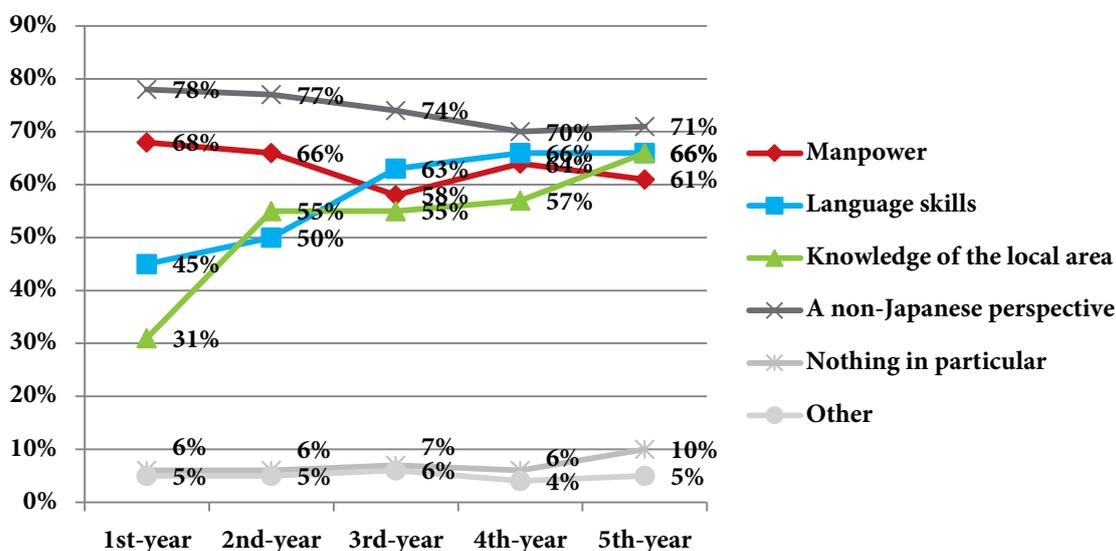
### Possible Contributions to Tourism/Economic Activities in Japan



“A non-Japanese perspective” was the most common response, at 76% of all respondents. This remained consistent when examining responses with respect to participants’ years on JET and municipality sizes, which suggests that years on JET and town size do not influence the ability of JET Programme participants to feel that “a non-Japanese perspective” is an important asset to tourism. Furthermore, it identifies a highly valuable opportunity for municipalities of all sizes to utilise JET Programme participants to better identify, understand, and cater to the needs of tourists and economic investors from foreign countries. To further underscore this, the lack of a decreasing trend in these areas over time suggests that culture shock and fatigue play little part in participants’ considerations, as even after 5 years, over 70% of respondents still felt they could contribute that

perspective.

### Possible Contributions By Year



The next most common contributions that respondents felt they could make were manpower, for example physical presence and assistance at events (65% of all respondents), and language skills such as translation and interpreting (52%). Almost half of all first- and second-year participants (45% and 50% respectively) felt they could contribute language skills in Japanese or their native tongue, and this percentage increased with the number of years on JET, to 63%, 66%, and 66% of third-, fourth-, and fifth-year participants, respectively. This indicates that JET Programme participants believe that their ability to contribute in language-related areas increases over time.

Similarly, respondents demonstrated that they feel more equipped to contribute knowledge of the local area as their time on the JET Programme increases. Although at the time of the survey, most first-year participants had only been in Japan for 2-3 months, almost a third (31%) already felt they could contribute, and the trend steadily increases for each year after the first, culminating at two-thirds of participants on their fifth year (66%). This trend suggests that as participants spend time on the JET Programme, they continue to learn more about their communities and feel they have knowledge worth sharing with respect to tourism and economic activities. Combined with their ability to supply a non-Japanese perspective and increasing linguistic capabilities over time, this survey might be considered strong evidence that current JET Programme participants could have meaningful impact on their local tourism and economic endeavours.

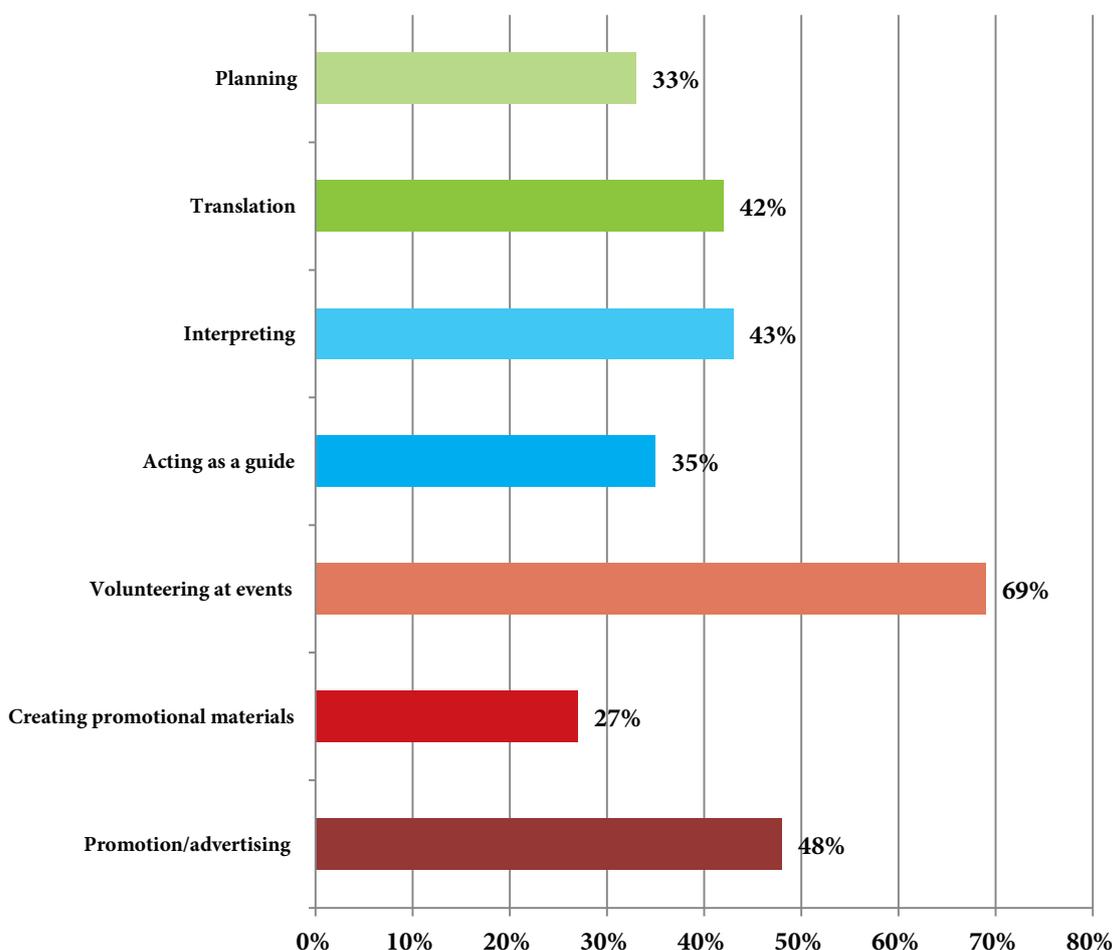
The written responses to this question highlight some possible areas in which those impacts could occur. Of the 50 people who wrote responses to this question, seven mentioned helping with website improvement or social media presence for their community. As technology becomes a more prevalent tool of the international tourism and business world, these skills will likely become more valuable to Japan and its various industries. As such, JET Programme participants may prove to be a strong asset in this regard. Other skills that respondents felt they could contribute included creative skills such as design and advertising, cultural knowledge, and word-of-mouth promotion.

## Current Involvement

Of the 1052 respondents to the question about involvement in local tourism and economic initiatives, more than half (69%) answered that they were not or had not been involved in such activities, leaving 31% of respondents who indicated that they were or had been involved. This section focuses on the latter, while the former is addressed in the following segment.

Of those current participants stating they were involved, the most common response chosen by respondents for this question was “Volunteering at events” (69%), followed by “Promotion/advertising” (48%) and “Translation” (42%).

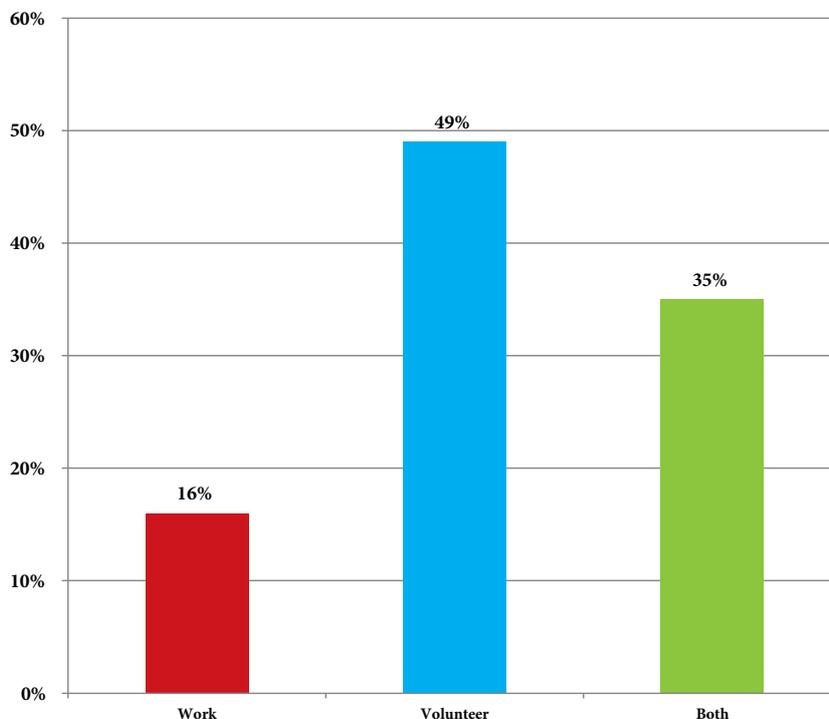
### Types of Contributions



There were also written comments detailing a wide range of additional types of involvement, including updating or creating English webpages, blogging or using other social media for promotion, assisting in their areas' efforts to become recognised as world heritage sites, and activities such as *“organising events that promote local food and sake producers”*.

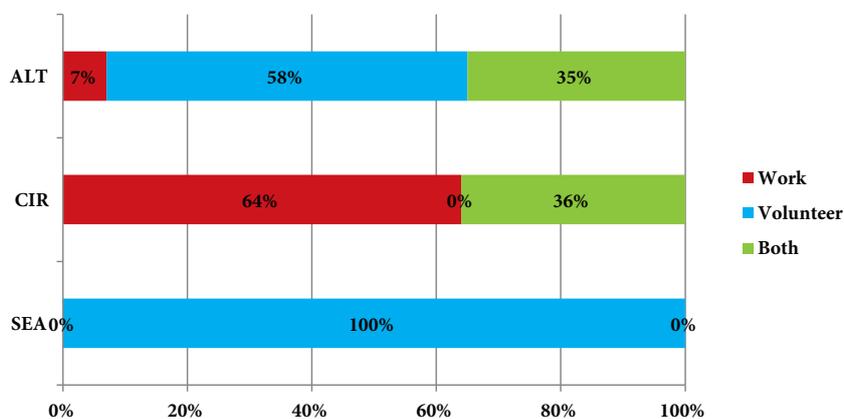
When current JET participants were asked if their involvement was for work or volunteer activities, nearly half (49%) of all respondents who reported that they had contributed said that they made contributions of their own volition while an additional 35% said their contributions were both voluntary and a facet of their job. Combined, this indicates that 84% of the JET participants who reported being involved in tourism and economic activities do so because they are actively interested in and willing to contribute to such efforts.

### Work vs. Volunteer



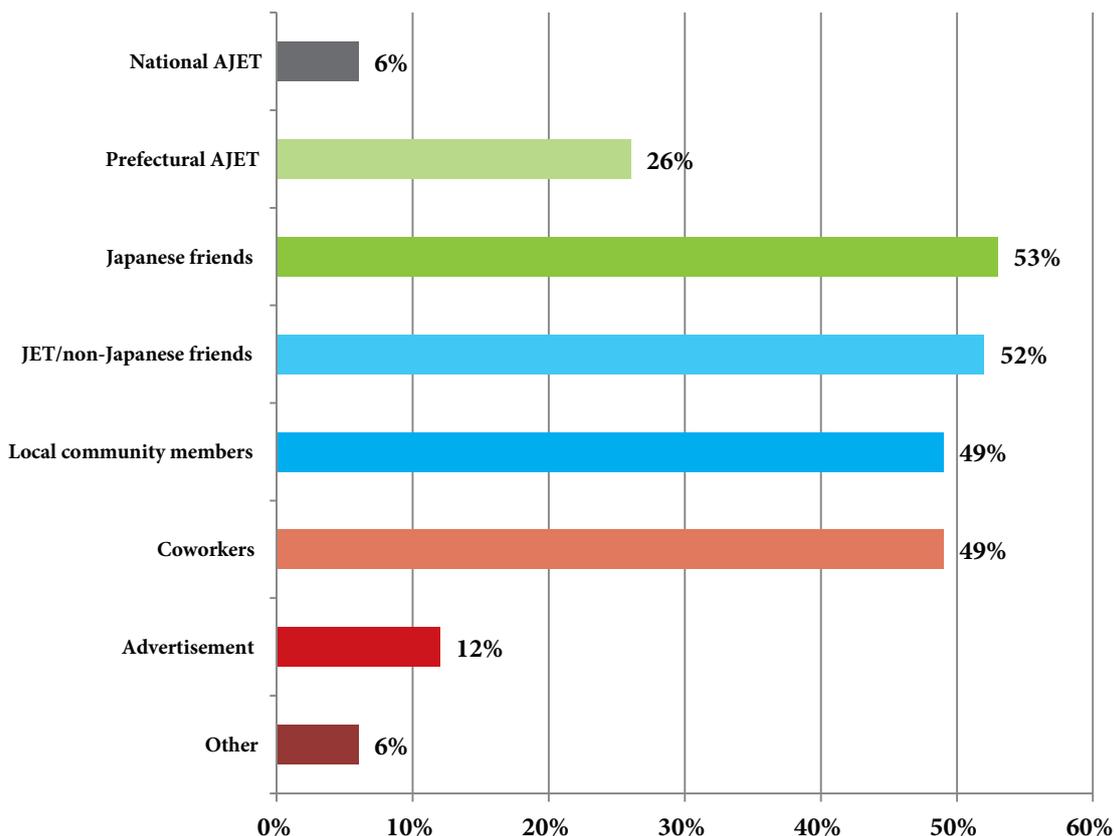
Of those who indicated involvement in tourism and economic activities, roughly equal percentages of ALT and CIR respondents (35% and 36% respectively) indicated that this was a combination of work and volunteer activities, while 64% of CIR respondents said their involvement was solely through work, as opposed to 7% of ALT respondents. Interestingly, no CIR respondents indicated that their involvement was solely for volunteer purposes, while all SEA respondents did so. However, it must be noted that due to the small sample size of CIR and SEA respondents, these trends may not be representative of the populations as a whole, though similar trends were present in the data from alumni respondents.

### Work vs. Volunteer By Job Type



When asked how respondents learned about opportunities to be involved, the most frequently selected means were “Japanese friends” (53%), “JET/Non-Japanese friends” (52%), “Local community members” (49%), and “Coworkers” (49%) indicating that interpersonal relationships are important for JET Programme participants to learn about events and activities in their area.

### Sources of Information for Opportunities for Tourism/Economic Activities

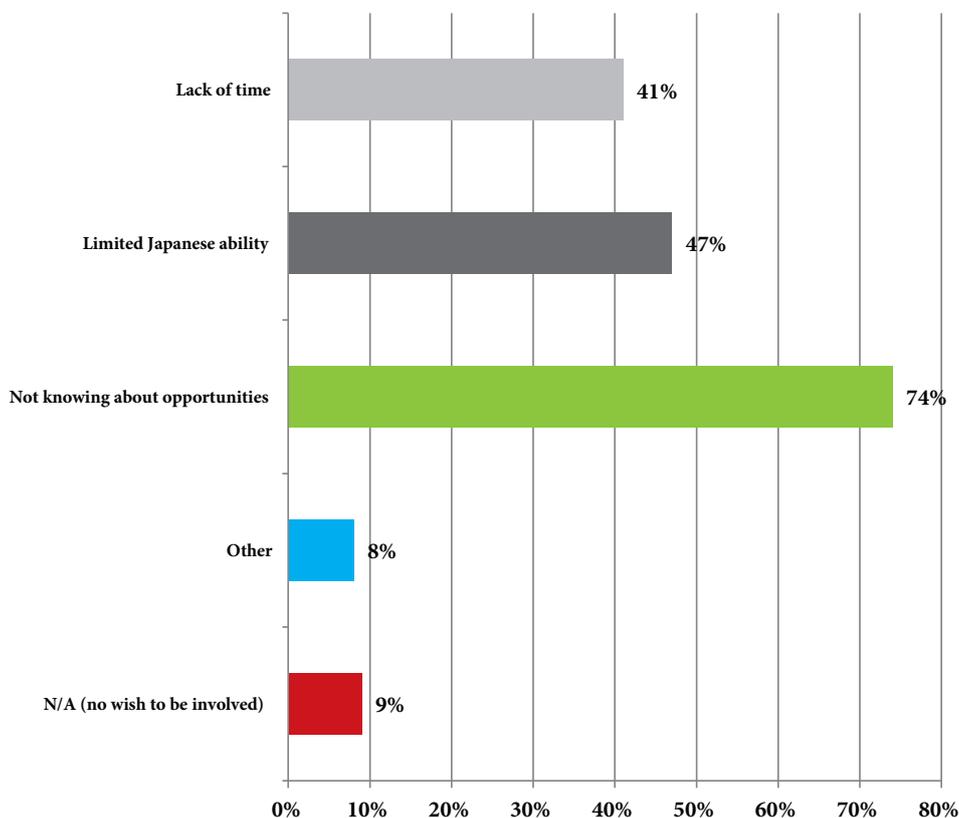


More impersonal means of communication, such as advertisements (12%) and invitations or announcements from National AJET (6%) and Prefectural AJET chapters (26%) appeared to be less important sources of information.

## Barriers to Involvement

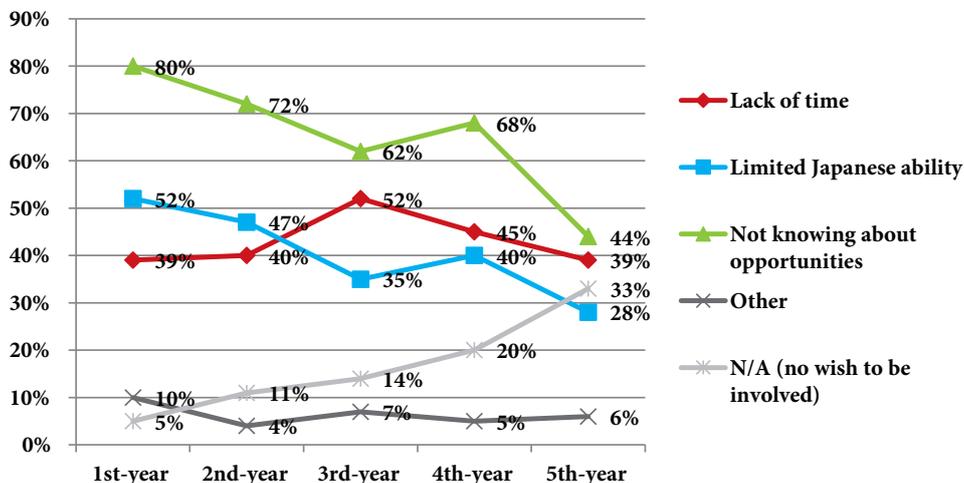
As mentioned in the previous section, the majority (69%) of survey respondents indicated that they were not involved in tourism or economic activities. Although this may not be surprising considering the nature of the JET Programme and its goals, this section explores possible explanations for this.

### Factors Preventing Involvement



A significant portion of respondents (74%) selected “Not knowing about opportunities” as their response. It was the most common response selected by participants, regardless of year.

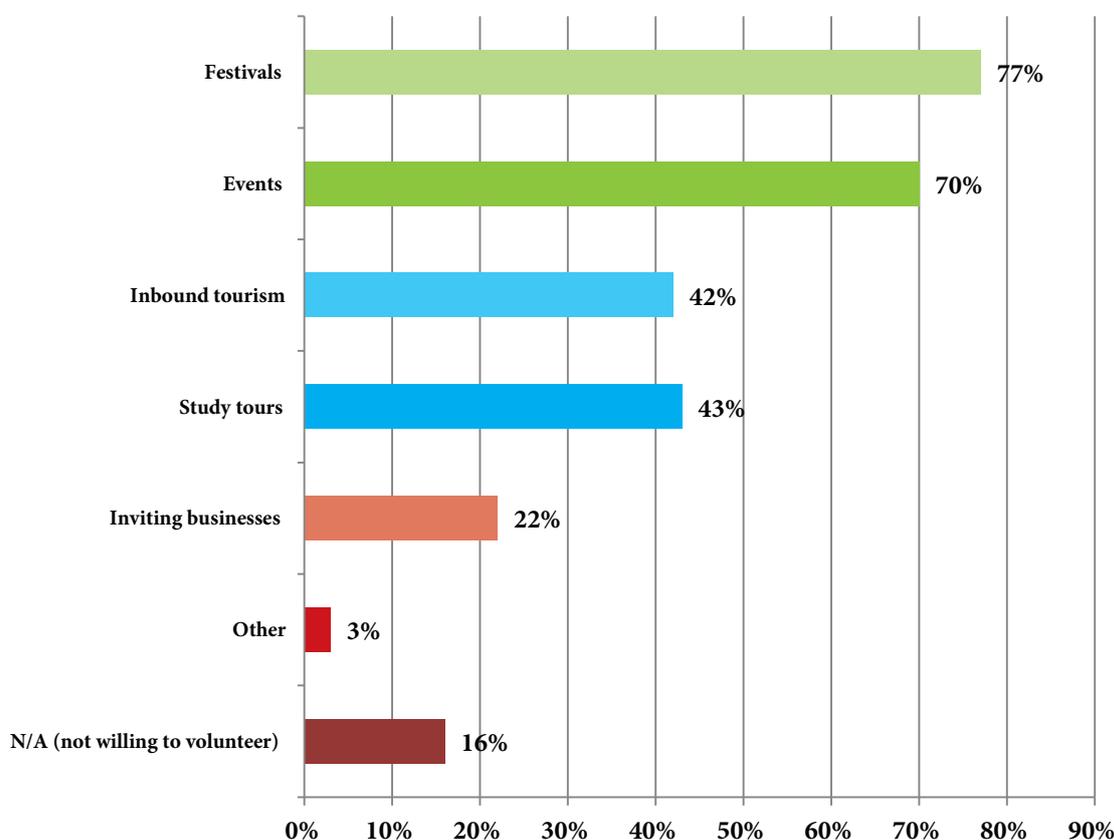
### Barriers to Involvement By Year



However, the response percentage decreases the longer participants have lived in Japan, from 80% of respondents in their first year, to 62% of respondents in their third year, and finally to 44% of those in their fifth year. This response rate is negatively correlated with respondents' year on JET. One possible interpretation for this is that as JET Programme participants continue to live in Japan, they become more adept at seeking out information about events in their host communities. However, other explanations, such as a change in priorities, are equally possible; further study is necessary to determine the probable cause of this correlation.

The number of respondents who choose "Limited Japanese ability" and "Not knowing about opportunities" as barriers to their involvement decreases by 24% and 36% respectively as respondents' time on the Programme increases. "Lack of time" stays relatively the same, indicating that it may not be a correlated variable.

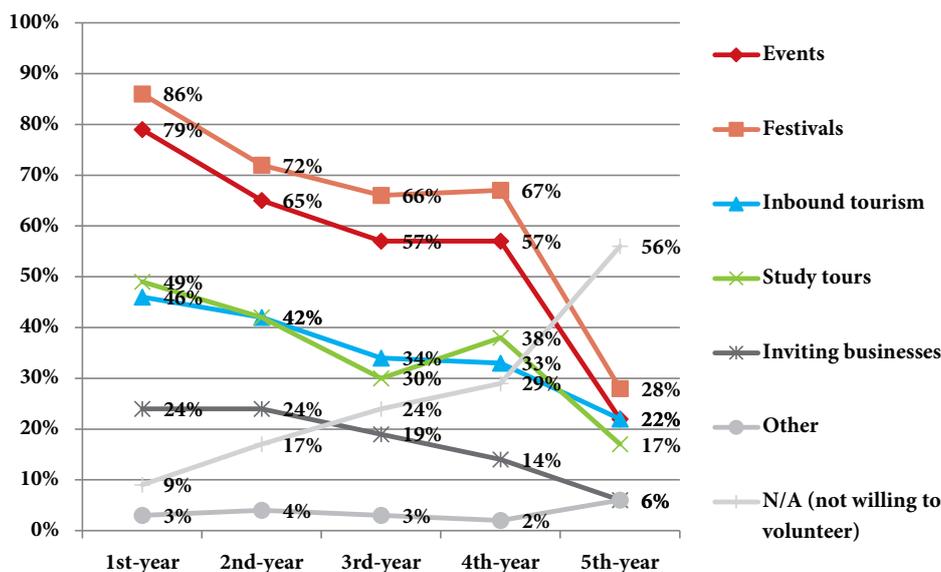
### Types of Activities for which Participants Would Be Willing to Volunteer



Of those who are not currently involved in any tourism/economic initiatives, only 16% said they "would not be willing to volunteer". This is a very positive result overall, suggesting that interest is high for all participants regardless of year. It is also worth noting that of those who commented that they had not yet been involved, all but two added that they would like to be involved or intend to be soon. This lends strong credibility to the possibility that JET Programme participants are not choosing to be uninvolved, but rather lack the ability or opportunities to do so. The data sorted by year also demonstrated that as participants spent more time on the Programme, they were more likely to be involved.

When asked what kind of events those who would be willing to volunteer would participate in, the most commonly chosen volunteer event was "Festivals", chosen by 554 people (77%), followed by "Events", chosen by 503 respondents or 70%.

### Activity Types By Year



Interestingly, there is a strong negative correlation between the number of years as a JET and the willingness to volunteer. The data shows that first-year JET participants who have not yet volunteered are eager to be involved, with only 9% stating they were not willing to volunteer, but this number rises with each successive year. Of respondents who had previously indicated that they had not been involved in tourism or economic activities, 17% of second-year participants, 24% of third-year participants, 29% of fourth-year participants, and 56% of fifth-year participants also stated they would not be willing to volunteer. This implies that with prolonged lack of involvement, JET Programme participants feel less inclined to volunteer.

This is an alarming observation, suggesting that in order for JET Programme participants to stay motivated to pursue volunteer activities, the first two years represent a window that is dangerous to miss, and that allowing participants to remain uninvolved during their JET Programme experience damages their potential to benefit Japan across a spectrum of community relations and business endeavours.

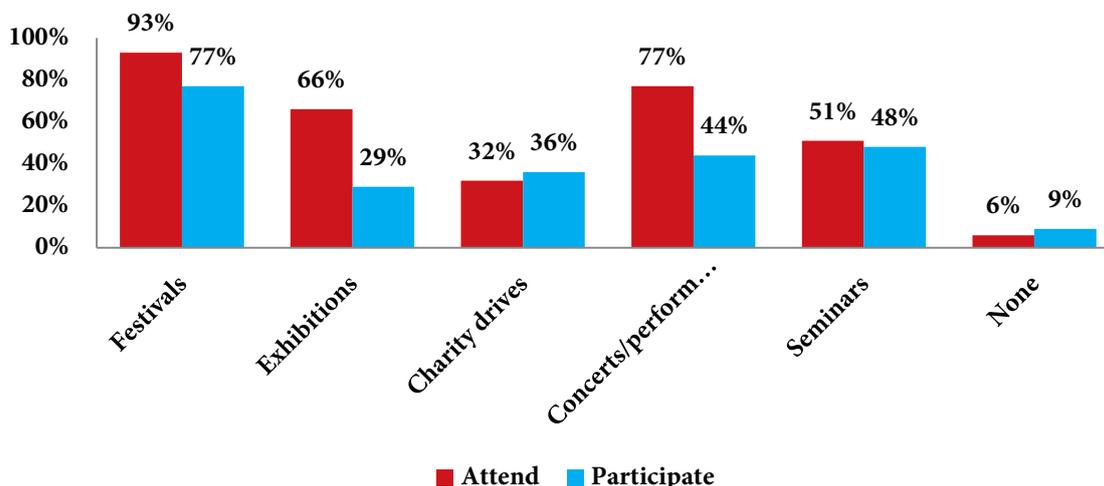
## JET Alumni Involvement in Tourism and Economic Activities

This section analyses responses from JET Programme alumni to compare them to responses from current JET Programme participants, in addition to determining their current or possible contributions to tourism and economic activities after concluding their time on the JET Programme. While it should be noted that the scope of this survey is limited by the small sample size, the results are nonetheless informative to a degree and can be improved through further research and survey.

### Involvement as JET Programme Participants

In order to supplement the data provided by current JET Programme participants, JET alumni were also asked the same questions with respect to their time on the JET Programme. For the most part, the data from these responses supported the trends shown in the results from current participants.

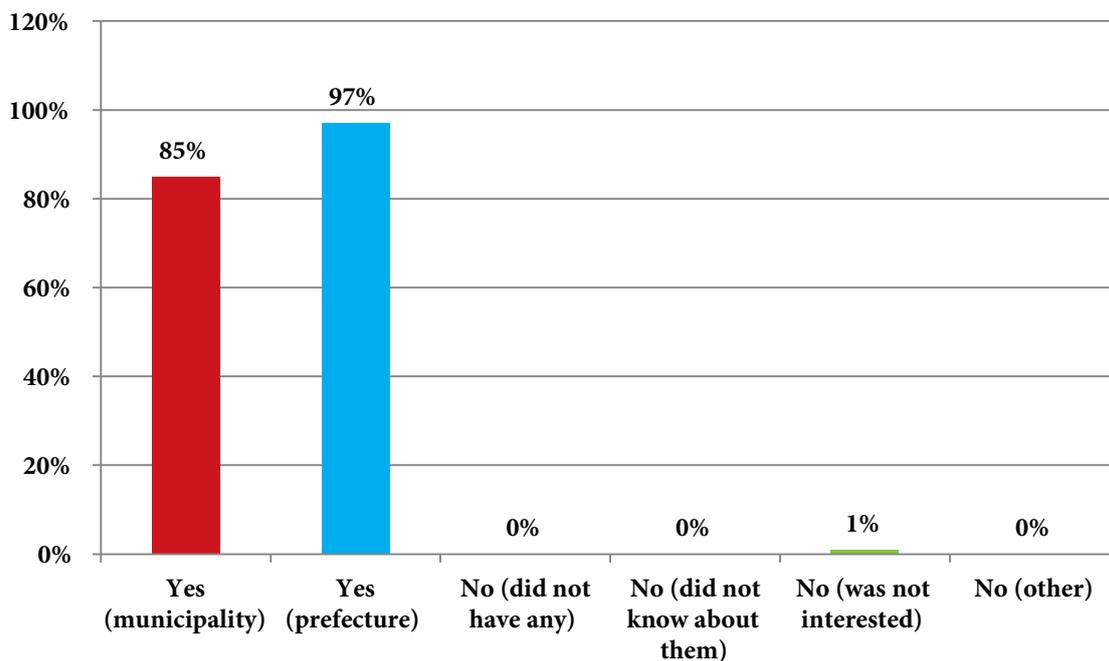
### Attendance and Participation in Public Events



When asked about their participation and attendance in public events, alumni respondents indicated that they actively attended and participated in several types of local events such as festivals, exhibitions, charity drives, concerts, and seminars. The written comments also revealed that respondents participated in many other types of events such as English conversation classes, cooking classes, gender equality symposium panels, and school- and community-based events.

The number of events that JET Programme alumni reported attending each year also indicated a high level of involvement, with 39% of respondents indicating they had attended 4 or more events each year while on the Programme, 20% of respondents stating that they had participated in 7 or more public events per year and 24% of respondents stating that they had participated in 10 public events or more per year.

## Did you visit the local attractions/tourist sites in your municipality/prefecture?



With respect to whether JET alumni had visited local attractions and tourist sites while on the Programme, 85% and 97% reported having visited places in their municipalities and prefectures, respectively, while only 11 of the 305 respondents reported that they had not done so. Of those who had also recommended the places they visited to others, a majority of respondents made recommendations by word of mouth (94%). Social media was the next most popular approach to make recommendations (61%), followed by blogs (21%).

There were many other means by which respondents were able to recommend events. This included writing articles for magazines such as Japan Tourist, prefectural magazines, the JET Programme participant's contracting organisation's English website, bilingual tourist magazines or wiki pages for other JET participants in their prefecture.

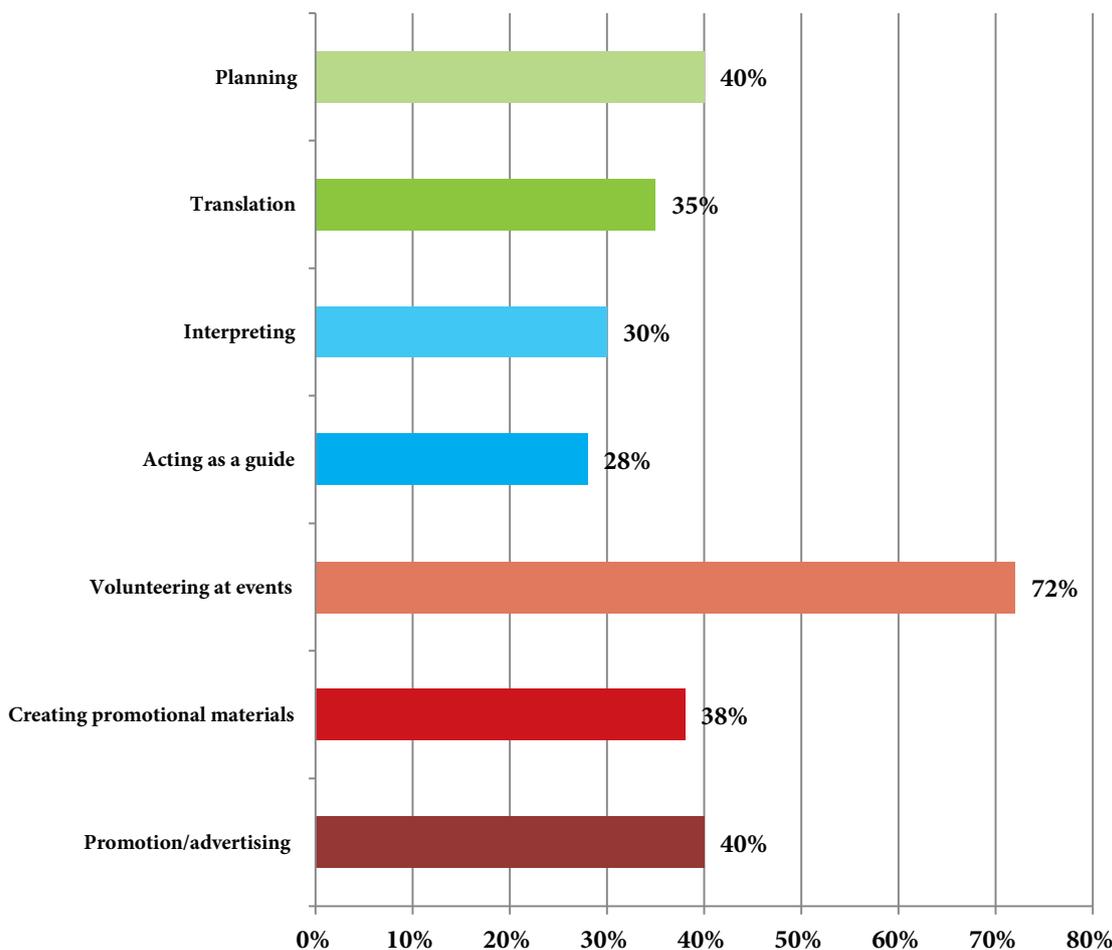
One particularly interesting example is of an alumni JET who created a promotional video for their former colleague in Fukuoka Prefecture that included JET participant interviews and scenes from around the prefecture.

Evidently, the majority of alumni help promote the areas where they lived as JET Programme participants through engaging in positive word of mouth. One possible way to make use of this would be for contracting organisations to encourage JET alumni to provide contributions to foreign language versions of their websites.

When JET alumni were asked about visitors to Japan who had come during their time on the JET Programme based on their recommendation or presence in Japan, the overwhelming majority (94%) indicated that family, friends or acquaintances visited Japan because of their recommendation or due to them living there and 94% believed that their guests would not have come without their recommendation or presence in Japan.

Finally, when asked about their involvement while they were participants in the program, the results were similar, with 50% indicating their involvement in areas such as events (72%), promotion/advertising (40%), and planning (40%).

## Types of Contributions



### Possible Contributions As Alumni

Of the survey respondents only 7% of JET alumni felt that they could not currently contribute anything in particular to tourism or economic activities/initiatives in Japan.

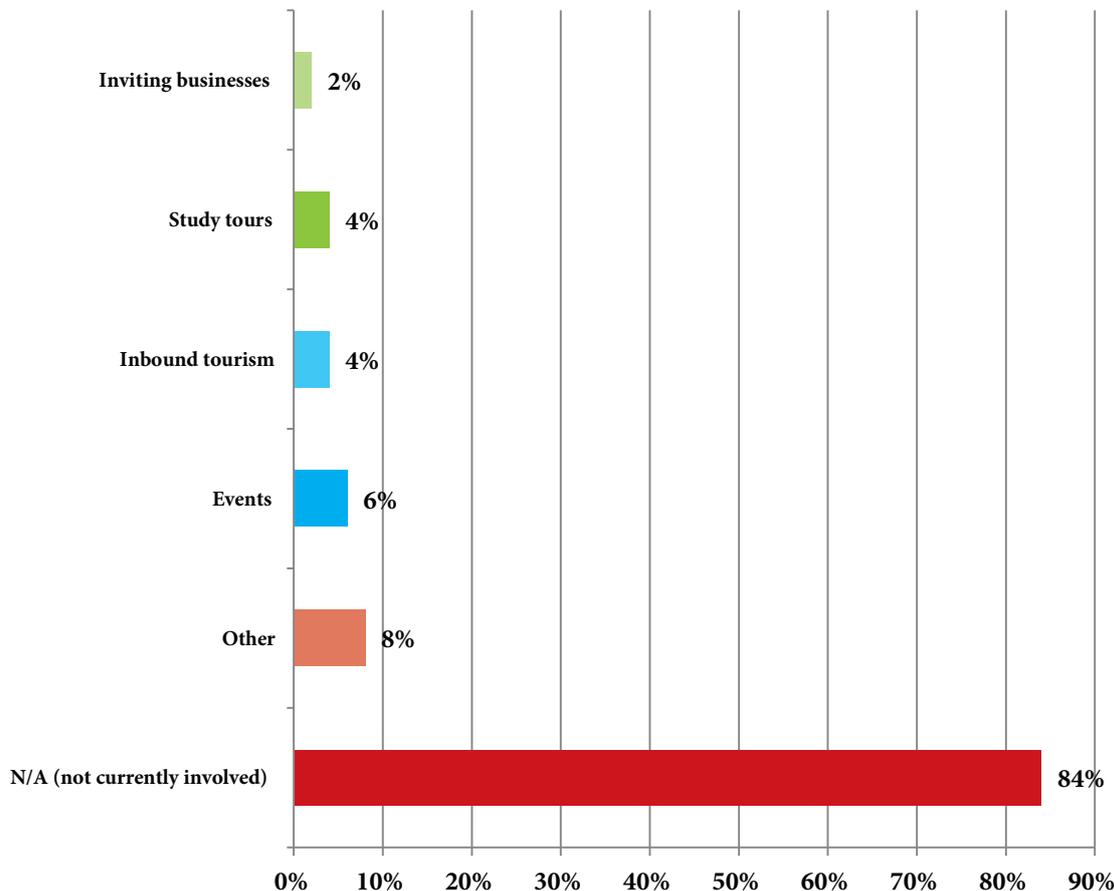
A majority believe they could offer knowledge of local areas or a non-Japanese perspective (68% and 72% respectively), while 69% indicated they could promote Japan inside their home country. On the lower end, 35% indicated that they could contribute manpower to events, while 46% believed they could contribute their language skills in translation and/or interpretation.

Those who chose 'Other' as an option discussed various possible ways to contribute to tourism and economic activities including travel blogs and apps, promotion through social media, travel advice for those with dietary restrictions in Japan, assistance with preparing for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and proofreading municipality information.

This shows that JET alumni could be great potential resources available for tourism and economic gains.

**Current Involvement As Alumni**

**Current Involvement in Tourism/Economic Activities**



Of the JET Programme alumni who responded to the survey, 84% indicated that they are not currently involved in any tourism or economic activities within Japan. Of the remaining respondents, 24% reported involvement in events, 19% with inbound tourism, 16% aided with study tours, 7% helped attract business to their city or prefecture and 8% participated in a variety of other activities.

The 8% of alumni respondents that marked their tourism/economic involvement as “other” had a wide variety of contributions. These included but were not limited to government work, journalism, tourism management, the International Japan Society and Peace Boat, in addition to the following examples:

- “[working] on projects for the Japanese government related to economic development”
- “[helping] British companies enter [the] Japanese market”
- “[serving as] Project Director for the Japan ICU Foundation in NYC, Promoting educational exchange with ICU in Tokyo”

For the 72 alumni respondents that reported they were involved in tourism and economic activities outside of Japan but involving Japan, the involvement and activities is varied. Some of the activities mentioned include:

- “Held a joint conference between my organization and the Japan Economic Foundation ,

*brought together former trade reps, ambassadors and Deputy Chiefs of Mission, current Department of State, Department of Energy, and METI officials to discuss the future of TPP and US-Japan Economic Relationship”*

- *“I represent a variety of Japanese scientific companies at academic meetings outside of Japan”*
- *“Work at the Consulate-General of Japan”*
- *“Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Sydney Office”*
- *“UN Work”*

From these responses, it is clear that some JET Programme alumni are involved with a variety of tourism and economic activities from both within and outside of Japan.

## CONCLUSION

Survey respondents provided information on a variety of topics pertaining to their contributions to tourism and economic activities. The results have produced the following conclusions:

- While the majority of JET Programme participants are not involved in tourism or economic activities, the willingness of the majority of participants to be involved represents a possible resource in this area.
- Both current and former JET Programme participants believe that they could contribute things such as a non-Japanese perspective, language skills, and knowledge of local areas to tourism and economic initiatives.
- JET Programme participants, both current and alumni, provide an excellent way to promote knowledge of tourism and attractions in Japan, as many are already doing so through work, volunteer, and recommendations.
- The recommendations and presence of JET Programme participants have a direct influence on visitors to Japan, as many report having visitors who they believe would not have come to the country otherwise.



