

The JET Programme: A Great Way to Experience Japan

Strengthening Relationships Both Locally and Globally

Although Brazil is far from Japan, it is easy to come into contact with Japanese culture, thanks mainly to the large Nikkei (Japanese-descent) population. My father emigrated from Japan to Brazil when he was 18 years old, making me a Nisei, or second-generation, part of this Nikkei population. São Paulo offers frequent Japanese festivals, and is home to plenty of Japanese language schools for Nikkei children like myself. I used to attend one of these twice a week. Thus, it was natural to me to proceed to a Japanese university.

Although I had plenty of exposure to Japanese culture and had learned to speak the language, I knew that working in Japanese society was a must if I wanted to know the “real Japan”—not just arts and foods, but the ways people think and communicate day to day. The JET Programme enabled me to do just that. I have recently begun my fourth and final year in Kofu, the capital city of Yamanashi Prefecture, working as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in the prefectural government. My job is to push forward the internationalization of Yamanashi.

We are currently working on a project to attract international athletic delegations to Yamanashi for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, and this year I accompanied the prefectural vice-governor to Brazil for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. We visited the state of Minas Gerais, with which Yamanashi has a sister-state relationship. Minas Gerais did a great job attracting delegations for Olympic training, and we went to learn how to do the same. I felt proud to have helped facilitate the sharing of knowledge between the two governments.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games also present a great chance for people from all over the world to travel to Japan and get to know it better. Japan’s local areas, like Yamanashi, offer lots of unique attractions you cannot encounter in Tokyo, starting with Mount Fuji. In Kofu we are surrounded by nature and mountains. I enjoy hiking in my free time, and it’s a real pleasure to be able to climb every weekend! Japan’s safety and convenience further enhance Japan’s charm for visitors, as do the polite manners and kindness of the Japanese. I hope as many visitors as possible can experience all of this.

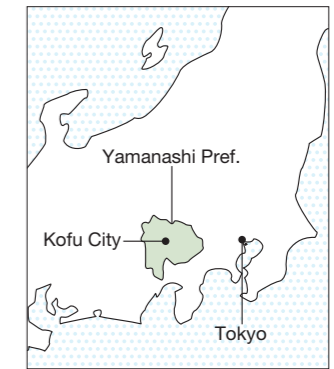
Our team includes a number of JET participants. My office has a diverse CIR staff, with representatives from the United States, Britain, Indonesia, Brazil, China, and South Korea. We run a blog and publish a magazine, *The Yamanashi Grapevine*, to showcase Yamanashi’s charms.

Thanks to JET, I am now able to work comfortably in a Japanese workplace. Having used Japanese only in the classroom previously, it was a real challenge to become fully functional in the language, but the on-the-job training has given me much experience and confidence. I hope to stay here in Yamanashi and be involved in work related to international friendship—planning and organizing projects to enhance ties between Japan and Brazil. Becoming this sort of a “bridge” is the best part of the JET experience, and has become one of my lifetime goals as a Nikkei living in Japan.



Daniela Miwa Amemiya

Second-generation Japanese Brazilian born in São Paulo, Brazil. Became a JET participant in 2013. Prior to that, graduated from the São Paulo University and earned her master’s degree at Kochi University in Japan.



Daniela speaks with fellow CIRs in the office from other countries. With so many diverse nationalities, meetings are conducted in Japanese.



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1. Daniela (left) interprets for the vice-governor during a visit to Minas Gerais, Brazil, this summer. 2. Daniela talks with students about Brazil’s multicultural society while visiting a local high school to promote ties between Japan and Brazil. 3. Daniela and a friend while climbing Mount Fuji.

About the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grass-roots international exchange between Japan and other nations, and is now one of the world’s largest international exchange programs. JET participants are placed in every region of Japan and work in one of three positions: assistant language teachers (ALTs), coordinators for international relations (CIRs), or sports exchange advisors (SEAs). In 2016, the JET Programme welcomed 4,952 participants, and currently there are approximately 62,000 alumni from 65 countries living in all parts of the world.

The JET Programme official website
<http://jetprogramme.org/en/>