

Disaster Awareness and Preparedness in the JET Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disaster awareness and preparedness in Japan is a major concern amongst all residents, both Japanese and foreign. In the past twelve months alone Japan has experienced earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, landslides and tornadoes. However, disaster awareness and preparedness was brought into particular focus in March 2011 when The Great East Japan Earthquake struck the north of Japan. The earthquake caused widespread disaster with many communities seemingly unprepared for the severity and scale of the damage that occurred. Since then disaster awareness and preparedness has been an important issue in local communities nationwide.

The 4,372 current Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants live throughout Japan's 47 prefectures, each with their own weather systems, geographical features and immediate risks in the event of a natural disaster or emergency. Currently, there are various systems in place to make JET participants aware of and prepared for large scale emergencies and natural disasters, such as earthquakes or typhoons. However, report findings indicate that JET participants feel these systems could be improved by making the information available more frequently, in a language the participant can understand, and through a medium that is readily available and commonly used by JET participants.

Furthermore, the findings indicate while the majority of those surveyed consider themselves aware of the potential disasters which could affect their area, they remain fairly unprepared in the event of an emergency actually occurring. Additionally, there is confusion among participants of the steps to take in the event of an emergency, for example, whom to contact first and what to do next.

This report concludes that while there is a high level of satisfaction among JET Programme participants regarding receiving and understanding emergency information, there is a need for further instructions which are simple to understand, readily available in the participant's native language and communicated to them on a regular basis in a format that they have easy access to, such as email.

