

## **MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity**

**Assignment Title & Partner Organization:** SALT/YAMEN: Church Youth Worker – FEMO/EEMBF

**Term:** August 17, 2021 – July 21, 2022

**FTE:** 1.0

**Location:** Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

**Date Required:** August 17, 2021

Program information and policies can be found at [mcc.org/salt](http://mcc.org/salt) or [mcc.org/yamen](http://mcc.org/yamen).

***MCC is an equal opportunity employer, committed to employment equity. MCC values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply.***

### **Synopsis:**

The SALT/YAMENer will offer capacity-building opportunities to Foyer Évangélique Mennonite de Ouagadougou (FEMO) residents and other youth of the congregation according to their specific skills and interests. These could include, but are not limited to, leading a young adult English conversation group, offering basic training in information technology to support those beginning university studies, teaching Sunday school, and being involved in a young adult choir.

### **Qualifications:**

***All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking.***

***An invitation to an assignment is contingent on the successful completion of a criminal background check.***

- A post-secondary degree is an asset, preferably in youth ministries, biblical studies, theology, or another related field.
- Fluency in French and/or English; if English is the dominant language, basic proficiency in French is an asset.
- Must be able to work independently, take initiative and be a self-starter.
- Creativity, flexibility and an interest in working with youth is necessary.
- Computer literacy (Word, Excel, etc.)
- Good organizational skills.
- Teaching experience is an asset.

### **Assignment Narrative:**

Most congregations of the Église Évangélique Mennonite of Burkina Faso (EEMBF) are located in the Kenedougou province in western Burkina, 430 kilometers from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. However, many church youths come to Ouagadougou to pursue university studies. The Mennonite congregation in Ouagadougou hosts some of these young men and women in a residence, the FEMO (Foyer Évangélique Mennonite de Ouagadougou).

The SALT/YAMENER would live near the church (where the FEMO is located) and be available for regular friendly interaction, mentoring, and skill-building activities with Foyer residents and other church youth.

Language skills will determine the shape of the placement; fluency in French is necessary for teaching Sunday school; English fluency will allow for involvement in English teaching.

### **Duties:**

There is flexibility within this assignment regarding specific activities for a participant. The SALT/YAMENER will be expected to discuss with the MCC Burkina Faso Representatives ahead of time their specific skills and interests. They will then work with the placement supervisor to determine which activities fit best with the participant's skills and the needs of the youth. Some possible activities are as follows:

- Teach Sunday school and participate in child/youth ministry.
- Teach basic computer skills to FEMO residents.
- Teach English to FEMO residents and church youth.
- Offering mentoring and coaching for entrepreneurial and income-generating activities.
- Build healthy relationships with youth of the church and those staying at FEMO.

### **Location Description:**

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is surrounded by six countries, Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin to the southwest, Togo and Ghana to the south and Côte d'Ivoire to the southwest. Its size is 274,000 square kilometers (105,900 square miles), and it has an estimated population of 20 million. Formerly called the Republic of Upper Volta, it was renamed on August 4, 1984. The inhabitants of Burkina Faso are called Burkinabè. This placement is in the capital, Ouagadougou, which is also where the MCC Burkina Faso office is located.

Burkina has limited high-level medical services, but there are plenty of clinics and pharmacies. MCC staff usually go to a private clinic where good care is available for non-emergency needs. Malaria medication is required for workers during their term of service.

The diet in Burkina Faso consists mainly of *tô*, a dish made of millet or white corn with sauce. Rice is also commonly eaten, and it is easy to buy tasty street food. Vegetables are usually eaten cooked into sauce. Delicious fresh fruits (mangoes, pineapples, watermelons, grapefruits, strawberries) and vegetables (green beans, carrots, eggplants, cauliflower) are seasonally available.

Burkina Faso is a relatively flat country. The average altitude of Burkina Faso is 400 meters (1,312 feet) and the difference between the highest and lowest terrain is no greater than 600 meters (1,969 feet).

Burkina has a primarily tropical climate with two very distinct seasons. The rainy season lasts approximately four months (May/June to September) and is shorter in the north of the country. During this season, the country receives between 600 and 900 millimeters (23.6 and 35.4 inches) of rainfall. The dry season lasts from October to May. November to February are marked by a strong, dry east wind from the Sahara (the harmattan), and slightly cooler temperatures. During these

months, average daily high temperatures are around 32°C (around 90 F). A hot season lasts from about March to May, with the average daily high temperature above 38°C (above 100 F).

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest GDP per capita figures in the world – \$1,200 USD – and a very low literacy rate (41% in 2018). Agriculture represents 32% of its gross domestic product and occupies 80% of the working population. It consists mostly of livestock but also, especially in the south and southwest, of growing sorghum, pearl millet, maize (corn) peanuts, rice, and cotton. A large part of the economic activity of the country is funded by international aid.

Burkina Faso hosts the International Art and Craft Fair in Ouagadougou, better known by its French name SIAO, Le Salon International de l'Artisanat de Ouagadougou, one of the most important African handicraft fairs. It also hosts the largest African film festivals and has a vibrant year-round arts scene.

The MCC Representatives for Burkina Faso are based in Ouagadougou and provide support through routine visits and meetings.

### **Challenges:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect countries around the world. While we remain hopeful that the pandemic will have stabilized by August 2021, to prioritize the well-being and limit risk to our participants and the local community, assessments of each assignment will continue on a regular basis. If it is deemed that an assignment is no longer viable, we will do our best to help you secure an alternative assignment.
- The climate as described above can be difficult, particularly during the hottest season. Loose cotton clothing is imperative, as is adapting expectations based on reduced energy levels. The air can be very dusty much of the year. Those suffering from asthma, allergies and respiratory illnesses may find this season particularly challenging. Malaria and typhoid fever are common in Burkina Faso, but can be avoided with appropriate precautions.
- It may be difficult to develop routine in this assignment. The participant will need to take initiative in designing a schedule of activities that is energizing without being draining. Many opportunities exist, but these will need to be developed based on the person's interests and skills.
- For those who are very task-oriented, it can be a challenge to recognize the importance of "being" instead of always "doing": building healthy relationships and mutually transformative learning is an important part of the participant's experience. We hope participants will come with a desire to walk alongside our local partners, rather than see the assignment solely as a way to "get things done."
- Burkina Faso continues to be a relatively safe place where crimes against individuals are minimal. Local colleagues are very conscientious in offering safety advice.
- Violent extremist attacks have become a reality in Burkina Faso in recent years. MCC takes this risk seriously and proactively provides guidance to foster safe working and living conditions.
- Living with a host family means privacy (in the Western sense) is considerably reduced. There are few places to "get away" in Ouagadougou, and entertainment options are very limited.
- Expect limited internet connectivity. The MCC office has internet and on occasion internet can be accessed here, but SALT/YAMENers are encouraged to self-regulate their internet usage.
- Resources are limited, so workers are encouraged to think creatively and with flexibility in

achieving the goals of their placement.

- Openly LGBTQ+ individuals may find it challenging to feel supported by the local community and church, who largely hold conservative views on issues related to sexuality.
- Managing frustration when things don't turn out as expected can be hard. While we do our best to determine and outline job responsibilities with our local partners, assignments really come alive based on the passions, skills, and giftings of an individual. Responsibilities may change or be refined over time in communication with supervisors to meet the ongoing changes and needs within a local context. As such, the greatest characteristics a participant can bring to an assignment are adaptability, flexibility, patience, a willingness to get your hands dirty, and humility to complete even mundane tasks.

*Good local friends, close and trusting relationships with local partners, tolerance, and a willingness to laugh all help counter these challenges.*