

The JET Programme: A Great Way to Experience Japan

Joining a Network Spanning Japan and the Globe

I came to Japan on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme in 2011, eager to take advantage of the opportunity to live and work abroad. As a student in my hometown of Northampton in England, I was involved in my high school's Japanese club and delighted in the various language and cultural activities the teacher, a former JET participant in Nara Prefecture, provided. This motivated me to study Japanese at university, and during my third year I had the opportunity to visit Japan for five months. After graduation, the enduring memories of studying abroad strongly influenced my decision to participate in JET, which I did initially as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) and later as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR).

I spent my first two years on the program as an ALT at an elementary school and junior high school in Kobe. Working alongside the schools' Japanese teachers of English, I planned original activities aimed at providing students opportunities to communicate in English, and I took great satisfaction from witnessing their ability grow over time. I also found it rewarding to put a personal face on the language through open and friendly interactions, such as sharing aspects of British culture and answering the multifarious questions students posed.

In 2013 opportunity knocked and I joined the Kobe City Government's International Department as a CIR, enabling me to fulfill my childhood ambition of becoming an interpreter and translator. Working in a Japanese office environment posed new and exciting challenges, and I applied my language skills on a wide variety of projects, such as interpreting for the mayor of Kobe and rendering official documents into English. I delighted in playing a vital role as a member of a close-knit team. The numerous connections I forged within JET and Kobe City Hall continue to support me in my new role as PR Specialist for the city, a position I have held since April 2015.

Now as an alumna, my JET connections remain important. My office has recently initiated the Kobe PR Ambassador scheme to have those who know Kobe best share its numerous charms with the world via social media. Kobe, one of Japan's first international ports, enjoys a mix of Japanese and Western traditions. Combined with its abundant natural environs, these have produced a distinct, high-quality lifestyle. In putting out the call for Kobe PR Ambassadors among non-Japanese residents, I made sure to reach out to Kobe's sizable JET community, whose participants are broadly involved in a profusion of activities throughout the city.

Being a JET participant means becoming a lifelong member of a vast, ready-made network extending around the world. There are a multitude of former participants who are using their JET connections to do valuable work at various organizations in Japan and abroad. Going forward, I hope to contribute to and also expand this network through involvement in the JET Alumni Association. Professionally, I am confident my JET experience will continue to serve me in whatever endeavors lay ahead.



Louise Dendy

Born in Northampton, England. While a student at the University of Birmingham, spent five months in Japan studying at Sophia University in Tokyo and traveling around the country. Has lived in Kobe since 2011. With both traditional appeal and Western charm, she considers Kobe to be a microcosm not just of Japan but of the entire world.



Dendy interprets during a meeting run by Mayor Kizo Hisamoto of Kobe (to her left) aimed at promoting the city internationally.



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1. Public announcements are just one aspect of Dendy's role as PR Specialist for Kobe. 2. Dendy and coworkers discuss what photos of Kobe to share on social media. 3. Dendy runs an English lesson while an ALT at a junior high school in Kobe.