

JET からの手紙

私なりの CIR 活動

岡山県 国際交流員

Moses Fonua (モーゼス・フォヌア)

2016年4月、私はCIRとして岡山県国際課に着任しました。主な仕事は通訳・翻訳、相談窓口や学校訪問です。

私はシドニー生まれのトンガ系オーストラリア人で、二つの文化の中で生活してきました。大学で日本学を専攻し始めるまで、「通訳と翻訳は余裕でできる」と考えていましたが、その国の文化をよく理解していないとそれを言語化して通訳や翻訳をするのは難しいと分かりました。私の両親が英語を上手に使いこなせるのに翻訳は上手くできない理由もそのためです。私は23歳で日本語能力試験1級に合格し、これまでに日本文化に長く触れてきましたが、教育や生活面などまだまだ知らないことがたくさんあります。職場の方との雑談なども、表現力や思考力を広げる助けとなり、通訳や翻訳に役立っています。

JETプログラムでの私の目標は、日本とオーストラリアの生活習慣や考え方などの文化を互いに理解するための架け橋となることでした。文化的背景が異なるため、いろいろな失敗を通してこの国の文化に少しずつ馴染むことができます。それと同時に、それぞれが持つ個性を生かす必要性に気づきます。

しかし、岡山に来て3か月経ったころ、私は悩んでいました。自分の目標と求められる通訳・翻訳の精度に差があり、今後何をしたいのか再考して、目標を変更すべきだと感じました。赴任してたった数か月とはいえ、自分が何を達成したのか、やる気と満足度を維持しながらどうすれば目標を実現できるのかを考え、仕事以外のことにも目を向けることにしました。

岡山に赴任した4月来日のJET参加者は私だけだったので、JET参加者のコミュニティがあることを知りま

せんでした。代わりに、岡山の英雄である桃太郎の冒険にならって、あるスポーツイベントに参加してみました。そこにはさまざまな人が集まり、文化の違いについて話すうち、多くの友達ができるようになりました。そこで別の国際交流イベントを知り、また違う分野の人々に出会い、友達が増えました。最終的にはいろんなコミュニティがつながり、それがきっかけとなってオーストラリアの友達が初めてパスポートを取得し、海外旅行に出かけたときは達成感がありました。

9月になると、私がさまざまな地域活動に関わっていることを知った岡山AJETの会長から「マックス」(豪州語で「マクドナルド」の意味)になってほしいと頼られました。マックスの役割は通訳・通訳やイベントの手伝いなど、ほかのJET参加者の世話役のようなものです。私はAJETハロウィーンや送別会、誕生日会などの司会を頼られました。このようにして、人脈や自分が影響を及ぼす範囲が広がり、やる気が少しずつ戻ってきました。



岡山桃太郎祭りであらびを踊る筆者(手前右から2番目)



国際理解講座で訪問した学校の生徒と交流する筆者（右）

私はボランティア活動が好きで、幅広く取り組んでいます。1月から3月までは大山でのスキー、西大寺の裸祭や花見を手伝いました。4月から6月まではイングリッシュキャンプ、野球や教会での国際イベント、7月にはじゃがいもの収穫、8月はダンスグループ「地球人」とのパレードへの参加、9月には祭りの屋台でビールや焼きそばをお客さんに提供しました。10月は稲刈り、11月は矢掛町の大名行列、12月は最上稲荷での年越しカウントダウンに参加しました。私は訪れた場所ごとにオーストラリアのイメージを尋ね、逆に現地の話を聞いて岡山のことをどんどん知ることができました。

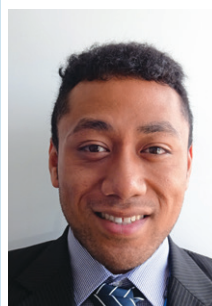
1週間にわたるテレビの密着取材など、予想外のこともありました。ほかにも、7月に岡山を襲った大雨災害の後、真備町で片付けを手伝い、そこで偶然会った生徒や地元の方が、以前私が講師を務めた国際理解講座のお礼を言ってくれたことがあります。その時の笑顔は一生忘れません。

これまで、CIRをやめたいと思ったことが何度ありました。「前任者は通訳と翻訳の神様」「前任者は日本人のような日本語を話していた」と聞き、余計なプレッシャーを感じていました。しかし、私は自分で道を切り開き、周りも私のことを「岡山の一番有名な外国人」「セセ先生（「セセ」とはトンガ語のニックネーム）」と呼ん

でくれます。

私は今、JETの後輩たちへのメッセージを考えながら「中山下テラス」というバーにいます。私のCIRとしての活動は人とはちょっと違うかもしれません。仕事以外の活動にも力を入れることはワークライフバランスを整え、自分を目標に近づけてくれます。自分は周りから必要とされていない、この仕事は自分なんかには務まるのかと悩むこともあるかもしれませんが、さまざまな活動を通して、自分が思い描くCIR像に少しずつ近づけるのかもしれない。

プロフィール



Moses Fonua

オーストラリア出身。今年でCIRとして勤務3年目。以前は旅行会社で働いていたが、文化の違いや行動について認識することが言語力向上にもつながる点に興味を持ち、それがきっかけとなり、JETプログラムに参加。将来はこの分野についての知識を広げるために大学院へ進学する予定。

JET LETTER

My way of CIR-ing

Moses Fonua

I began work as a CIR for the Government of Okayama's International Affairs Division in April of 2016. My work duties include interpreting and translating, providing consultations, and school visits.

Before I get into the details, please let me briefly introduce myself. I am a Tongan-Australian born and raised in Sydney. I was exposed to and grew up with two cultures. I had originally thought interpreting and translating was a breeze until I encountered the Japanese language at the age of 19. I finally realized why my parents weren't able to properly "translate" despite being fluent in their foreign language.

"Speaking two languages means you can interpret (and translate)." This way of thinking often invites misunderstandings, and I too used to think this way. I graduated from university with a major in Japanese Studies and obtained my Global Leadership Program recognition. Although I had passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test's N1 level on my first go at the age of 23, I still find it difficult when translating and interpreting between Japanese and English as opposed to Tongan and English.

There are many reasons for the difficulties associated with interpreting and translating, one of them the idea of thoroughly understanding the culture, another being word choice. I have been in touch with many parts of the Japanese culture but there are still other areas I have yet to experience. Examples would be the Japanese education outside of language school, family lifestyle, and conversations with people of the same age group at work. These situations develop forms of expression and thinking, and are helpful experiences for interpreters and translators.

This led me to my goal for the JET Programme: to be the bridge for mutual cultural understanding starting with everyday cultural differences and trains of thought between Japan and multicultural Australia. I wanted to teach everyone that the power to learn is found within mistakes so utilizing that will bring your 21st-century persona within the target culture. I also wanted to facilitate the realization that differences and individuality are to be encouraged because there are no set personalities for people with blood type A.

However, all my work duties besides the school visits clashed with my original goals for joining the JET Programme so I had to reconsider what I wanted to get out of living in Okayama and revise my goals. Fast track three months into the Programme and I didn't think I could endure my first year. The gears driving me to my goals in the workplace had come to a stop. No; they had yet to begin. So I thought, "What have I accomplished these last few months, and how can I maintain my motivation and sense of satisfaction while achieving my original goals?" I decided to think outside the box.

Being the only April arrival in Okayama with no orientation, the idea of reaching out to the JET community hadn't crossed my mind. Instead, after hearing a lot about Okayama's hero Momotaro, I went on a little adventure down to a sports event. There were many people with various backgrounds and we talked about the cultural differences between our countries while becoming friends. Here, I found out information for other international events where I met people from different fields of society leading to my friendship circle expanding, and again I'd be given even more information. These growing communities would merge with further development of understanding leading to many of my local friends to apply for their first passport and jet around the world. At that moment, I felt a sense of accomplishment.

Come September, and the President for AJET Okayama asked me to be the Director of Maccas (Australian slang for Mc Donald's) after noticing my involvement with the local community. My role would focus around casual and business interpreting, translating, and assisting with events. Here, I was asked to MC for not only events such as the AJET Halloween, but for farewells and birthday parties from other guests who attended these events. As my circle expanded, my influence to help others

understand the world grew exponentially. My motivation had returned.

I have a passion for volunteering. The scope of my activities has been so diverse each passing month I can recall vividly what I had participated in. From January to March these would be assisting and participating in AJET events with the Daisen skiing, the Saidaiji Naked Man Festival, and the Hanami event. I would be volunteering at an English Camp in April as it gets warm. May meant I would lead a group of people who haven't seen baseball out to their first baseball game, while in June I'm out and about interpreting for an international church event. July sees me harvesting potatoes and going on an outdoor camp. In August I have a TV crew following me for Okayama's biggest dancing parade Uraja, while in September I'm passing out beer and yakisoba for a yatai stall at a festival. I have my long boots on for harvesting rice in October. Yakage's Daimyo Gyoretsu would conduct historical reenactments in November, and finally in December I would be counting down the last 10 seconds before the New Year with friends at Saijo Inari followed by throwing out 5-yen coins. At each of these places I would question people about Australia's current image and in return I would receive stories to complete my image of Okayama.

I hadn't expected to be followed by a TV crew for a week during that August parade nor be part of a traditional dance expanding close to 300 years out in Takahashi City's Obon festival. Running in my first Marathon and being put on live radio to talk about it was very interesting. Helping to clean out a friend's house after being hit by the recent torrential rains in Mabi Town was eye-opening. And I won't forget the smiles from students and locals who would call out to me on the streets despite my presentations at their schools and centres being held only once a year.

Looking back on my time, I remember how much I wanted to leave my post because I didn't feel like I was needed nor did I feel adequate. People would compare me to my predecessor and that placed a lot of unwanted pressure on me like, "Your predecessor was very talented at interpreting and translating in both languages," "The previous one before him didn't beat around the bush with his opinions," and "She is basically Japanese when she communicates in Japanese." Of course, out of curiosity I asked the Land of Sunshine its thoughts about me. Who'd thought I would be "the most famous gaikokujin (international resident)", "that approachable older brother for advice" and "our Sese-sensei ("my nickname is Sese in Tongan). Of course, most of these comments don't relate to my actual job duties but to a certain extent represent my original goal.

Thinking about work and my private life, I'm sitting at the Nakasange Rooftop Terrace, and I am greeted by the manager in English who then passes me the English menu all in natural 21st century English (a good friend and I taught them easy and relatable English). I have a message for my JET kohais (future JET participants) who want to create a suitable place for the 21st century. Take care of your work and private life, and at the same time don't abandon your goals. Society is weird and interesting but your goal has an important power. Putting in a little bit of effort outside of work to bring me closer to my goal has done wonders for my motivation inside of work, so fight and ganbare!

Profile

Moses Fonua is an Australian JET in his third year as a CIR for the Okayama Prefectural Government's International Affairs Division. He previously worked for a travel company where he gained an interest in bringing awareness toward cultural differences and behaviours, particularly its effects on language ability, leading to his motivation for joining the JET Programme. He seeks to further develop his knowledge in this field through postgraduate study.