Dear JET Alumni,

I hope this message finds you well, and that you are utilising the knowledge, skills, and experiences you gained on the JET Programme in your various fields of work. Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all JETAA members in particular, for your efforts in contributing to grass-roots internationalisation through the introduction of Japanese culture overseas, for your daily activities which promote the JET Programme, and for providing information to JET participants prior to their departure for Japan.

Since the JET Programme began in 1987, there have been over 60,000 participants from 63 countries, including 4,476 participants from 42 countries last year. In addition to contributing to the enhancement of foreign language education in Japan and the promotion of international exchange in local communities, this people-to-people exchange programme has lead to ever-increasing numbers of people who support Japan, and understand it well.

At this time, in response to the introduction of English education in elementary schools at an earlier grade, the Japanese government is aiming for 6,400 ALTs on the JET Programme by 2019.

Also, in 2016, the JET Programme will celebrate its 30th anniversary since establishment, leading to increasing focus and expectation being placed on the programme.

The assistance of JET alumni and JETAA members is imperative for the further growth of the JET Programme, and as such I kindly ask for your continued cooperation and support.

Hiroto Watanabe
Director
Department of JET Programme Management
Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)
Hello from the Editors!

Greetings from the Department of JET Programme Management at CLAIR. The Department of JET Programme Management issues JET Streams to JET alumni as a way of sharing the wide range of activities of JETAA chapters worldwide and to further strengthen ties among JET alumni, and between JET alumni and Japan. This would not be possible without all the JET alumni around the world who share their experiences with us. As such, we would like to sincerely thank all contributors to this edition of JET Streams.

JET Programme Country and Participant Numbers
1726 new participants have been welcomed to the JET Programme in 2014–15, bringing the total number of JET participants to 4476 participants, from 42 different countries. There have been approximately 60,000 JET participants to date!

JET Programme Facebook Page
Since 2012, CLAIR has managed an official JET Programme Facebook page, which is used mainly to assist in the dissemination of JET Programme–related information to current JET participants and contracting organisations. Although most of the information posted to the page is intended for current JET participants, we encourage JET alumni to view and like the page, and enjoy being reminded of their own days as a JET participant!
The URL for the Facebook page is: https://www.facebook.com/pages/JET-Programme/219440938121634

JETAA Member Count
JETAA currently has 52 chapters in 15 countries and regions and around 25,000 members. CLAIR would like to thank the JETAA chapters for the resources they provide to outgoing and newly returned JET participants, and the role they play in international exchange between Japan and JET Programme participant countries.

JETAA Chapter Websites & Contact Information
If your JETAA chapter website or chapter representative’s contact information changes, please send an email to CLAIR at jet-aa[@]clair.or.jp
I was on the JET Programme from 1995–1997 in Ojima-machi Junior High School, Gunma Prefecture, and stayed an extra year in Japan afterwards. It would be true to say that this experience was life changing for me.

Eventually, although I felt that the time was right to return to the UK, and I knew that I wanted to keep my links with Japan, I honestly did not know in which direction to take it. I was extremely lucky that I got a job with the Japan Local Government Centre in London, and could maintain those links for the next three years, as well as gain some business skills and learn more about Japanese corporate culture. I also got heavily involved with JETAA London and was able to take part in their Careers Information Day, The Japan 2001 celebrations, and even an appearance on Blue Peter on the BBC with the Mikoshi that JETAA sent round the UK. This all meant that my bond with Japan was well and truly sealed.

However life has a funny way of taking us in different directions. I became pregnant and moved back up to the Midlands to start my family. Whilst my involvement with Japan was put on the back burner, it was never forgotten. I trained as a primary teacher but always felt the Japan connection- I taught the kids about it and would often tell people about Japan.

I had not fully appreciated the importance of my JET experience until a very well known businessman who travels between the UK and Tokyo commented to me that the JET Programme gave me a very deep understanding of Japan, its culture, people and language. He said this would be important in helping UK businesses and organisations understand and re-engage with Japan. With all the positive changes taking place in Japan, including the renewed optimism brought in by Abenomics, I felt inspired and compelled to set up my own business, Japan In Perspective, to promote trade and understanding.
I am now working with a variety of businesses in various sectors to conduct market research for their sectors, make the right connections for them, and help them with their Japan strategy, using the skills I learned whilst on the JET Programme and back in London. I am also delivering “Global Communication Training” to Japanese executives, in line with Japan’s current globalisation imperative, to improve their communications so they can develop new skills themselves and work within diverse teams.

I also decided to re-join JETAA to help set up a Midlands chapter, took on the role of National Careers and Networking Coordinator, and was honoured to be invited to speak at the JET Returns’ Conference (After JET Conference) in Yokohama organised by CLAIR in February 2014. Upon my return to the UK, I was elected as JETAA UK Chair, and have since been able to attend many events, promote the JET Programme, and meet many ex-JETS working in important Anglo Japanese roles in the UK. I was honoured to be invited to the Dinner for Prime Minister Abe during his visit to the UK in May, and amazingly, was seated next to the same ex-JET who I had sat next to on the plane going to Japan on the JET Programme back in 1995! I have also met many business people interested in engaging with JETAA, and have realised there is an obvious need and opportunity for JETAA to engage more professionally.

(Read more about JETAA UK's involvement in career support for former JETs on page 15).

About Sarah Parsons

Sarah was born in the Midlands and after studying German and Business at the University of Warwick, participated in the JET Programme as an ALT from 1995-1997 in Gunma Prefecture. Upon her return to the UK, she worked at the Japan Local Government Centre in London until 2002, when she moved to the East Midlands to start a family. She gained a PGCE and taught at primary schools, and has recently set up her own company, “Japan In Perspective”, helping British companies that work with or want to enter the Japanese market and delivering Globalisation Communications Training to Japanese executives working in diverse teams. Sarah has volunteered for JETAA both in London and in the Midlands, and is now the National Chair of JETAA UK.
When I was informed that I was chosen in 2009 to be one of the new German JETs who would live and work in Japan as a CIR, me and my husband could already imagine what life in Japan would be like. We both studied Japanese Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin and during that time, luckily, had the chance to experience Japan as exchange students at Tokai University in Kanagawa Prefecture from 2003 to 2004.

But for our kids, Jakob and Klara, who were only 4 and 1 years old in 2009, it was the first time to live in Japan. So, helping them to adjust to a completely new country and language, and people from another culture, as well as to Japan’s hot, humid summer climate, and on top of that trying to help them feel as comfortable as they had been back home in Germany was one of the biggest challenges during our first months in Tokushima, Shikoku. But, with the great support we got from colleagues, neighbours and people from the local kindergarten, we soon realised that we could cope with it. Not only did we get help with all the paperwork, we were overwhelmed when we heard that staff members of the town hall and local parents had collected a baby bed and other furniture, a baby seat for the car and things the kids needed for kindergarten. We did not expect such a warm welcome and we are still thankful for all the great support.

Our new home was located in Naruto, Tokushima Prefecture on Shikoku. This area is world famous for the Naruto whirlpools between Naruto and Awaji Island in Hyogo, for the 88 temples of the Shikoku pilgrimage, for Japan’s largest dance festival, the Awa Odori, which is held in Tokushima every year in August, and for the POW camp Bando, where German WWI prisoners performed Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony “Ode to Joy” for the first time in Asia in 1918. It is fascinating how the popularity of this symphony in Japan is continuing, seeing how many people in Tokushima (and Japan in general) can sing the symphony – in German, while only a few can do so in Germany...

Shortly after I came to Tokushima I was asked to practice singing the ‘Ninth’ in German together with kids of our local kindergarten, but being a native speaker is not enough if you don’t know the lyrics and melody exactly.
So I decided to join the Naruto Ninth Symphony Choir in order to fill this embarrassing knowledge gap, and soon the weekly routine of singing the Ninth became part of my life. For me, taking part in the performances of the Naruto Daiku Concert in 2010 and 2011 as a member of a choir numbering up to 600 singers from all over Japan was definitely a highlight of these two years.

The work as a German CIR in Naruto offers a variety of exciting tasks like giving tours of the Bando POW camp museum of the German House, translations of all kinds, giving speeches on various topics about Germany and helping organise the itinerary of the annual friendship delegations from and to Lüneburg and various other exchange activities with Germany. Living in the Naruto community together with my family this gave me the chance to become friends with many other families through sports events at our kindergarten and other activities – some of these friendships have even lasted until today. During our daily life, while grocery shopping or when visiting playgrounds, people would often come up and start a conversation. We got to know many nice people – which is easy if you live in Japan with two little kids with blond curly hair, I confess. After only a few months our kids were fluent in Japanese, even speaking the local dialect, and whenever or wherever they started to talk, people would always react the same way: at first surprise, then by smiling, followed by countless “kawaiis.”

During the first weeks I was mainly focused on studying the history of the former POW camp in order to be able to give interesting tours through the German House and the Bando POW camp exhibition. To me, a particularly fascinating feature of this camp history is how the exchange between the German prisoners and the local Japanese people has had a lasting effect until today. Friendships have been made and the common interest in the other culture is still very strong on both sides. In 1974 a sister city contract between Naruto and Lüneburg was signed, and it is important to say that it does not only exist on paper, but has been intensively cultivated and maintained. After only a short time I began to realise that my workplace was a really unique one, even for a German CIR in Japan, not only because I was the first female CIR in Naruto, but also because I was the first CIR in Naruto that had come with family.

As we had to live on a single income, our budget was definitely smaller than that of most JETs, who come here alone, but we still tried to travel to as many places as possible, and made a lot of nice memories during these short trips. All in all, being a full time working JET and mum is a big challenge and I remember that I often felt guilty that I did not have the chance to spend as much time with our kids as my husband did, but because my husband really did a great job in being always there for our children, I think Jakob and Klara got along with this situation.

We had planned to return to Germany in August 2011 because our son turned 6 that year and we wanted him to enter primary school in Germany. But the tragic and shocking disaster of March 11 forced us to make an important decision: worried about the safety of our children and not knowing anything about the consequences of the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima we decided to leave Japan, at least for the time of uncertainty. After a sleepless weekend we left on Monday, March 14, not knowing if we would ever be able to go back to Japan again, to the place we called home. We were worried about all our friends and colleagues in Tokushima, who did not have the chance to evacuate to another country far away. We were completely being put off in all aspects during the next weeks, unsure how the situation would develop, but after having spoken to nuclear experts, who told us that returning with our kids would be safe in the area of Shikoku, we decided to go back to Japan and finish our time in Tokushima as planned.
After having spent 6 weeks in Germany it felt very good to come “home” again. Hanami season had just started in Japan and we were happy to help set up a charity event at the German House for the victims of the Tohoku disaster. It was impressive and touching to see how people from all over the country were supporting the areas hit by the tsunami and nuclear pollution.

After we moved back to Germany, as originally planned in August 2011, it took us a while to get settled again with the kids, but having worked in Japan for two years had made me confident enough to apply for Japan(e)se-related jobs which gave me the chance to keep my level of Japanese language skills and stay in contact with Japanese people. Also, my experiences in the field of project management which I gained while working as a CIR were definitely a good preparation for my career: I was accepted to work as a project manager for the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in Berlin for a bit more than a year, where I had new experiences and met great people. The employment was temporary, in substitute for a colleague who took maternity leave, however. Unfortunately my current job does not have anything to do with Japan or Japanese, but even though my professional career is not Japan-related any more, I still keep in good contact with friends in Japan, former co-workers and even with kindergarten-nannies.

We wanted our kids to continue speaking Japanese in Germany and to not lose their Japanese language skills, so Jakob and Klara started to attend a Japanese supplementary school in Berlin. But as most of their friends are German and their daily activities involve only German they started to refuse speaking Japanese more and more. Eventually, after 18 months, we took them out of that school. Today, both Jakob and Klara do not speak a word of Japanese any more, but they are generally interested in foreign languages and they are good at learning English at school. I think they carry Japan deep in their hearts.

In my opinion our stay in Japan has made me and my family open to new things, has given us countless wonderful memories and has helped us grow together by overcoming various obstacles.

Today, I am still connected with the JET Programme in a number of ways. In 2012 I was asked to attend the Pre-Departure Orientation for new JETs and was happy to give advice and speak about my experiences. I also attend alumni events as often as possible, and I am always happy to meet my German JET friends.

About Anja Hankel:
Together with her husband and two little kids Anja spent two years (2009 - 2011) working as a CIR in the German House in Naruto, Tokushima. During that time she was able to discover Japan through her kids’ eyes, and today she is still connected with friends from Naruto and its’ sister city Lüneburg.
"Modi先生じゃないですか。" (Aren’t you Modi-sensei?) These were the words I heard a young policeman say when I stopped at a koban (police box) in Shibuya during a brief visit to Japan in 2007 to enquire where the closest bank was. You can imagine my delight when it turned out he had been in a class I had taught in 1987, during my very first year on the JET Programme as an ALT at Ihara High School in Kambara, Shizuoka Prefecture. Needless to say, I was overjoyed that he still remembered me even after twenty years.

My four year teaching career at Ihara High was a wonderful experience, exposing me to not only varied aspects of the Japanese educational system, but also to fascinating facets of Japanese culture. I had the good fortune to work with amazingly dedicated teachers and enjoy the beauty of Japan at my doorstep. Ihara High School faced the Pacific Ocean on one side and snow capped Fuji-san on the other.

Even most Japanese had hardly heard of Kambara, a small rural town in the hinterlands of Japan where “Gaijin” were a rarity. And yet, this was the town that not only adopted me and my family but years later also largely supported Ashta No Kai, (ANK) a non-profit organisation I founded in India in 1998 to empower rural women and educate the girl child.

My connection with Kambara continued throughout the years I lived in Japan even though I moved on to university teaching in another city. One of the major reasons was the Ali Baba Club that my adult students had formed there. I had been requested to teach the class voluntarily in my first week of arriving in Kambara, and I gladly agreed to do it. At the time, I had no idea of the far reaching ripple effect this group would have on my life, and the lives of thousands of women in rural India.

I started campaigning in Japan a year prior to founding ANK. My campaign plea that education could change the cycle of poverty and dependence which characterised the lives of poor village women in India touched a chord among the Japanese, with 900 members all over Japan pledging to support our work. It is thanks to their generosity and continuous support, and in particular, the people of Kambara that ANK was able to sustain and enhance its activities. Subsequently, Sumida-ku where my daughter Zareen was a CIR in the early-mid ‘90s also became a major supporter of ANK’s efforts.
Today, the Ali Baba Women’s Center stands proudly in Khandale, a remote village near Pune, along with another women’s center in Nimgaon Bhogi village that was supported by the Lions Club of Kambara. The Sumida-ku group largely supported a Bicycle Bank we had set up to arrest drop-out rates among village girls. The generosity, care and concern shown by Japanese friends and donors who reached out across the seas to lend a helping hand to villagers in India, many of whom they had never seen and would never meet, has been truly touching.

ANK was established with the goal of creating long term sustainable solutions to gender discrimination, poverty and illiteracy. Fifteen years on, we are seeing the seeds we planted grow, knowing that the organisation has made a positive difference in the lives of the many women it has touched. ANK has successfully transformed the lives of hundreds of rural women and girls by presenting them with opportunities that their mothers and grandmothers would never have dreamed of. Thousands of rural women run their own savings groups, dairy cooperatives, and poultry farms among other livelihood ventures. The combination of added financial autonomy and increased confidence levels has given rural women a significant voice in their communities.

ANK’s Bicycle Bank has enabled more than a thousand girls to access distant schools, by providing them with bicycles, thereby curbing dropout rates and helping to arrest early marriages. ANK’s scholarship program has encouraged village girls to realize their potential by giving them opportunities to pursue higher education. Village girls are now completing Bachelor’s and Masters degrees in various fields including Engineering, IT and dentistry.

An unintended consequence of starting this project has also been the opportunity to introduce many Japanese to India. Many donors as well as student groups from the various institutions I taught at in Japan over the years have visited India on study trips we arranged. Our focus for these excursions has been on real experiences to help visitors understand the complexities of the country that is modern India. Many of these Japanese visitors continue to be connected with India in various ways, in cultural or business related fields, with a couple even marrying Indian partners.

None of this could have become a reality had it not been for my JET experience which enabled me to forge close links between India and Japan at the grassroots level and opened up whole new worlds I could never have imagined.

About Armene Modi:
Armene was a US JET 1987-1991; she is the social activist founder of the NPO Ashka no Kai.
If you would like to contact Armene Modi, please mail her at armene.modi [@] gmail.com
Officially JETAA Wellington doesn’t have a motto. However, if we were to, it would be something like: ‘Bigger is better’. We tend to do everything on a large scale. Literally, our projects are HUGE.

In the past year JETAA Wellington have organised some enormous projects. These include: the co-ordination of the ‘Giant Kimono Project’, facilitating a titanic amount of chit chat with the Japanese Conversation Club ‘JkaiWa’, creating a taiyaki obsession with our epic taiyaki stall, and covering the city in koinobori as part of the Children’s Day activities.

See the theme here? Big. Everything is big.

The ‘Giant Kimono Project’ saw the fostering of friendship between New Zealand and Japan beginning at a young age. As part of the project, 19 schools and 1 community group from Wellington and its sister city Sakai, as well as schools from the Hutt Valley in New Zealand, and Minoh (Osaka Prefecture) and Kyoto in Japan submitted a panel that best represented their environment and culture. These panels were combined to create a giant ‘friendship’ kimono. The Kimono, along with a series of photographs from each participating school, was displayed to more than 40,000 people at the Wellington Japan Festival in August 2014.

By Jess Clarke, Secretary, JETAA Wellington
At the Japan Festival, JETAA Wellington also ran a very, very popular taiyaki stall. Queue wait times for our custard and chocolate taiyaki were up to an hour long!

On the day, we sold over 700 taiyaki and were by far the most popular stall. The aim of the taiyaki stall was to provide a Japanese food with a point of difference – something new from sushi.

JkaiWa has been a great way of fostering Japanese culture in Wellington, by promoting the Japanese language. It has allowed the chapter members an opportunity to practice their Japanese skills, while inspiring an interest in Japan and its language among the public. These monthly conversation classes have filled capacity at our venue, the Japan Information and Culture Center (JICC). Each session, attendees are provided with some delicious snacks from a popular Japanese restaurant in Wellington. We have had a variety of attendees, ranging from high schoolers to grandparents who are all studying Japanese.

As part of the Japanese Children’s Day festivities, JETAA Wellington teamed up with the national museum of New Zealand: ‘Te Papa’ for a second year. There, we hosted family orientated activities promoting Japan, such as origami, kendama and koinobori making. The tiny koinobori flags proved to be a hit, and a fun day was had by all.

Later this November, we are holding a charity cooking night at Ronald McDonald House. We hope to provide the families and kids there with some big smiles, by making a tasty Japanese themed dinner. Also, we have an upcoming Japan themed photo competition, in which both past JETs and the general public can participate. Through an exhibition of the photographs submitted, we want to showcase Japan’s beauty to the public, as well as inspire a few amateur photographers. With this, we hope that the events of JETAA Wellington this year will continue our inadvertent motto ‘bigger is better’!

About Jess Clarke:

Jess is a former ALT who was based in Uto, Kumamoto from 2012-2013. She currently is based in Wellington, New Zealand.
The 2014 JETAA Oceania Conference Report

By Eden Law, JETAA New South Wales

The 2014 JETAA Oceania Regional Conference, hosted by JETAA Victoria/Tasmania/South Australia (JETAA VICTASSA) took place over the weekend of October 24–26, in the city of Melbourne, the state capital of Victoria. In addition to the hosting chapter, the other chapters in attendance were those that make up the Oceania region: JETAA Queensland, JETAA New South Wales, JETAA Canberra, JETAA Western Australia; and from New Zealand, JETAA Wellington, JETAA Auckland and JETAA South Island. In addition to the 19 chapter delegates, representatives from CLAIR Sydney were also in attendance.

Conferences have always served a useful purpose in reconnecting chapters, especially in the Oceania context, where chapters can not only be separated by time zones but also by country borders and large bodies of water. It could be argued that fostering a sense of community is just as important as the actual work of discussing, debating and exchanging ideas and strategies over the official two-day programme.

The 2014 conference theme was “Staying Relevant”. The conference reflected a 'back-to-basics' approach, in tackling long-present issues of membership recruitment, visibility and maintaining ongoing chapter dynamism and viability. Each chapter was invited to do a presentation on the theme, and presentations ranged from providing examples of projects that focused on community engagement, tools for online outreach and exploration of what the concept of “relevance” is in the context of JETAA.

The following is a brief outline of those discussions:
Delegates agreed that it is vital to engage with returnees, and to be more useful to this demographic by providing practical services such as career and networking opportunities;

The importance of using online tools was highlighted – not only having a website and using online social media such as Facebook and Twitter, but also using Meetup.com for event promotion, and Japanese social sites like Mixi to attract native Japanese speakers. LinkedIn is also a great resource for networking and making professional connections;

Many chapters advocated supplementing their budget for organising events with capital raised from food and drink stalls;

The importance of conferences as great motivators was recognised. Wherever possible, new JETAA members will be given priority when selecting delegates for future conferences;

Certain events, such as Japanese–English language exchange events, were highlighted as being consistently popular;

Many chapters have added more roles to their committees, and have changed their charts to stay up to date with changing needs of their community;

As Australia also plays host to Japanese ALTs, chapters were encouraged to provide a support network for them, in recognition of the similar situation that many JETs would have encountered upon arrival in Japan;

Japanese–related university groups are great places to make contact with potential JETs.

This year’s guest speaker was Leonie Boxtel, former Director of Alumni Relations and Communications at the University of Melbourne. Leonie was a JET in the second year of the Programme itself, so it was great to hear from one of the original sempai generation. Bringing her experience in fostering alumni connections, she shared the following insights:

In order to get organisations to work with JETAA, JETAA must show the value proposition of how and why it would be useful and worthwhile for them to do so;

Delegates should set objectives, and develop strategies to reach those objectives;

Planning is vital in developing strategies to get to the end goal;
To reach the alumni community, one should strive to build a connection or affinity with said alumni community. By doing so, the community will want to engage:

- Maintain regular communications, updating the alumni community on what your chapter has been doing;
- Provide a mentorship program, but define limits to it – most people can be reluctant to participate if they feel they may have to over-commit. Setting limits like a short, 6-month period of volunteering one’s time would go a long way to assuaging those fears;
- Define the current challenge or opportunity – “It would be good if…”;
- Define what benefits can be given to people in return for their engagement;
- Recognise the value of senior people. To engage them, make them feel recognised and appreciated for their achievements and contributions.

Country representatives, Raelene Wilson (Australia), and Shelley Butt (New Zealand), also held a discussion on the roles of country representatives and what chapters would like to see being done after the conference. The main takeaways were:

- To get a JETAA Oceania site up and running, the structure and content of which will be decided by and contributed to by all the chapters through their webmasters;
- To get country representatives to visit isolated chapters if possible;
- Country representatives should help with facilitating communication between chapters, to strengthen the sense of community and bond across Oceania. One way of doing this would be to set up a regular online conference meeting between chapters.

CLAIR Sydney delivered a report this year which contained interesting historical data, and signaled their wish for more involvement in chapters’ affairs:

- Chapters were encouraged to do more sister-city projects. In order to help with this, extra funding has been allocated by CLAIR Sydney, which will be released for any sister-city project;
- Chapters were encouraged to do more work in reaching out to regional JETs.

The conference closed with lots of ideas and suggestions to think about. There is a definite mood and spirit of determination to put plans into motion. Already much debate and further exchange of ideas has been taking place on the JETAA Oceania Facebook group, which is a hopeful sign for the future. One thing is certain, and is best encapsulated in the presentation by JETAA New South Wales: Being relevant is a choice, and there can be no results without action.
Ex-JETs fall broadly into 3 categories: those who have just returned, and are looking for jobs, hoping to make sense of and use their JET experience; those who are interested in keeping in touch with Japan even though their careers are not directly Japan related; and those who have been very successful in using their JET experience professionally, whether it be directly Japan related or by using it as a catalyst for a new career.

Unfortunately, some of these ex-JETs have not engaged with JETAA for a long time, if ever. Two things became evident to us at JETAA UK. First, JETAA UK needed to support the professional needs of its members. JET is such a life-changing experience, offering so many potential professional opportunities for knowledge sharing. Secondly, the job environment in the UK is getting more and more competitive, and it is very challenging for returning JETs to stand out, so more business experience and networking opportunities are needed to build upon JET experiences.

It is for these reasons that JETAA UK decided to launch the Careers and Networking Programme and hold professional networking events around the country. For example:

- We hold an annual networking reception at the University of Nottingham with speakers and representatives from Japanese and British companies in the area.
- We hold a bi-annual Japan UK careers seminar at Robert Walters in London with speakers (some of whom are ex-JETS) from Goldman Sachs, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Deloitte, and Hitachi, who speak about using Japan related skills in today’s business world.
- We held a very successful JETAAUK Careers Seminar for the 2014 returning JETs, with JETAA members on the panel giving advice and sharing their experience on topics such as: working for Japanese companies, networking, interview and CV skills, getting into graduate recruitment programmes, and keeping in touch with Japan.
The volunteer panellists came from various industries including the travel industry and digital media, Japanese companies such as Toyota and KDDI, Japanese organisations such as the Japan Foundation, the Japan Society, Daiwa Anglo Japanese Foundation, and the Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO), as well as the FCO and Teach First.

- Mitsubishi Corporation in London held the first of our ‘Spotlight on Japanese Companies in the UK’ events in October for our members to find out about what they do, and to network.

- Brother UK, a Japanese company in Manchester, hosted a Welcome Back Networking evening in October too.

These events give ex-JETs the opportunity to engage with their local business communities, both Japanese companies and UK companies that are interested in Japan. They also give attendees a chance to make important contacts and keep up to date on what has been happening in the Japan related business world.

Running alongside these events, we have also implemented a mentoring programme and were absolutely astounded by the number of ex-JETS who showed an interest in mentoring. With support from the UK Trade and Investment team in Tokyo, we have been able to identify some possible Japan based internships suitable for life after JET and we hope to set up more links with companies in the UK and Japan. The British Chamber of Commerce of Industry in Japan has agreed to feature ex-JETs in its monthly publication, BCCJ Acumen, to raise the profile of ex-JETs. We also hope to attract more members who are willing to organise or speak at events and engage professionally on behalf of JETAA, as well as add new ideas.

Please contact Sarah at chair[@]jetaa.org.uk if you have any comments or questions.
The JET Alumni Association in New York (JETAANY) is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organisation comprised of 1,500+ JET alumni from the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Being one of the most active alumni chapters in the U.S., JETAANY provides a variety of events to promote Japanese culture as well as to connect JETs with one another and help them grow professionally. In addition to helping new JETs prepare for their journey to Japan through pre-departure events, we support JETs upon their return from Japan by offering opportunities to stay connected to Japan, maintain their Japanese language skills, get career support and network with one another. These events include a welcome back reception with the Ambassador, Nihongo Dake events, a Momijigari Hiking Trip, and a boat cruise around Manhattan, among many other social and cultural events. All of this shows JETs that even though they have left Japan, there is still a strong network and community back in their home countries.

In addition to providing fun and social activities, we also understand that JETs returning (or moving) to the United States will face a number of challenges such as culture shock. Another major setback for re-assimilation can be trying to get back into (or into for the first time) the American job market. Some people finishing up on the JET Programme might feel like they have suddenly lost direction, like they had a clear vision and path, yet now find themselves with too many directions and options and do not know what to do next. Others maybe want to steer away from Japan-related or teaching jobs, but do not know how to leverage their last year(s) of experience into a new position.

The JET Alumni Association in New York (JETAANY) is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organisation comprised of 1,500+ JET alumni from the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Being one of the most active alumni chapters in the U.S., JETAANY provides a variety of events to promote Japanese culture as well as to connect JETs with one another and help them grow professionally. In addition to helping new JETs prepare for their journey to Japan through pre-departure events, we support JETs upon their return from Japan by offering opportunities to stay connected to Japan, maintain their Japanese language skills, get career support and network with one another. These events include a welcome back reception with the Ambassador, Nihongo Dake events, a Momijigari Hiking Trip, and a boat cruise around Manhattan, among many other social and cultural events. All of this shows JETs that even though they have left Japan, there is still a strong network and community back in their home countries.

In addition to providing fun and social activities, we also understand that JETs returning (or moving) to the United States will face a number of challenges such as culture shock. Another major setback for re-assimilation can be trying to get back into (or into for the first time) the American job market. Some people finishing up on the JET Programme might feel like they have suddenly lost direction, like they had a clear vision and path, yet now find themselves with too many directions and options and do not know what to do next. Others maybe want to steer away from Japan-related or teaching jobs, but do not know how to leverage their last year(s) of experience into a new position.
We try to show individuals with these different challenges that there is an established network of people that are here to help with such roadblocks. Every fall, JETAANY hosts a “Career Forum.” This event is typically aimed at recent returnees, but also welcomes any career-changing alumni looking for information, tips, and resources. Nearly all of the speakers at the Career Forum are JET alumni themselves who volunteer to share their expertise.

The 2014 Career Forum was held from 2:30–6:30 pm on Saturday, September 27 and had 25 attendees. The day kicked off with an introduction by Monica Yuki, President of JETAANY, and a keynote speech by Emilie McGlone, the International Coordinator of Peace Boat U.S. We followed with three sessions: “Writing Resumes for Results,” “Interviewing with Confidence,” and “Making the Most of Your Network.”

As one of the presenters, I was in charge of the “Interviewing” session. The purpose of this was not necessarily to walk JET alumni through the interviewing process, but to really show them how they can translate their JET experience for what they want to do next – in combination with their resumes and networking skills. Some individuals have been out of the job market for a while and do not know what job hunting is like today. Or maybe they want to break into a new field but are not sure how to translate teaching experience into that new sector.

With practical advice, prompts, and exercises, we were able to help the participants to think about their JET experience not only as a “teaching gig,” but also as a hands-on, cross-cultural experience requiring a number of different types of skills. Not only did we teach English, but we have also learned how to build teams, work in another language and in another country, coordinate with coworkers on scheduling and lesson plans, develop curricula and testing materials, and many other activities that were unique to our positions – not to mention anything else we may have learned in special activities and side projects.
The purpose of the Career Forum is to help participants recognise these additional aspects, and tailor their JET experience on paper and in conversation to fit whichever field or position they are trying to transition into next. With a little bit of assistance, the recent returnees were able to see how much they had done, learned and grown in Japan – that this experience could be used in a multitude of different contexts moving forward.

Although the Career Forum was scheduled for one afternoon, it is actually happening all year round. JETAANY members continue to help and mentor the new returnees, who in turn will meet with and mentor the individuals who return after them. With this community and network, we are able to keep the Career Forum alive all year, paying it back and paying it forward. Hopefully with this event we are able to help those who are ready for that next step, and just need that little bit of extra support to get there.

To see the materials from the 2014 Career Forum, visit [http://jetaany.org/resources/welcome-back-guide/](http://jetaany.org/resources/welcome-back-guide/). To see the other events we offer through the year, visit us at [www.jetaany.org](http://www.jetaany.org) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/jetaany](http://facebook.com/jetaany). Feel free to reach out to the JETAANY Executive Board if you have questions, we look forward to hearing from you! And remember, if you are in the process of finding your next calling or just need a boost during your search, reach out to your local JET Alumni community. It’s a great resource right at your fingertips!

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About Lana Kitcher:

Originally from Croton-on-Hudson, New York, Lana Kitcher was on the JET Programme as an Assistant Language Teacher for two years in Yamanashi Prefecture, stationed at the largest junior high school in the prefecture. Soon after JET Lana made her way back to New York to pursue Intercultural Consulting between Japanese and U.S. communities and businesses. As the Business Development Associate at Bridges to Japan (founded by a fellow JET Alumni and current JETAANY Board of Directors member, Jennifer Jakubowski), and assistant to author and consultant Laura Kriska, she helped Japanese executives and management assimilate into American business culture. Lana now works as the Development Associate in Individual Giving at Japan Society in New York. To get in touch, please visit [www.lanakitcher.com](http://www.lanakitcher.com).
With the number of JET Alumni in the Tokyo/Kanto area increasing year by year there was a need to help make the transition from rural to metropolitan life easier. In order to combat this dilemma, the JET Alumni Association of Tokyo started the so-called “JETAA Tokyo Mentor Programme” in 2011.

The purpose of the JETAA Tokyo Mentor Programme is to provide current JETs and JET alumni living in the Kanto area with a resource for developing their careers in Tokyo. We offer the opportunity to partner JETs with mentors from all walks of life. This gives current JETs who are not reappointing the chance to seek personal advice and knowledge from someone who has successfully established themselves as a working professional in the Tokyo area. The JETs participating in the mentor programme can expect monthly contact through face-to-face meetings, telephone, Skype or e-mail with their mentees. Further, advice and suggestions on researching career opportunities in Tokyo is given, and feedback on job search materials such as résumés, Japanese CVs, letters of recommendation, etc. is provided.
I personally had fun organising this programme. This was something I had always wanted to do and was always keen on starting. As a former JET Programme Coordinator working at CLAIR, I always heard from current JETs about the challenges they faced when wanting to stay in Japan. Unfortunately, at that time there was limited advice that I could give, however because of a significant interest amongst the JET Alumni across the Kanto area, after thorough research, the Mentor programme started.

At first, getting enough current JETs who would be interested in participating was difficult, and calling out mentors in the Kanto area was even more of a challenge. And, once the committed 60 JETs from Okinawa to Hokkaido were set, pairing them with JET alums in the Kanto area who matched their interests was much more difficult than I had expected. Areas of interest such as entrepreneurship, visual arts, education, media, sales, marketing, design, graduate school and business were amongst the most popular, but looking for JET alums in similar fields required plenty of time and networking. Unfortunately not all of the participants could be matched according to the specific fields of interest they requested, however they were all happy to be able to talk to someone who had experienced life after JET and to discuss tips on how to look for the right job and place to live. One interesting topic of enquiry from current JETs was the commuting experience, as most people working in Tokyo commute by train while many JETs who live in the countryside commute to work by car. Overall, the mentor programme was a great success, and there was plenty of positive feedback from mentees as well as mentors. Some mentees have successfully moved to Tokyo and have started their new lives, whereas others returned home and have managed to move on with their lives there. In order to help current JETs who struggle to move on to the next step, we would definitely like to continue pursuing this great programme in the near future.

About Christian Tsuji:
Christian originally comes from Los Angeles, California. He was a JHS ALT in Miyazaki City from 2004 - 2008. He is currently working in global HR at People Mobility at Accenture Japan Ltd.
Introducing JETAA International

The Japan Exchange & Teaching Alumni Association International (JETAAi) is a voluntary body which seeks to facilitate links between JETAA chapters across the world. JETAAi has seen many changes over the years but remains steadfast in its belief that maintaining a connection between past and present is integral to the continual improvement of the JET programme, and to the visibility of the JET Programme around the world.

Consequently, JETAAi aims to promote the extraordinary achievements of JET alumni and the successes of the JET Programme through the life-long commitment alumni make to Japan and their home countries. JETAAi seeks to assist alumni to maintain a life-long relationship with Japan by delivering a number of professional, support, and networking opportunities.

Key themes for JETAA activities include:

- Support for Japanese language learning
- Career and business development opportunities
- Social and professional networking
- Promoting Japanese culture
- Supporting Japanese communities living in countries with a JETAA chapter
- Supporting leaving and returning JET participants
- Promoting Japan within schools and other organisations

Official Homepage: http://www.jetalumni.org/

About Kay Dunkley:

“I became a JET participant in 2000 as one of the first Jamaicans participating in the programme. I lived in Toyonaka, Osaka between 2000 and 2003 and worked as an ALT at Teshima Furitsu Koko and Minoh Koko. I am a trained teacher of language (English and Spanish) and I am currently Senior Lecturer at the Vocational Training Development Institute, a tertiary institution which is part of the National Training Agency of Jamaica.

Since returning to Jamaica I have actively participated in the growth of the Jamaica JET Alumni Association. I have also worked closely with the Embassy of Japan in Jamaica to foster the growth of Japanese language in Jamaica as well as to encourage a close relationship between Japanese nationals in Jamaica and Jamaicans who have worked and studied in Japan.”
Integral to the growth and development of JETAA International is the setting up of JETAA chapters worldwide. Since its inception in 1987, the JET Programme has welcomed to Japan approximately 60,000 JET participants. Currently there are 52 chapters in 15 countries/regions around the world. Chapters vary in size from small (25 members) to thousands. To start a chapter JETAA International recommends the following steps:

1. **Find Local JET Alumni**
   Get the word out that you are interested in starting a chapter. Get the word to the local Japanese Embassy or Consulate General, and spread the word by mouth and the use of social media. If there is a local CLAIR office find out if they may also be able to help.

2. **Get in Touch with JETAA International**
   Get in touch with JETAA International to talk through the process of starting a chapter. JETAA International may be able to inform you of chapters in the area that you might not have known about. Enquiries about starting a chapter should be directed to the Vice Chair at: jetaainternationalvicechair[@]gmail.com or jetaainternationalchair[@]gmail.com.

3. **Set up a Working Group/Chapter**
   This will include you and other interested alumni you find. The group need not be a formal committee at this stage but you may want to meet informally to get the “ball going”. However, please note that to be fully recognised by JETAA International a formal committee needs to be appointed, including a chair, treasurer, secretary, events team, etc. To make the working group formal, documentation including chapter by-laws will need to be composed. For help with documentation please contact JETAA International.

4. **Plan Activities and Events**
   Depending on where you are located and how many alumni are nearby, you can hold various activities and events. Here are some ideas:
   - Welcome events for newly returned JET alumni
   - Career/networking events
   - Events related to promoting Japan and local regions of Japan
   - Events linking with local Japanese groups (universities, companies, etc.)
   - Japanese language classes
   
   For more ideas please contact JETAA International.

5. **Apply to Become a Chapter Member of JETAA International**
   JETAA International is the umbrella organisation for JETAA chapters. Once you have gathered 20 members for your chapter, you can apply to JETAA International to become a member. To become a chapter, please provide a membership list, summary of activities and events conducted over the last 12 months and your chapter by-laws.
   Membership of JETAA International means that you can use the JETAA logo, access resources and advice, and network with other chapters and members.

6. **Keep in Touch with Other Chapters**
   The JETAA International website (http://www.jetalumni.org/) is a good place to start. JETAA International is currently working on gathering resources for the website, including advice on accessing funding, chapter newsletters, templates for planning events, event brochures, and pre-departure guides. From the website, you can also access JETAA chapter websites and social networking sites around the world. The JETAA section of the JET Programme website (http://jetprogramme.org/e/former/jetaa.html) also contains a list of JETAA chapter websites.

7. **Set up a Website or Social Networking Page**
   JETAA International encourages all chapters to set up a website and/ or use other social networking pages to promote their activities and events. Once this website or social networking page has been set up we encourage you to share it with us so that we can post it to our website.

JETAA International is dedicated to helping JET alumni set up new JETAA chapters across the world and is eager to hear from JET alumni.
# JETAA Chapter Contact Information

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Check out Kanagawa’s New Promotion Video!

Being part of the Greater Tokyo Area, you have probably visited at least one of Kanagawa’s popular sightseeing spots, whether it be Chinatown in Yokohama, Kamakura with its Great Buddha statue, or the famous Hakone Shrine and its beautiful autumn scenery. But Kanagawa has much more to offer, places like Jogashima Island, Mount Oyama, and one of the three great haiku houses in Oiso town as well as Enoshima are definitely worth a visit, too.

If you still need new ideas for your next Japan trip, watch the recently released promotion video of Kanagawa Prefecture and get inspired!

http://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/cnt/f500062/p825444.html

Thank you for reading!