

# The Exchange Event with JET Programme Participants

Hosted by  
Keizai Doyukai  
(Japan Association of Corporate Executives)



June 2014

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## Note:

This report contains the outline and proceedings of the exchange event between the JET programme participants and corporate executives, hosted by Keizai Doyukai on 16 May 2014, in cooperation with the ministries in charge of the JET programme. All the titles and positions referred to in this report are as of the date.

The responsibility for the wording and contents of this report lies with Keizai Doyukai secretariat.

## 1. Introduction

The Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives) FY 2013 Committee on Americas-Japan Relations (chaired by Yukio Tada, President, Sojitz Research Institute, Ltd.) was committed to promoting mutual understanding and stronger ties between the Americas and Japan through personal exchange. To this end, we carried out questionnaire survey for our members focusing on the topic of making wide-scale use of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants, such as expanding employment opportunities in Japan for former program participants.<sup>1</sup>

In FY 2014, Keizai Doyukai set up the Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands, one of the main reasons being to follow up on the questionnaire survey. Through this Project Team, we are working to expand knowledge of and positive feelings for Japan not only in the Americas, but also in countries and regions around the world. For the time being, the focus of our activities is the JET Programme, a theme that continues from the previous fiscal year. We have endeavored to learn more about the state of the program, for example through discussions with program participants and alumni. In this manner, we have been trying to increase recognition of the program and build momentum toward making best use of JET participants.

As a first step in that effort, on May 16 we held the “Exchange Event with JET Programme Participants and Corporate Managers.” Honorable guests included Ms. Akie Abe, Japan’s first lady. The key intentions of the Event were as below.

- To help corporate managers better understand the JET Programme
- To increase programme participants’ interest in and understanding of Japanese companies
- To encourage networking among participants, corporate managers, and all those concerned with the JET Programme

## 2. Date and venue

### **The Exchange Event with JET Programme Participants and Corporate Managers**

Date and time : 19:00 ~ 21:00, Friday, May 16th, 2014

Venue: ANA Intercontinental Hotel Tokyo, Japan

Number of participants: 135

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<sup>1</sup> Results of the survey, which were announced in January 2014, may be found on our website (<http://www.doyukai.or.jp/policyproposals/articles/2013/pdf/140124a.pdf>).

### 3. Agenda

## **The Exchange Event with JET Programme Participants Hosted by Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives)**

19:00 ~ 21:00, Friday, May 16th, 2014  
“Prominence I”, 1st basement floor,  
ANA Intercontinental Hotel Tokyo

### **Agenda**

#### **1. Opening remark**

Mr. Yukio Tada                      Chairman, Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands,  
Keizai Doyukai

#### **2. Welcome remark**

Mr. Yasuchika Hasegawa      Chairman, Keizai Doyukai

#### **3. Remark of the honorary guest**

Ms. Akie Abe                      First Lady of Japan, Spouse of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

#### **Remarks of other honorary guests during the program**

Mr. Hakubun Shimomura      Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology  
Mr. Masakazu Sekiguchi      State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications  
Ms. Naoko Saiki                Director-General for Cultural Affairs,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### **4. Remark of a representative of JET alumni**

Mr. Stephen Woerner          Representative of JETAA Tokyo

#### **5. Remark of a representative of current JET Programme participants**

Mr. Aaron Gilling                Treasurer 2014-15, National AJET

#### **6. Reception**

#### **7. Photo Session**

#### **8. Adjourn**

## 4. Guests and participants

### The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET)

Mr. Aaron Gilling                      Treasurer 2014-15, National AJET

Mr. Patrick Loyer                      Block 4 Representative

9 participants from Block 3 and 10 participants from Block 4

### JET Alumni Association (JETAA)

Mr. Steve Woerner                      Representative of JETAA Tokyo

and 16 other JET alumni

### Honorary Guests

Ms. Akie Abe                              First Lady of Japan, Spouse of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

Mr. Hakubun Shimomura              Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Mr. Masakazu Sekiguchi              State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications

Ms. Naoko Saiki                         Director-General for Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Norio Funayama                    Managing Director, Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

and 28 other guests

### Embassies

H.E. Mr. Bruce James Ross Miller      Australian Ambassador to Japan

H.E. Mr. Mackenzie Clugston            Canadian Ambassador to Japan

H.E. Mr. John Neary                      Irish Ambassador to Japan

H.E. Mr. Benson Henry Ouma Ogutu      Kenyan Ambassador to Japan

Mr. Ken O'Flaherty                        Prosperity Counsellor of British Embassy in Japan

Mr. Paulo Moraes                         Minister-Counselor, Brazilian Embassy in Japan

Mr. Sauvage Frederic                      Counselor for Industry and Services, French Embassy in Japan

Ms. Alina Asceprova                       Economic Counsellor, Latvian Embassy in Japan

and 9 other guests

Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives)

Mr. Yasuchika Hasegawa	Chairman <i>President &amp; CEO , TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY LIMITED</i>
Mr. Kaneichi Maehara	Vice Chairman & President
Mr. Yukio Tada	Chairman, Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands <i>President, Sojitz Research Institute, Ltd.</i>
Mr. Harry A. Hill	Vice Chairman, Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands <i>President &amp; CEO, OAK LAWN MARKETING , INC.</i>
Mr. Ken Shibusawa	Vice Chairman, Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands <i>CEO, Shibusawa and Company, Inc.</i>
Mr. Masakatsu Mori	Vice Chairman, Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands <i>Vice Chairman, International University of Japan</i>
Dr. Kiyohiko Ito	Managing Director

and 31 other members



## 5. Opening remark

Yukio Tada

Chairman, Project Team for Empowerment of Japan Hands



The JET Programme is a work exchange program funded by the Japanese government. Each year foreign nationals are invited to live in Japan for one to five years and engage in English language education at public schools or participate in international exchange activities at local governments all over Japan.

Corporate executives in Japan recognize the importance of such person-to-person exchanges of next generation between Japan and other countries so that friendships with those countries can be enhanced. They are also interested in diversifying their workforces in the corporations they manage in a globalized business environment.

We believe that JET Programme participants can be excellent candidates for such diversified workforces in Japanese corporations and can contribute to person-to-person exchanges in the next generation. That is the reason we are hosting this event today. We sincerely hope that, although time is limited, current JET participants, JET alumni, corporate executives and people who have supported the JET Programme can all enjoy talking and discussing with each other this evening.

## 6. Welcome remark

Yasuchika Hasegawa

Chairman, Keizai Doyukai



Thank you very much for gathering here on a Friday night.

Japanese companies, along with the rest of Japanese society, need to globalize, starting with a better understanding of cultural diversity and different ways of thinking. Japanese companies are in the process of globalizing, but for Japanese society as a whole, I think the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics will be a major turning point.

I was interested to see that the joint announcements that were issued from the Japan-US Summit Meeting in Tokyo last month and a regular meeting of Japan and EU leaders in Brussels this month both emphasized the importance of youth exchange programs. This has been pointed out by ambassadors and their predecessors from many countries. Tonight we host a large number of JET Programme participants, who are on the front line of youth exchange between Japan and their countries.

JET Programme participants - I would like to both thank you for coming to Japan and encourage you to develop a real interest in Japan. I am interested in hearing your thoughts about the Programme because Keizai Doyukai would like to see these sorts of exchanges expanded and improved. And through events such as this, we would like to make Japan a more attractive place for young people from around the world.



Before coming here this evening, I checked and found that, of the 105 non-Japanese employees at Takeda Pharmaceuticals, five of them are JET alumni. We need such young non-Japanese people, who know and have a good impression of Japan, to help us with globalization. Many business leaders have joined us this evening and I hope they will also take this opportunity to meet the JET Programme participants and think about how Japan, Japanese business and society could make more use of the JET Programme. Thank you.

## 7. Remarks

### Stephen Woerner

Representative of the JET Alumni Association in Tokyo (JETAA Tokyo)

I was a participant of the JET Programme from 2002 to 2006. I stayed in Nichinan-cho, Tottori Prefecture. Currently I work in the CSR & Environmental Affairs Department of Mitsubishi Corporation in Tokyo. Including my years as a university student in Japan, I have spent 13 years here.



The first question I was asked when I came to Japan under the JET Programme was “How tall are you?”, and the second question was “Why did you come to Japan?” My answer was always the same. When I was a high school student in San Francisco, we became a host family and accepted an exchange student from Japan. Because that student was my age, I became interested in the Japanese language, as well as Japanese culture. If you encounter and experience different cultures while you are young, it can transform your life. In fact, I have seen in reality such transformations of peoples’ lives because of this JET Programme. I am convinced that there are excellent and positive influences, not only for the JET participants themselves, but for their colleagues in the workplaces where they are deployed and for local communities.

One of the objectives of the JET Programme is for JET participants, after they return to their respective country, to talk about the good experiences they had, and increase of the number of people interested in Japan. Even if they do not return to their home countries, but stay in Japan, still they can contribute a lot to Japan. The members here this evening from the JET Alumni Association in Tokyo are only a part of the former JET Programme participants who are living in Tokyo. Those former JET Programme participants, from all over the world, have spent some time in Japan living in locations across the country, have had good experiences with life in Japan, and have carved out careers here. Some work in Japanese companies, or in foreign corporations, and some started and run their own businesses now. Some have married Japanese partners, and some have acquired permanent-resident status and have decided to stay in Japan. The common factor shared by all of us is that we have had wonderful experiences provided by the government of Japan. Without the JET Programme, most of us would probably never have come to Japan.

I have two requests, if possible, for members of Keizai Doyukai. One is that each member think about the implications and possible impact of the JET Programme on their organizations. Second, if former JET participants wish to continue to build their careers in Japan, kindly provide such opportunities. I am convinced that companies can make the most of the capabilities of former JET participants to help them compete globally, and it could have very positive advantages for the companies.

## Aaron Gilling

Treasurer 2014-15, the National Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET)

The JET Programme is a serious undertaking, and despite our job title reading “Assistant Language Teacher” or “ALT,” there is more to this position than is implied. We are teachers, cultural ambassadors, occasional stand-up comedians, and full-time members of staff. We may be assistants in title, but in reality we are so much more.



This evening, I would like to give you a window into the work life of an ALT from my own experience. I teach at Ina Gakuen Sogo High School in a small town named Ina-machi. With over 2000 students, a campus consisting of 6 houses, each of which is the size of an average high school, and 8 ALTs from 6 different countries teaching 4 different languages, my school hardly sounds like the norm. In actuality, it is a normal high school that acts as a great example of what can be achieved when a school values inter-cultural interactions through language education.

My day always begins with a morning meeting with all the teachers. My teaching schedule consists of 3-4 class periods a day and 17 in total for the week. All of my classes are taught with a Japanese Teacher of English, or JTE. ALTs and JTEs meet together regularly to create and then deliver lessons to the students. I work with 14 different teachers. In one day, I will teach a variety of classes, some being the compulsory first and second-year communication English classes. This year, our first-year students researched foreign countries and introduced them to the class as if they were travel agents. Through this project, every student in our school was introduced to thirteen English-speaking countries that they had only known little about, and then chose which country they would most like to visit.

I also teach a number of elective English classes to second and third-year students. These include English Conversation, Cross-Cultural Understanding, News and Current Affairs, and English Debate classes. If you think you are well-read on politics, you should hear a 17 year-old girl try to convince you that the latest hairstyle of Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is international news. These classes allow students to further their use of English and develop an international viewpoint, whether it is through sharing their thoughts on a current world issue or debating an interesting topic, my personal favourite of which is that profound, age-old question: which is better, Tokyo Disneyland or Tokyo Disney Sea?

My involvement at school does not end inside the classroom. We also put on English lunch sessions and cultural exchange events such as carving pumpkins at Halloween, decorating eggs at Easter and holding afternoon tea, all in an attempt to merge our two worlds into one.

As I mentioned before, ALTs are very much cultural ambassadors. As the only British ALT at my school, I have found myself to be the main source of information on the culture of my home country. Indeed, however much of a thrill students get hearing that Harry Potter is my brother during my self-introduction, it is during our time spent discussing British culture, whether it be through food, sport, music, or literature, that I feel that I am able to help broaden their horizons and show them that the UK and the world are so much more than the conventional archetypes that they may know.

As I move on to my 4<sup>th</sup> year on the JET Programme, I cannot wait to continue my contributions to the English language education of my students and the internationalization of Japan. In my experience, the contributions of an ALT can have a great impact on a student's desire and ability to study abroad or work in Japan in fields pertaining to international relations.

As for the effect of the JET Programme on my future, I very much hope to continue in this field in the future by working in a government position that helps connect our countries together, whether it be through policy or diplomacy.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Keizai Doyukai for organizing this event and to thank all those in attendance tonight. JET Programme participants rarely get the chance to meet people from the private sector, and this evening offers a great chance for us to open up a dialogue between the JET participants involved in grassroots internationalization and the government officials and corporate executives seeking to embrace the globalization of Japan. I hope that this event leads to long-lasting ties and further interaction between our two worlds in the future, all leading to a better, brighter future for Japan.

## 8. Photos at the reception



