



JET Programme Disaster Preparedness

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JET Programme Disaster Preparedness

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes JET Programme participants' experiences with disaster preparedness, such as natural disasters like typhoons, earthquakes, and tsunamis, as well as ballistic missile warnings in recent years. This analysis was made possible by distributing a survey with questions on these topics to current JET Programme participants. The survey for this report was open for responses from all current JET Programme participants from October 9, 2018 to October 24, 2018. In total, 446 - or approximately 9.2% - of current JET Programme participants participated in the survey.

Nearly all of the respondents (97.6%) report that they have received some kind of information on emergency preparedness. Most of this information was received from CLAIR (62.4%), the workplace or Contracting Organization (61%), and/or a fellow JET participant (51%). The information was shared mainly at JET Programme-related orientations, such as pre-departure orientation, Tokyo orientation, or their host prefecture orientation.

However, much of this information may have been given during the JET participant's first year on the Programme. As such, the participant may lose the information, it may be changed or updated, or the topic may never be meaningfully discussed again during their time on the Programme. 60% of respondents are unsure of whether or not their Contracting Organization has emergency preparedness readily available to them. About half of the respondents report that neither their Contracting Organization nor their supervisor has spoken with them about emergency preparedness.

In addition, 45% of respondents say most or all of the information they've received is in Japanese, which has made preparing for emergencies difficult, while another 37.2% cite not knowing where or how to get information as another barrier. Nearly half of the respondents report that their Contracting Organization has not given them emergency preparedness information in their native language.

Contracting Organizations should be able to distribute up to date information on emergency preparedness to JET participants in their native languages and offer more training and explanations on emergency procedures. Only 34.4% of respondents report feeling adequately prepared to handle an emergency situation. 45.2% of respondents do not know their emergency workplace procedures, and 55.4% do not know their local evacuation procedures.

A majority of respondents indicate that they have experienced a natural disaster during their time on the JET Programme (84%), most of whom had some kind of prior notice to the event (75.4%). The respondents' Contracting Organization or workplace was most often reported as being the source of prior notice for the natural disasters (55.4%). However, 46.4% of respondents report feeling only somewhat prepared for a natural disaster. Contracting Organizations could provide more support during natural disasters, as nearly half of the respondents cite that they did not receive help from their workplace or CO before, during, or after a natural disaster.

Based upon the finding in this report, the AJET National Council offers recommendations relating to these topics. Access to effective resources can help participants as they encounter situations and stress that are unique to living in another country. Because it is extremely likely that participants will experience an emergency or natural disaster while living in Japan, it is imperative that they are provided with adequate information and support in order to ensure their safety. Through this report and its recommendations, National AJET hopes to assist JET Programme participants in their roles as teachers, employees, and cultural ambassadors.

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INTRODUCTION

JET Programme participants may experience one or more disasters, natural or otherwise, while they live and work in Japan. It is necessary that they become familiar with safety procedures in Japan. The potential language barrier and unfamiliarity with the Japanese evacuation systems, the J-Alert system, and other Programmes in place could be obstacles for many participants. As such, Contracting Organisations (COs), supervisors, and local organizations can help participants understand their local procedures in case of a disaster. Additionally, there are JET Programme-specific resources for emergencies that are available to participants. These resources are especially important where local options may not be available.

The goal of this report is to examine current JET Programme participants' experiences with emergencies, natural disasters or otherwise, in Japan and to offer suggestions to interested parties in how to improve access to relevant safety procedure information. By doing this, the AJET National Council hopes to assist JET Programme participants in maintaining their safety and well-being.

METHODOLOGY

The data used in this report came from a survey conducted by the Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET) over a period of 15 days, from October 9, 2018 to October 24, 2018. The survey was distributed to current JET Programme participants using an online survey development tool. The survey consisted of 58 questions that were written in English and Japanese. Questions were written in a variety of formats including yes/no, multiple choice, free response, and rating on a scale. The topics covered in the survey included respondents' experiences with natural disasters before, during, and after, disaster preparation, safety procedure knowledge, and access to resources regarding these topics while on the JET Programme. For the purposes of this report, survey percentages have been rounded to the nearest first decimal point.

SURVEY SAMPLE

This survey collected responses from a total of 445 JET Programme participants, equivalent to approximately 9.1% of the total current JET Programme population in Japan. Of these respondents, 416 (93.4%) identified themselves as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) and 28 (6.3%) as Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs). One Sports Exchange Advisors (SEA) responded to the survey. These results are congruent with the overall breakdown of JET Programme participants: 91.3% are ALTs, 8.6% are CIRs, and less than 0.1% are SEAs.

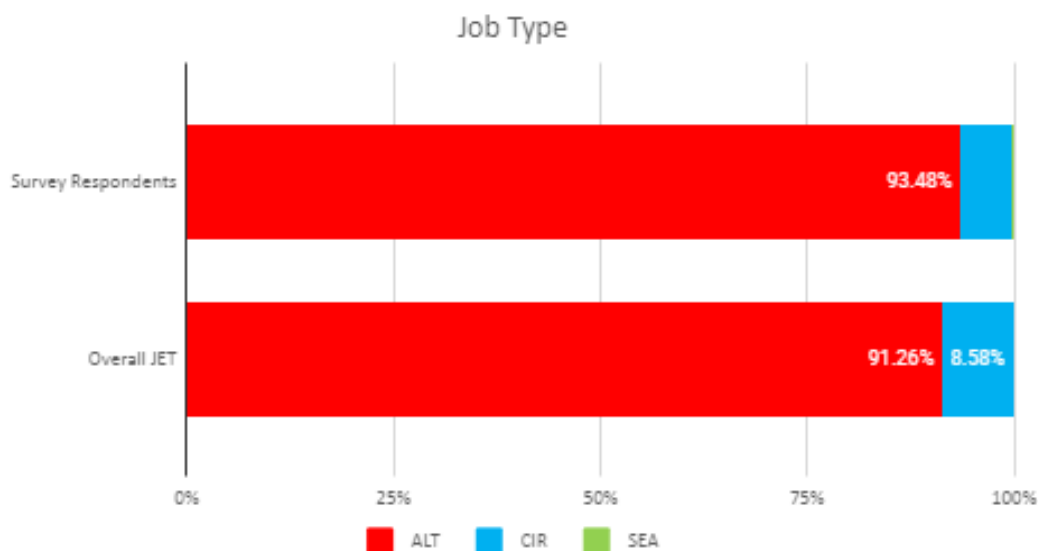


Chart 1

The largest proportion of respondents indicated that they are in their first year on the JET Programme (40.2%), with second and third year participants the next most populous groups (26.5% and 18% respectively). Overall, the results are comparable to the entire JET Programme participant population.

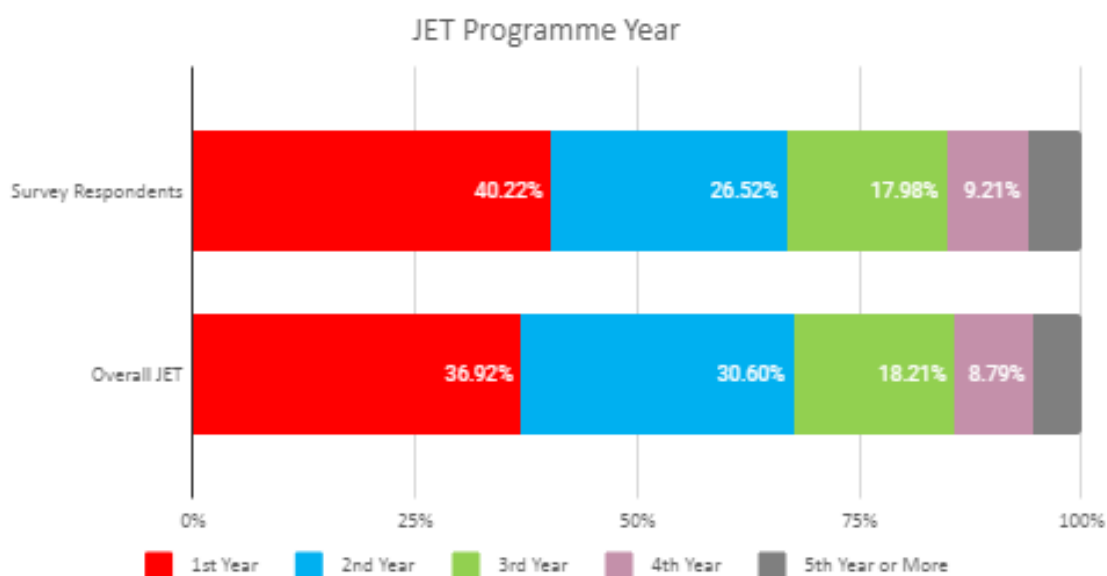


Chart 2

A majority of respondents indicated that their workplace situation is multiple schools (61.6%) or a single school (29.7%). About five percent of respondents reported working at an office.

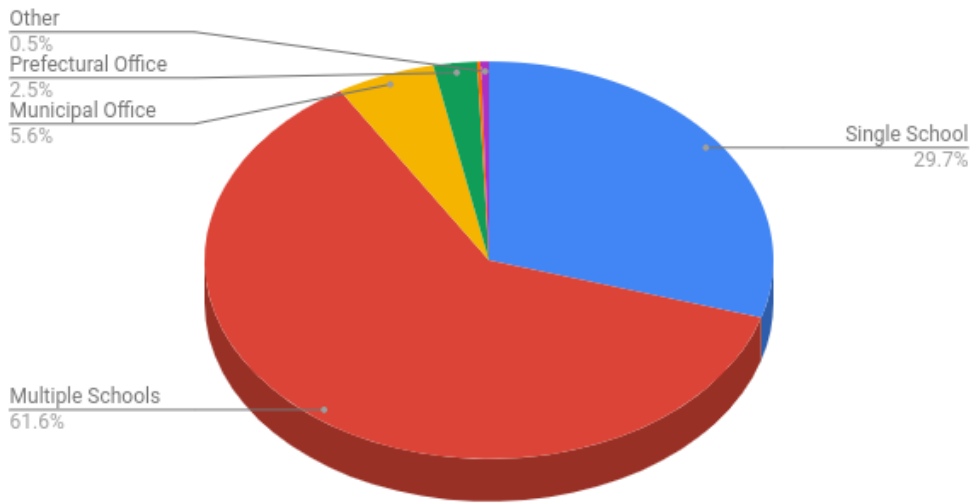


Chart 3

Although no knowledge of the Japanese language is required for Assistant Language Teachers, having some knowledge of the language can help and enhance the daily or work lives of participants while on the Programme. Respondents were asked to indicate their current level of Japanese proficiency. Most respondents rated themselves as having a moderate level of Japanese (34.8%) or a basic level of Japanese (26.5%).

Respondents' Current Level of Japanese

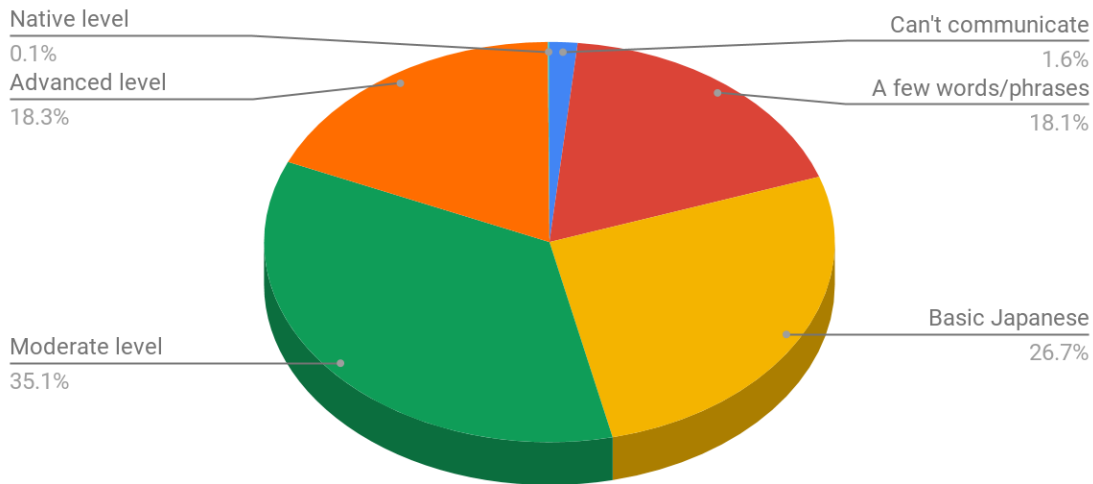


Chart 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

NATURAL DISASTERS

As JET Programme participants live in Japan, they will more than likely experience one or more natural disasters. They may require assistance due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with Japan’s emergency procedures. The next section will include insights on this topic.

NOTICE OF DISASTERS

About 84% of respondents reported having experienced a natural disaster in Japan. Respondents were asked if they had prior notice of the disaster, of which 75.4% answered yes. Respondents specified from which sources, if any, they received notice about natural disasters. The most common sources of information were the workplace and/or CO, mobile phones, and the internet (55.7%, 49.4%, and 44.6% respectively).

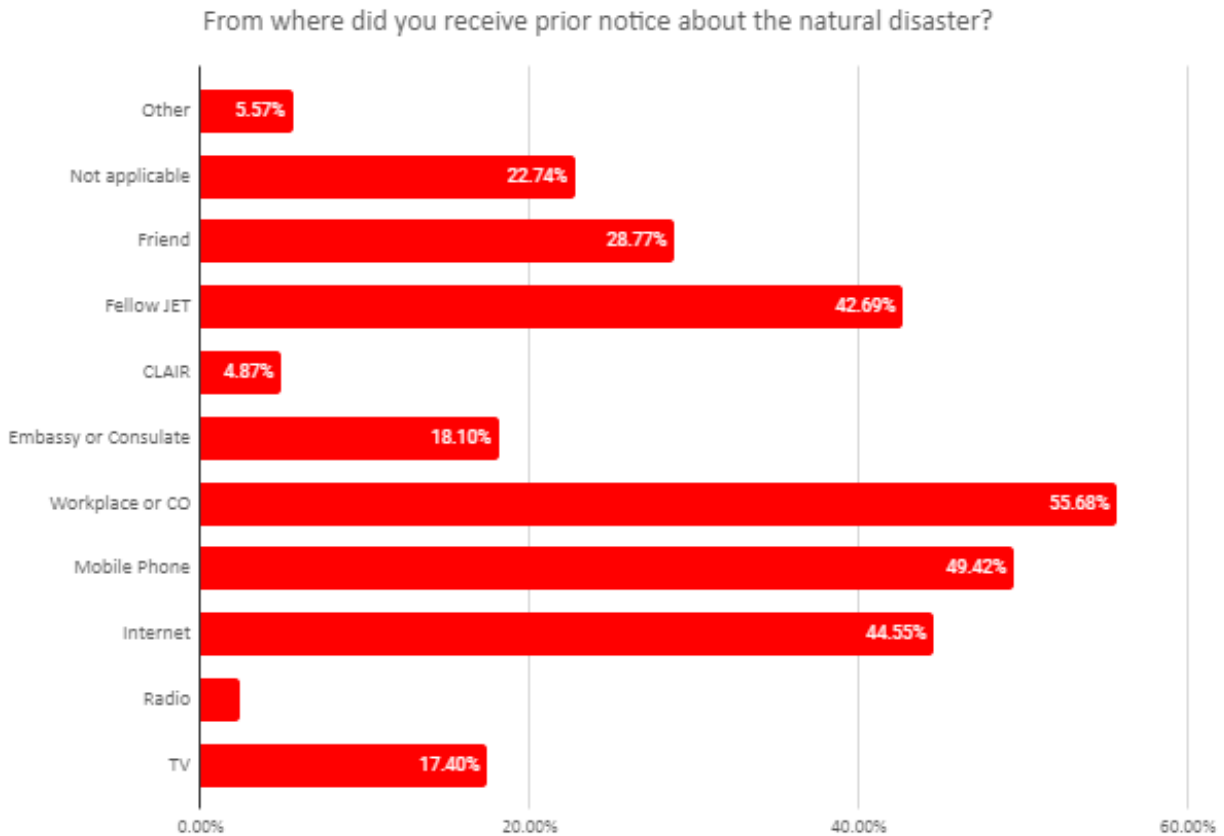


Chart 5

During participants’ time on the Programme, COs can help participants by providing assistance during natural disasters. However, only 15.1% of respondents cited receiving help from their CO before or during a disaster, and the number goes down to 8.1% for after a natural disaster. The respondents who did receive help for a natural disaster generally reported that the assistance from their CO was sufficient.

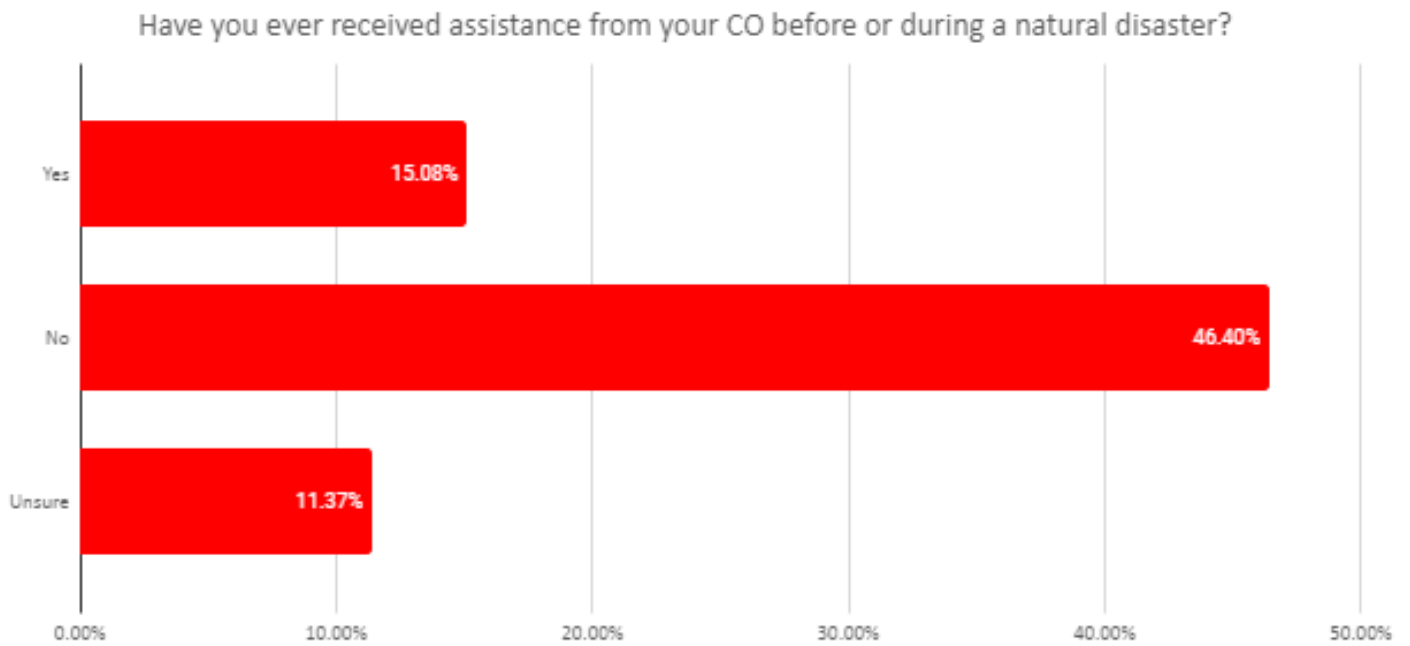


Chart 6

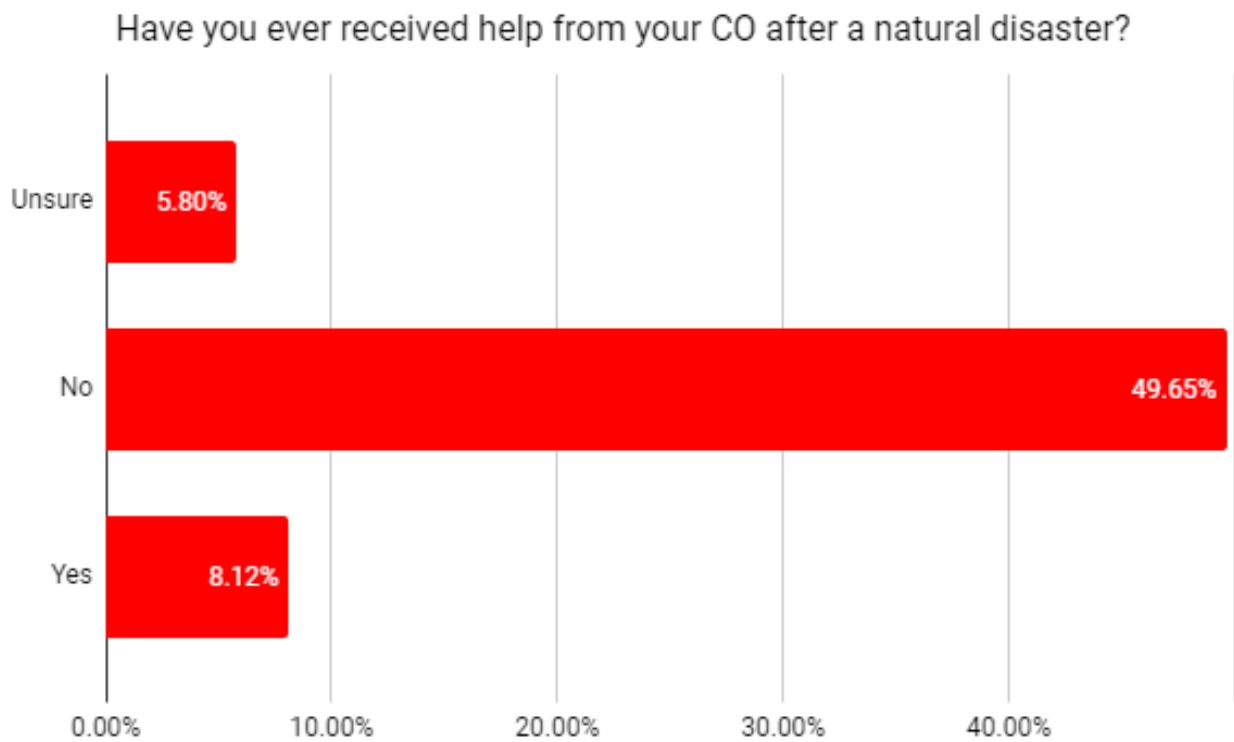


Chart 7

PREPARATION

When asked if they felt prepared to deal with a natural disaster, only 31.6% of respondents responded yes, while 46.4% cited feeling only somewhat prepared. 48.7% said that they made preparations before the event and 33.87% said they made none. Of those who did not make preparations, most respondents (28.5%) cited that they made the choice not to prepare.

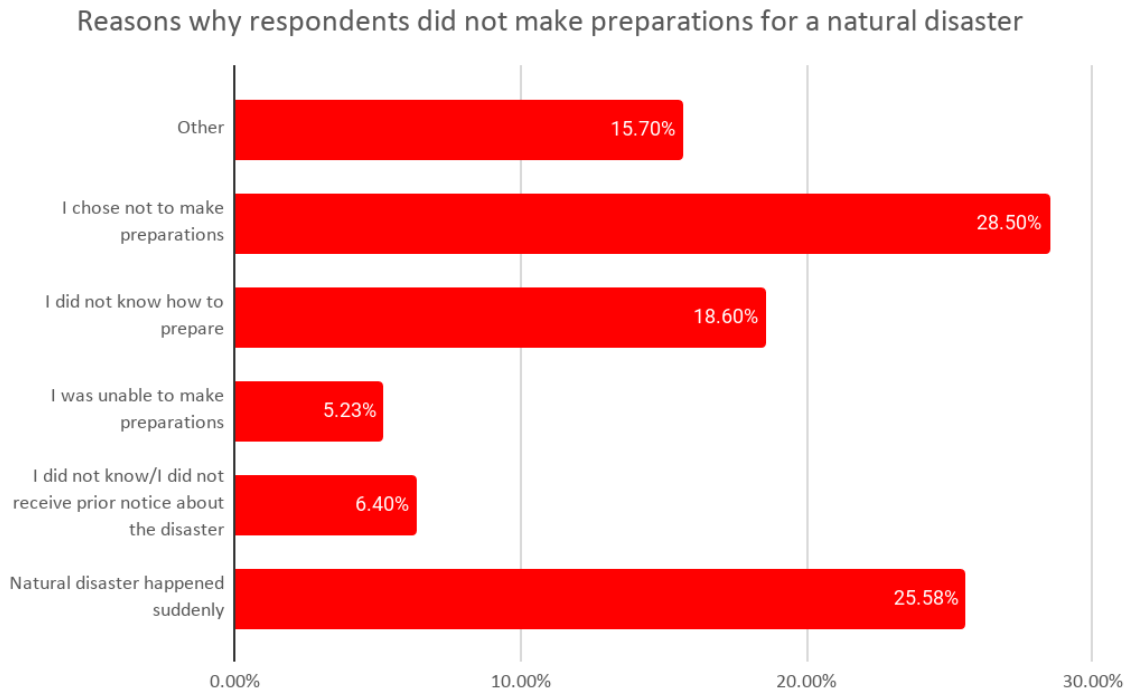


Chart 8

Some respondents (18.6%) reported not knowing how to prepare for a natural disaster. When prompted for more information, they cited not knowing where their evacuation shelter is, how to check if evacuation orders have been made, or that they felt overwhelmed by the number of things to prepare for the disaster.

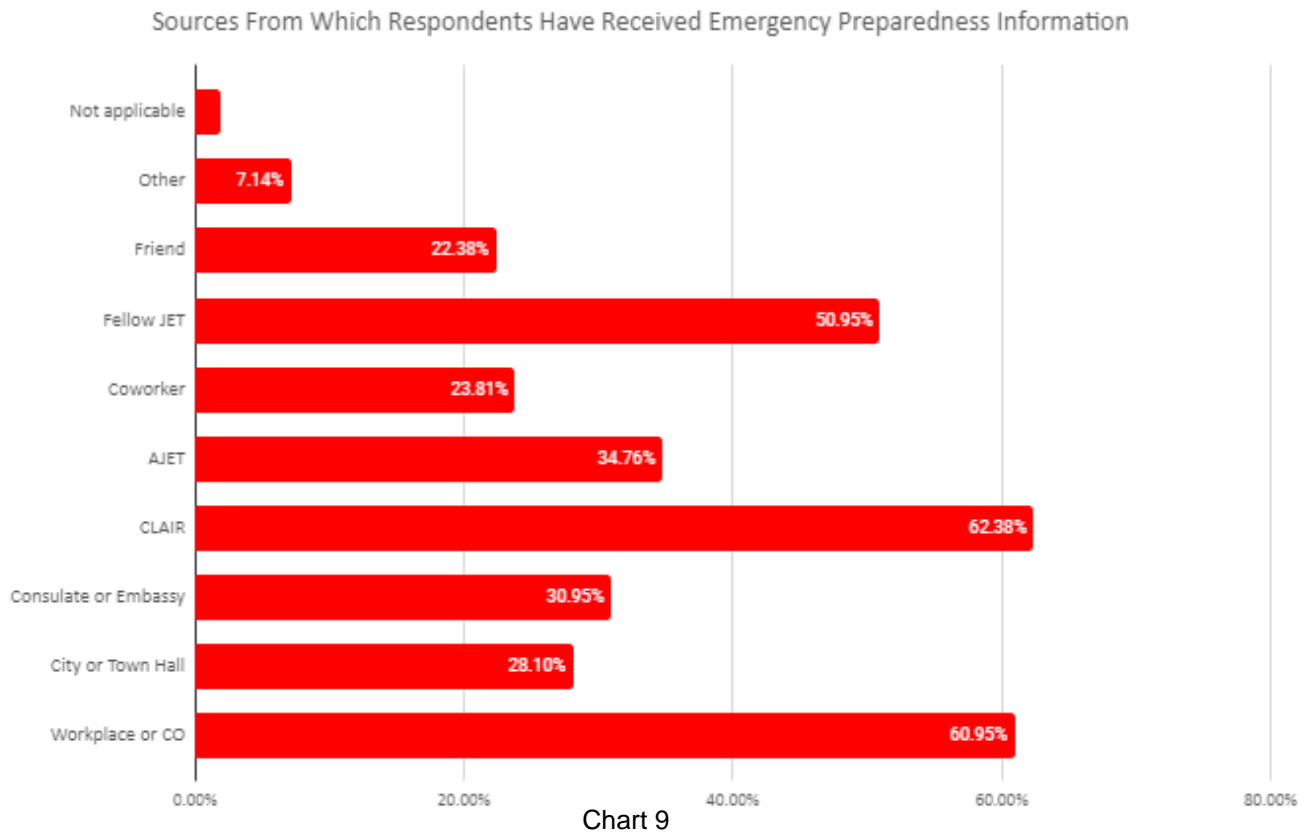
EMERGENCY INFORMATION

While on the JET Programme, participants may experience emergencies other than natural disasters as well, such as ballistic missile warnings. Due to potential language barriers and unfamiliarity with Japan's emergencies procedures, participants may have issues finding, understanding, and utilizing information on dealing with emergencies. The accessibility of such information and respondents' experiences with preparations will be discussed below.

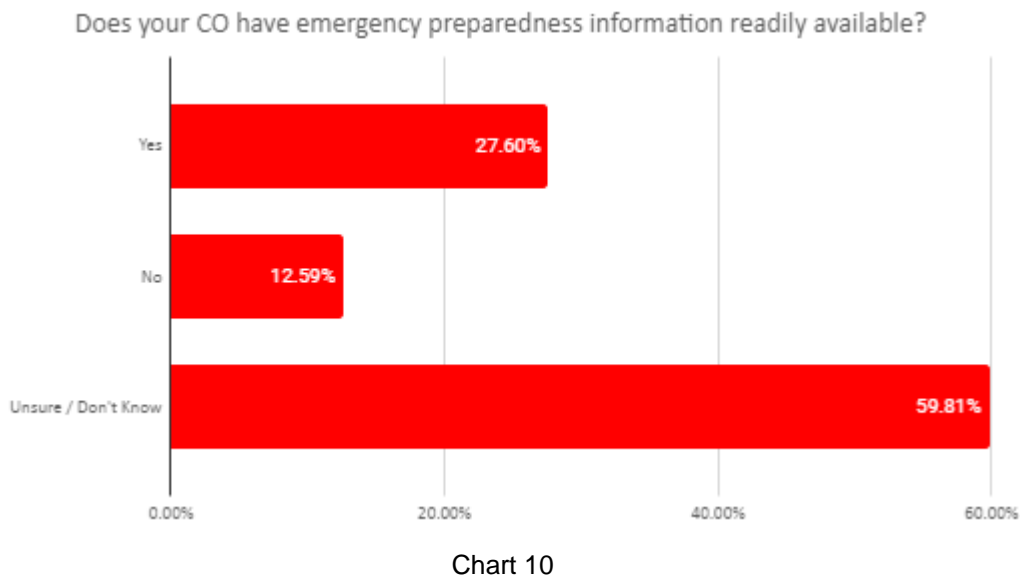
ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The overwhelming majority of respondents (97.6%) have received some kind of emergency preparedness information during their time in Japan. Respondents were asked what sources had provided them with information. CLAIR, their workplace and/or Contracting Organization, and fellow JET participants were specified as sources (62.4%, 61%, and 51% respectively).

When asked through what medium they had received this information, 79.1% of respondents indicated orientations (pre-departure, Tokyo, and/or host prefecture) as the source. A similar majority reported this information as being generally helpful (70.5%).



Outside of official JET events - such as orientations and mid-year conferences - a participant’s CO will be their primary source of information and assistance for emergencies. 46.7% of respondents reported that their CO has spoken with them about emergency preparedness and only 39.1% of respondents said that their supervisor had spoken with them about the topic. 59.8% of respondents indicated that they are unsure of whether or not their CO has emergency preparedness information readily available for their use.



JET Programme Disaster Preparedness – Winter 2018

Most of the emergency preparedness information available to participants is in Japanese. Having access to this information in participants' native language is essential for their safety. Contracting Organizations are the primary source of work and life information for JET participants. Respondents were asked if they had access to emergency preparedness information in their native language, with 44.3% saying yes, and 38% saying they were unsure. However, when asked if their CO had ever provided them with such information in their native language, 49.7% of respondents reported that their CO had not done so.

Has your CO provided you with emergency preparedness information in your native language?

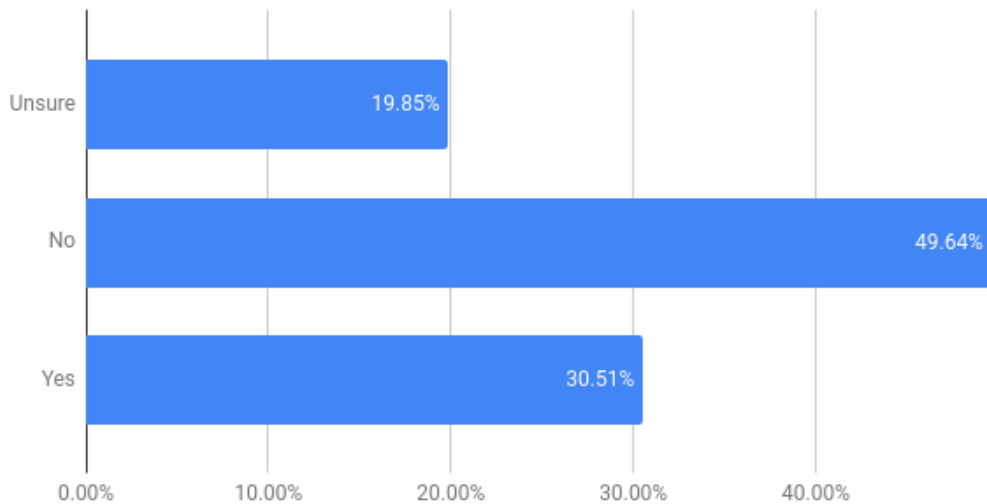


Chart 11

The respondents were asked through which medium they would like to receive emergency preparedness information. 74.8% of respondents indicated email as the preferred method, followed by text message/SMS, the internet, and social networking services (66.3%, 45.9%, and 41.2% respectively).

Preferred Method of Receiving Emergency Preparedness Information

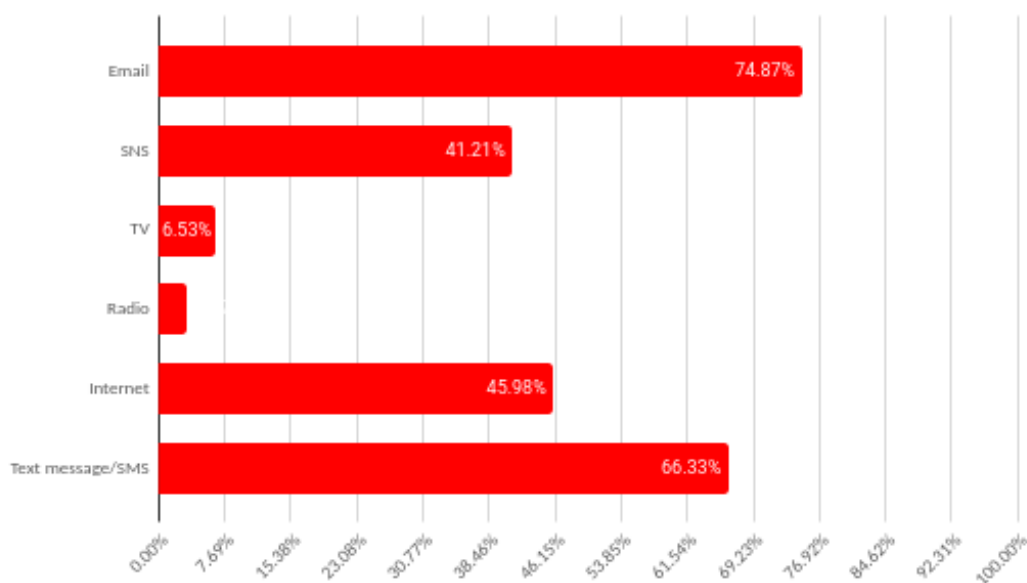


Chart 12

When asked from where they would like to receive emergency preparedness information, respondents cited host prefecture orientations, Contracting Organizations, the workplace, and supervisors and their preferred sources (51.3%, 47.9%, 46.7%, and 41.7% respectively).

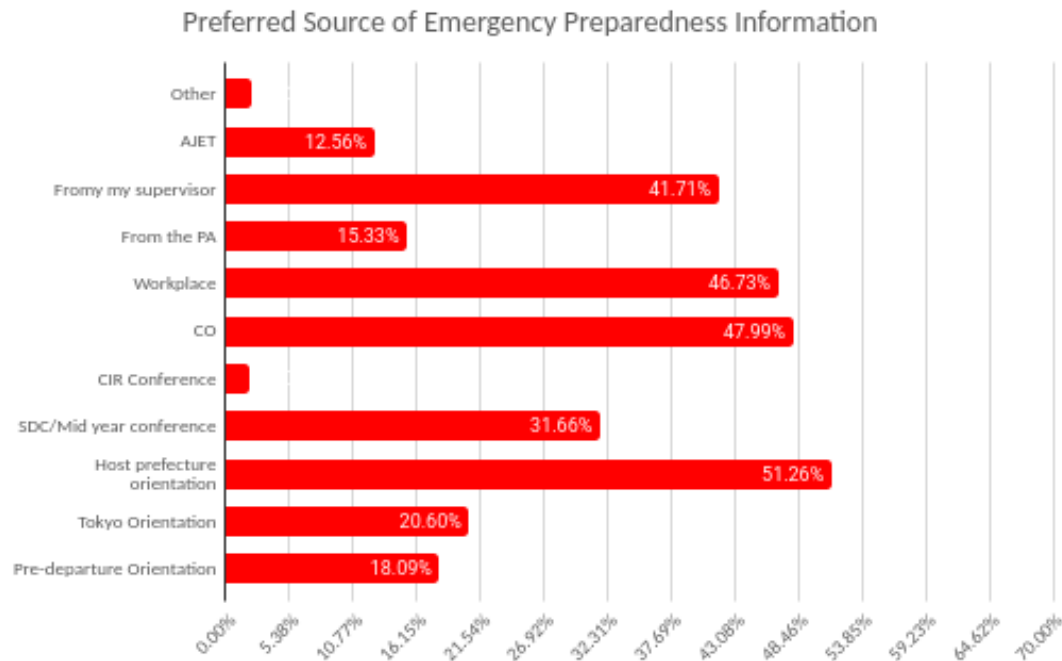


Chart 13

EMERGENCY POCKET GUIDE FOR JET PARTICIPANTS

A majority of respondents, or 71.11%, stated they had a copy of CLAIR's Emergency Pocket Guide for JET participants, which is distributed at each Tokyo Orientation. Of these respondents, 53% said that the pocket guide is generally helpful to them. Only five percent, or 20 respondents, said that it was not helpful at all. The respondents' and the National AJET Council's recommendations for the pocket guide are discussed in the Observations and Recommendations section of this report.

PREPARATION FOR EMERGENCIES

A large part of dealing with emergency disasters in Japan is preparation. As there are a variety of disasters that JET participants may experience, knowing how and when to prepare for an emergency can be difficult and confusing. Contracting Organizations are in a position to assist participants in preparation. The following section will include insights into respondents' experiences with preparing for emergency disasters while on the Programme.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEMS

There are some emergency alert systems in place that JET participants can enroll in to receive emergency information. Registering with their home country's embassy and CLAIR's Safety Confirmation System are two options. 63.2% of respondents reported having registered with their embassy and 76.8% have registered with CLAIR's safety confirmation system. When asked if they knew whether or not their host prefecture uses any type of safety confirmation system, more than half (52.5%) said they were unsure.

JET Programme Disaster Preparedness – Winter 2018

Recently, Japan has introduced the J-Alert system, which sends emergency information to mobile phones using Japanese cellular service. In 2017, this system was used across multiple prefectures to warn against potential ballistic missile threats. The respondents were asked if they were familiar with the J-Alert system. Only 46.2% reported being familiar with the system, while 43.5% said they were unfamiliar with J-Alerts. These results approximately align with the percentage of respondents who have (37.2%) and have not received (40.5%) a J-Alert before.

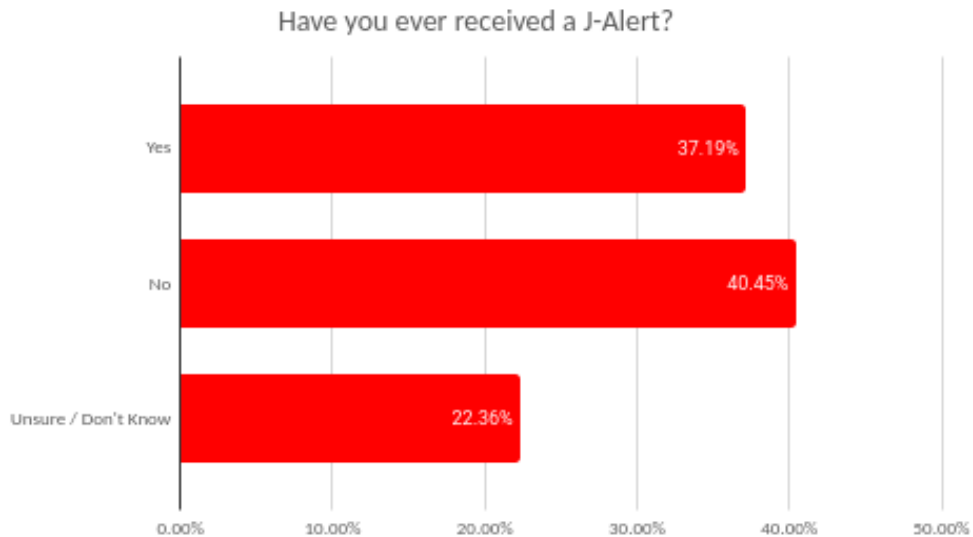


Chart 14

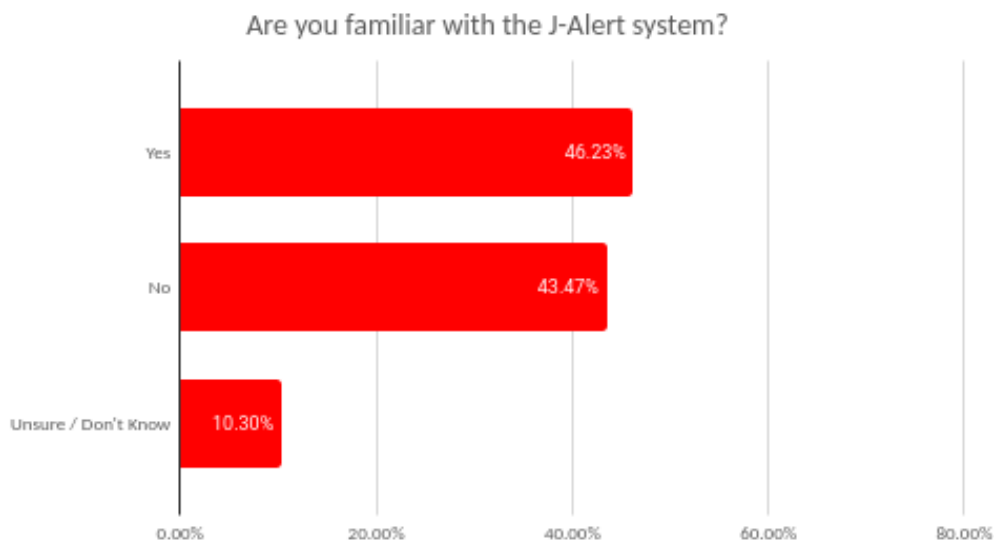


Chart 15

At present, most if not all of the J-Alert messages are sent and received in Japanese. The nature of J-Alerts means usually some kind of immediate action is necessary for the safety of the receivers. In addition, the level of Japanese used is above the basic or moderate level of proficiency that a majority of respondents reported themselves currently having (26.5% and 34.8% respectively). The respondents who have received a J-Alert were asked how they were able to understand the message.

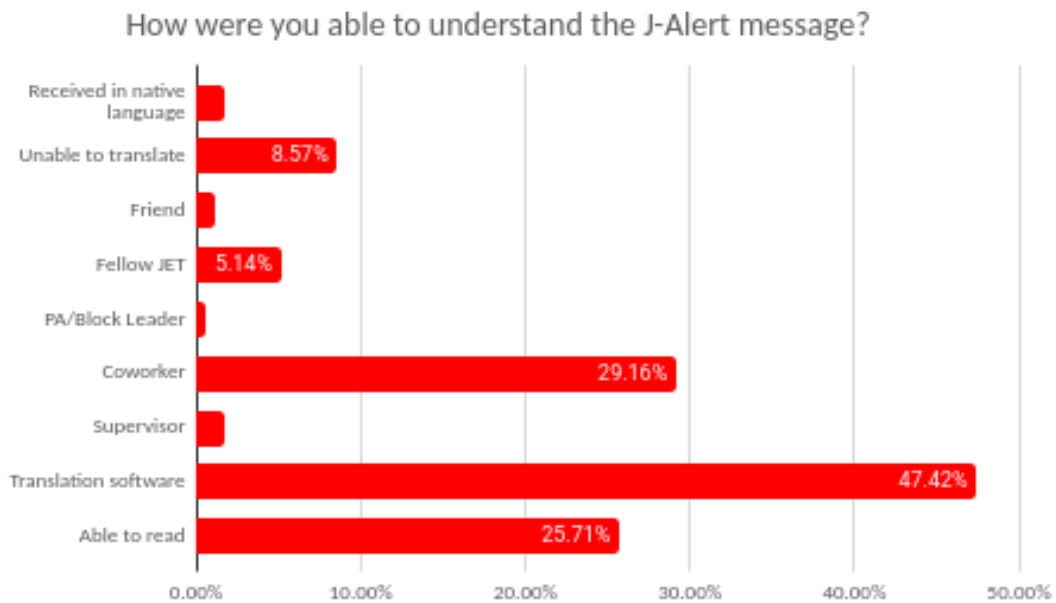


Chart 16

Most respondents, or 47.4%, reported using translation software (internet/mobile phone application). Another 29.2% cited that a co-worker translated the message for them. Only 25.7% of respondents were able to read and understand the message in its original Japanese. Three respondents cited receiving the J-Alert in their native language. Since most respondents needed to translate the message in order to understand the Japanese, this likely reduced the amount of time participants have to follow the suggested measures.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

An emergency disaster can occur at any time – whether a participant is at home, work, or traveling in a different part of the country. Emergency procedures will vary based on location, but it's important that participants at least know the procedures of the area in which they live. When asked if they know their workplace emergency procedures, 45.2% of respondents reported not knowing the procedures, while only 37.6% said they do.

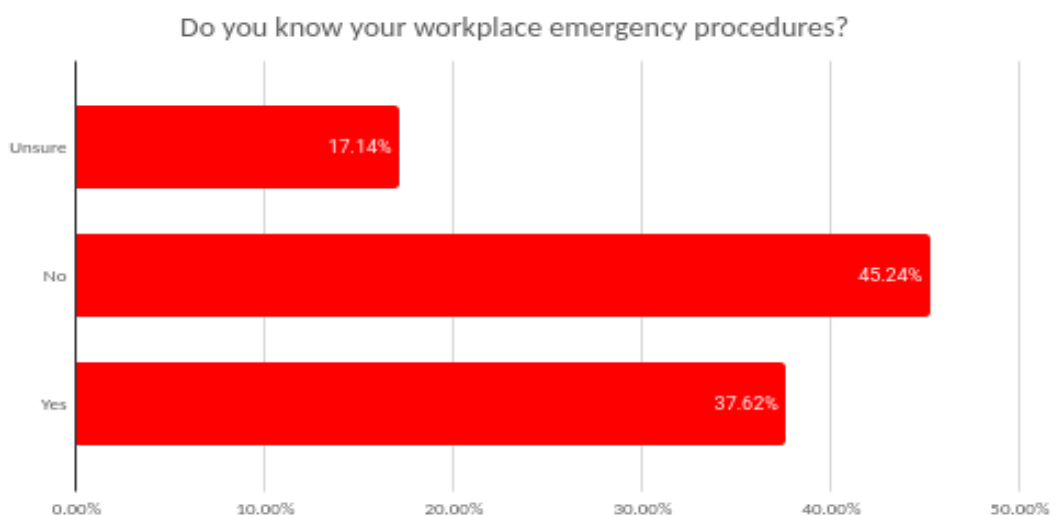


Chart 17

JET Programme Disaster Preparedness – Winter 2018

When the same question is asked about local evacuation procedures, the percentage of respondents who do not know the procedures increased to 55.2%. Only 26.7% of respondents cited knowing their local evacuation procedures. In addition, just over half of the respondents reported knowing the location of their local evacuation shelter. 38.1% of respondents said they do not know.

Do you know where your local evacuation shelter is?

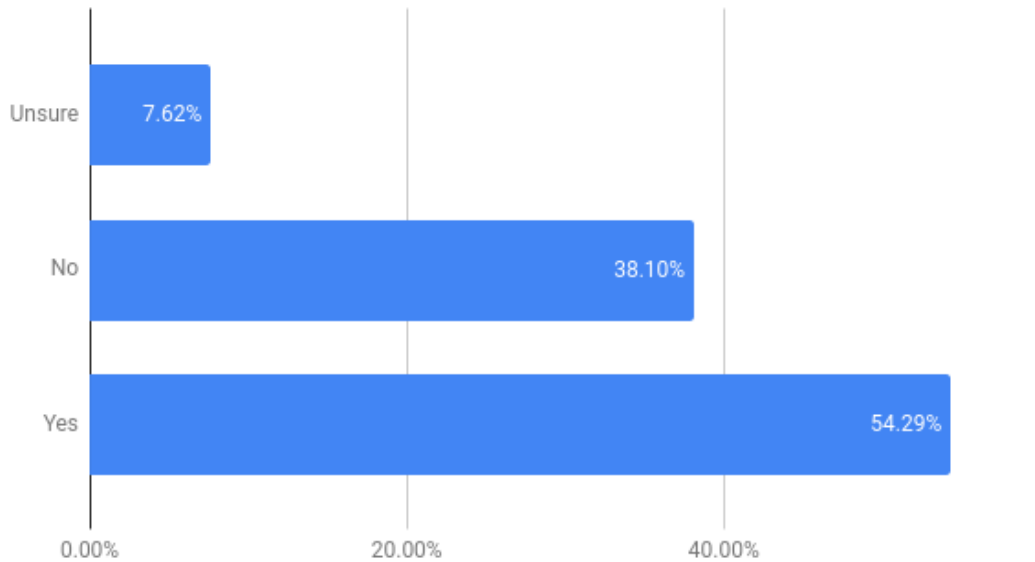


Chart 18

Respondents indicated that if they were not at work and needed emergency information, they would seek information from the internet (77.1%), fellow JET participants (71.9%), or friends in the community (54.8%).

Sources Respondents Use to Get Emergency Information When Not At Work

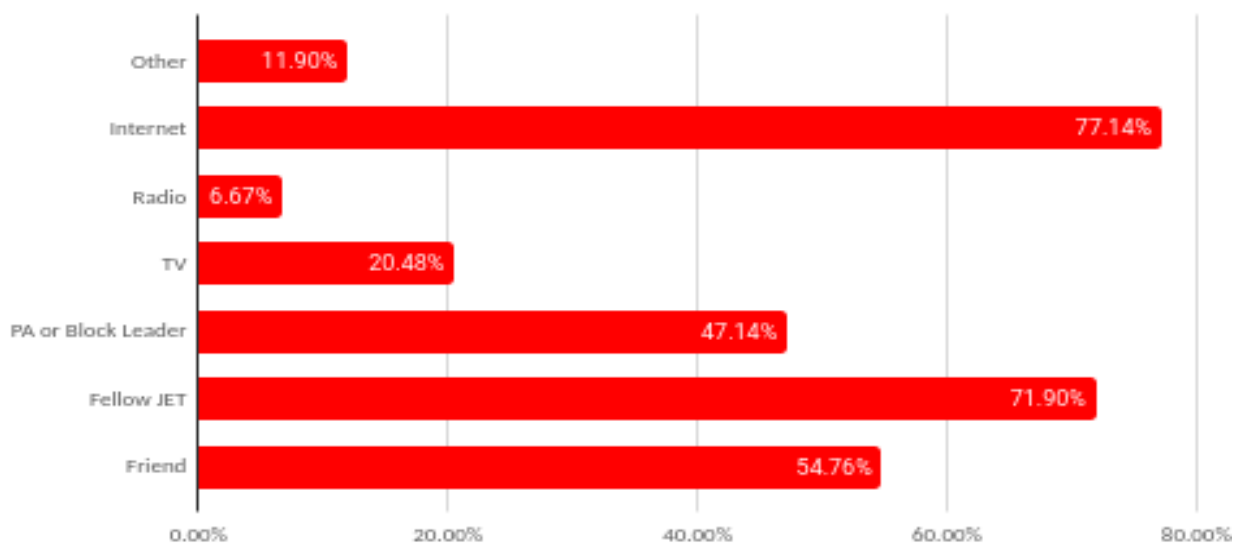


Chart 19

OTHER PREPARATIONS

More than half of the respondents reported that they had not prepared an emergency bag. Only 41.4% had one prepared. In addition, 54.3% of respondents indicated that they have not made other preparations at home in case of an emergency, while 40% said they had. Respondents were asked what has made preparing for emergencies difficult while on the JET Programme. Most or all of the information being in Japanese was the most cited reason (44.9%), followed by respondents not knowing where or how to find information (37.2%).

What Has Made Preparing for Emergencies Difficult

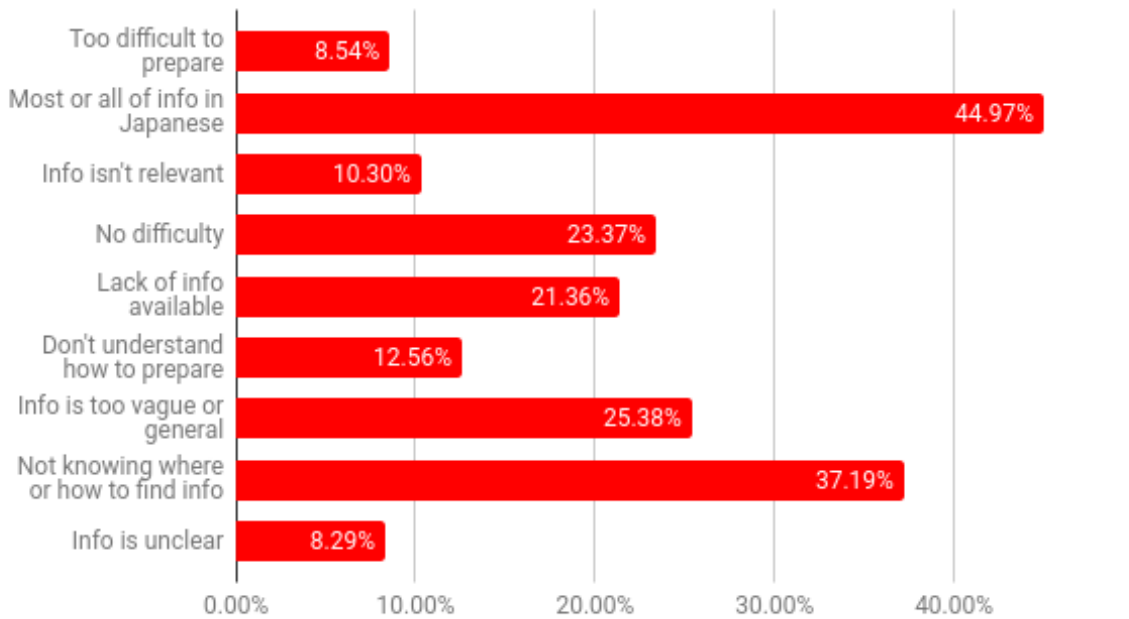


Chart 20

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Respondents have had a variety of experiences with disasters and emergency preparedness while on the Programme. Providing participants with more region-specific information about preparation and procedures before, during, and after disasters can help the participants feel safe during their time on the Programme. The majority of respondents have received some amount of emergency preparedness information and have received some assistance. Improving access to relevant and specific information, in addition to information in the participants' native language, may greatly increase the quality of life for JET Programme participants.

OBSERVATIONS

NATURAL DISASTERS

A majority of respondents have experienced a natural disaster while on the Programme. While most respondents cited having received some information about natural disasters, less than half have received assistance from their COs before, during or after a disaster. However, those respondents that have received assistance rated it as sufficient. In addition, a majority of respondents reported feeling only somewhat prepared or not prepared at all for a natural disaster. When asked if they have made preparations for disasters, 31.6% said no. The most common reason was the individual making the decision not to. Respondents also stated not knowing where their evacuation shelter is, how to check if evacuation orders have been made, or that they felt overwhelmed by the number of things to prepare for the disaster.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The overwhelming majority of respondents have received some kind of emergency preparedness information while on the Programme. Most reported receiving this information from CLAIR and their workplace and/ CO, and having received this mainly at JET orientations (pre-departure, Tokyo, and host prefecture). However, it seems that outside of these situations information on emergency preparedness is not often discussed, as less than half of the respondents reported that their CO or supervisor has spoken with them on the topic.

While nearly half of the respondents said they have access to such information in their native language, most stated that they have not received this from their CO. Additionally, about half do not know if their CO has such information readily available for their use. Respondents indicated email as their most preferred method of receiving information, followed by text message/SMS, the internet, and social networking services. Host prefecture orientations, Contracting Organizations, the workplace, and supervisors were listed as the preferred sources of emergency preparedness information.

About 70% of respondents said they have a copy of CLAIR's Emergency Pocket Guide for JET participants. A majority reported the guide being helpful to them.

PREPARATION FOR EMERGENCIES

Most respondents have registered with their home country's embassy and with CLAIR's Safety Confirmation System. Around half were unsure if their host prefectures used any type of safety confirmation system. Only 46.2% of respondents reported being familiar with the J-Alert system, while 43.5% said they were unfamiliar. These results approximately align with the percentage of respondents who have (37.2%) and have not received (40.5%) a J-Alert before.

Of those who have received a J-Alert, more than half of the respondents had to use translation software or have a co-worker translate to understand the message. Only a minority of respondents reported knowing their workplace procedures, and this percentage increased to over half regarding local procedures. Most respondents did not know the location of their local evacuation shelter.

Respondents also reported not having made preparations at home, such as an emergency bag. While most respondents reported choosing not to do so, most or all of the information being in Japanese and not know where or how to find information were also cited as reasons that made preparing difficult.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NATURAL DISASTERS

The AJET National Council recommends that CLAIR notify Contracting Organizations that they are obliged to provide the most basic information on how to deal with natural disasters. This can be in the form of preventative measures that protect both the home and the individual, a guide of necessary provisions to aid the individual in the case of prolonged natural disasters. Furthermore, they need to make sure they properly state to and/or show new JET participants where their evacuation sites are.

Some participants reported that they have not received any help from their COs before, during, or after a natural disaster. Since many participants do not have the Japanese ability to find help by themselves, they may need to rely solely on their COs. We recommend that COs define and implement clear procedures for when and how to contact the CO in an emergency and some basic steps for participants to take to ensure their safety until help arrives.

We also recommend that COs encourage JET participants that natural disasters of all severity should be treated with the utmost precaution. In the survey, a high number of respondents stated they took the choice of not preparing. A possible reason for this is that some JET participants underestimate how natural disasters could affect them. Therefore, having COs and possibly PAs (when JET participants gather for their conferences) properly educating JET participants that they should take all pre-warnings of disasters seriously and prepare accordingly.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Emergency information is readily available however making sure that the information is relevant to the regions that the JET participants live in is important. We recommend that COs provide region/town-specific emergency information to the participants. Such specific information can be: location of nearest evacuation spot, places that provide emergency help, and where one can buy emergency provisions. Even though some information is available, making sure that information is relevant, up-to-date, re-distributed regularly and in the participants' native language could increase the feeling of safety and knowledge of JET participants that they are prepared and sufficiently informed in case of natural disasters.

EMERGENCY POCKET GUIDE FOR JETS

Many respondents said that they have misplaced their pocket guide since receiving it at Tokyo Orientation. One reason for this could be because of the sheer amount of papers and information participants receive during their first weeks on the Programme. We recommend that CLAIR share the pocket guide with COs and ask that they distribute this yearly with their JET participants. This can help ensure that those who may have lost their copy receive a new one, and that each participant has access to one.

Alternatively, many respondents said that having the pocket guide in pamphlet form makes it easily losable, and inconvenient to carry around. We suggest that CLAIR look into making the pocket guide into a mobile phone application that participants can reference anytime, anywhere.

Some additional information that respondents said they would like to see included in the pocket guide are: who to contact first during an emergency, how to find your closest evacuation shelter, how to know if an evacuation order has been given, a list of suggested applications to use to stay up to date on news, a list of bilingual news sites and applications, where to buy specific supplies for an emergency bag, and including sections on procedures for volcanic eruptions and ballistic missile warnings.

PREPARATION FOR EMERGENCIES

Many respondents indicated that preparing for emergencies was difficult, despite the high percentage of them saying they've received some information on how to do so. We recommend that CLAIR encourage COs to have regular disaster preparedness training at local orientations and conferences. In these trainings, topics covered could be specific tips to prepare for each type of disaster (earthquake, tsunami, etc.), in-person demonstrations, and inviting organizations from the local community to participate and educate as well. As mentioned above, this could provide opportunities for COs to underscore the importance of preparation for disasters, as well as to inform and show JET participants where their local evacuation shelters are and their procedures.

In order to assist with this effort, the National AJET Council will work on an initiative to consolidate preparation information from various prefectural JET websites into one comprehensive document. We would then upload this onto the AJET website for use, and ask that Block Leaders and PAs email it out to participants in their areas. In addition, we can ask Block Leaders to organize events for participants to gather and prepare emergency bags together.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEMS

While the current J-Alert system does use other languages other than Japanese, severe weather warnings are only broadcast in Japanese. While we are aware that the J-Alert system is not within the purview of CLAIR, in the case of such disasters, having an adequate alternative that provides the information in multiple languages could be beneficial. We recommend that CLAIR ask COs to encourage mobile phone safety applications such as *Yurekuru Call* and *Safety Tips* to JET participants. Likewise, AJET will advertise these suggested applications on our website and social media outlets.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: Do the three ministries and CLAIR know if special leave will be granted to JET participants who volunteer at the Rugby World Cup or Tokyo Olympics?

QUESTION 2: Would CLAIR be willing to consider making a mobile phone application version of the Emergency Pocket Guide for JETs?

QUESTION 3: Would CLAIR be willing to consider asking COs to distribute the Emergency Pocket Guide for JETs to participants as an alternative to Tokyo Orientation?

QUESTION 4: Would CLAIR be willing to consider asking COs to create region-specific disaster preparedness pamphlets and distributing those to the JET participants in their area?

QUESTION 5: Would CLAIR be willing to consider asking COs to create a comprehensive list of evacuation shelters for their JET participants to reference?

QUESTION 6: Would CLAIR be willing to consider asking COs to implement disaster preparedness training seminars at their local orientations and conferences?

QUESTION 7: The National AJET Council is aware that the J-Alert system is not under the purview of CLAIR. Does CLAIR know if J-Alerts severe weather warnings can be issued in languages other than Japanese?

QUESTION 8: The National AJET Council will make efforts to encourage participants to make emergency preparations by posting relevant information on the AJET website. In order to support this effort, would CLAIR be willing to consider including reminders of the necessity of preparing for disasters during the relevant seminar at Tokyo Orientation?

QUESTION 9: The National AJET Council will make efforts to encourage participants to make emergency preparations by having Block Leaders organize events such as making emergency bags together. In order to support this effort, would CLAIR be willing to consider adding in reminders and/or tips about emergency preparations in the CLAIR monthly newsletter?

QUESTION 10: Does CLAIR have any suggestions of websites, applications, or other sources for AJET and JET participants to use for disaster preparedness information?

QUESTION 11: How many participants have applied for N1 and N2 grants since CLAIR has expanded the JLPT Grant?

QUESTION 12: Is CLAIR still considering extending the JLPT Grant to N4 and N5?

QUESTION 13: Is CLAIR still considering increasing the amount of reimbursement participants can receive for mental health services?

QUESTION 14: Is CLAIR still considering an alternate method of applying for mental health care reimbursement so that participants do not have inform their COs of treatment?

