

MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity

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

Assignment Title & Partner Organization: SALT/YAMEN: Climate Change Resilience Assistant – ODOV

Term: August 16, 2022 – July 15, 2023

Date Required: August 16, 2022

Location: Chi Phoch, Cambodia

Project Theme: FS Food Security and Livelihoods Salt/Yamen

Job Synopsis:

The SALT/YAMENER will serve alongside Organization to Develop Our Villages (ODOV), a long-term partner of MCC Cambodia, to assist them in evaluating/promoting local climate change resilience strategies and pursuing related funding and advocacy opportunities.

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.

- Experience in Environmental Science, Development, Communications, Agriculture, or another relevant field.
- Post-secondary education in Environmental Science, Development, Communications, Agriculture, or another related field is an asset.
- Experience implementing environmental assessments or willingness to learn.
- Experience doing soil and water testing or willingness to learn.
- Strong English language skills, both written and verbal.
- Disposition to conduct field research on ODOV's climate change adaptation work
- Background in grant writing/fundraising or a keen interest in learning.
- Good organizational skills and ability to keep clear records, data, etc.
- Strong skills in networking, and communication.
- Strong writing and editing skills.
- Self-motivated to work independently, take initiative, and design project ideas without regular supervision.
- Proven flexibility to live and work in ambiguous situations.
- Able and willing to ride a bicycle for local transportation.
- Desire and confidence to live in a rural community, located more than an hour from other MCC service workers.
- Willing to diligently study the local language and live with a local host family.
- Cooperative spirit and commitment to becoming involved both at BCV and at MCC Cambodia.

Key Responsibilities:

Primary Duties:

- Evaluate ODOV's capacity for environmental and climate resilience using evidence-based metrics. This will include some fieldwork to collect soil and water samples.
- Actively participate on MCC Cambodia's Climate Solutions team to coordinate, development, and share resources related on climate change adaptation, mitigation, advocacy.
- Assist the ODOV Executive Director by editing documents written in English including grant proposals, project reports, strategic plan documents, and annual reports.
- Research rural development grant opportunities to bring ODOV's work to scale.
- Accompany ODOV field technician to visit project communities at least twice weekly, to understand the challenges and needs facing rural farmers.
- Collaborate with MCC and ODOV staff to learn about other development projects in Prey Veng province. Research and make contact and visits (when possible), to other NGOs in Cambodia and Southeast Asia and report back the ODOV Executive Director with suggestions that may benefit ODOV communities.
- Learn and speak the local Khmer language to build strong relationships with coworkers and community members.
- Assist in data management of the project including data entry and analysis.
- Work alongside staff members to recruit the target households to develop several experimentation plots for conducting basic variety trials; assist in the organization of these trials and assist staff as they collect information throughout the trials. The trials will be implementing with ODOV target households.
- Maintain a cooperative spirit and commitment to becoming involved both at ODOV and with the MCC Cambodia team.

Secondary Duties:

- Help prepare and submit planning and reporting documents and stories to MCC.
- Contribute stories of impact and experience for the MCC Cambodia Blog
- Attend MCC Cambodia team meetings and staff events.
- Be a contributing member of the MCC team that supports and cares for one another.

Additional duties will depend on the specific SALT/YAMENer's background and skills, but may involve:

- Assist ODOV in updating website and writing stories of impact.
- Take photos of projects to be used for website and office. These must follow MCC photo guidelines regarding consent, sensitivity, and photo quality.
- Join bi-weekly ODOV program and technician staff meetings.
- Assist ODOV staff with basic technology support and use of Word and Excel.
- Periodically accompany ODOV staff as they conduct fieldwork.

Assignment Narrative:

An important component of the MCC SALT/YAMEN program in Cambodia is life with a host family. While in Cambodia, the participant will be expected to assimilate into the life of the host family. This includes engaging with their church, home, and social life. The participant will be living as an "adult son or daughter" and the goal is for the SALT/YAMENer to be considered as a member of the host family for the assignment.

Organization to Develop Our Villages (ODOV) is a local non-governmental organization that works to build the capacity of local community organizations (particularly marginalized groups). ODOV was started in 1993 as a MCC initiative, the Mesang Integrated Development project, before localizing and becoming officially registered in 2005 as an independent Cambodian NGO.

The mission of ODOV is to work to build capacity and empower vulnerable groups and community-based organizations. We envision Cambodian people (both female and male) living in a positive environment with dignity, good health, and peace.

ODOV is based in the rural district of Mesang where it supports poor rural communities through an integrated community development approach. Their projects promote sustainable food security, community finance and income generation, homestead food production, local governance, community nutrition, and climate change resilience. This encompasses sustainable agriculture technologies, including those adapted to climate change, such as water management (i.e., drip irrigation, bed preparation and mulching, expanding fishponds to improve rainwater collecting, and food production), crop diversification (year-round vegetable production), cyclical farming models, soil management (crop rotation, inter-cropping, compost making, and natural fertilizers), poultry production, and fish cultivation.

While ODOV has worked with local farmers and community leaders to strengthen their local climate change resilience over the last twenty years, they request assistance to evaluate their ongoing initiatives, researching funding opportunities to bring them to scale, and developing grant proposals.

Learn more about ODOV's work at their website: <http://www.odov.net/>

The SALT/YAMENr will report to the Executive Director at ODOV and the MCC Cambodia Connecting People Coordinator. Holidays for this position will follow the ODOV calendar (please note this calendar allowance might differ from the MCC Cambodia calendar). In addition, to existing vacation days, the SALT/YAMENr may take MCC's Christian holidays (Christmas Day and Good Friday), if desired.

Location Description:

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia between Vietnam and Thailand and bordered on the north by Laos. The population is about 15 million, with about 80% living in rural areas.

This country is still emerging from the genocide era of the Khmer Rouge that killed nearly 1.7 million people. The educational, health, and legal systems were all destroyed, along with the general infrastructure within the country. This conflict created an atmosphere of mistrust, fear, and hopelessness. Open conflict with the last remaining Khmer Rouge faction ended well over a decade ago and Cambodians are thankful for the peace and stability that has reigned throughout the 2000s.

This position will be based in Chi Phoch village in the district capital of Mesang District, Prey Veng Province. The town has a small market, a bank, and a few small shops and places to eat. The location is rural, although most households in town now have electricity and some form of running water. Travel is on dirt roads alongside beautiful rice paddies. Chi Phoch is about 1 hour from Prey Veng town, the provincial capital (Prey Veng town is a 2-hour van or bus ride to Phnom Penh).

The Cambodian diet consists primarily of rice, soup, vegetables, fish, meat, and fruit. It can be challenging to find vegan/vegetarian dishes, as almost all dishes contain meat or fish in some form or another. A well-balanced diet will ensure SALT/YAMEN participants stay healthy and strong throughout their MCC terms in Cambodia. Particularly while living with a host family, the expectation is that the SALT/YAMENer will eat the meals that have been provided. Keeping an open mind and an open palate while trying new Cambodian dishes and delicacies is advisable.

Daily vans and small buses travel between Phnom Penh and the provincial capital, Prey Veng town, where the MCC field office and MCC Representatives are located. Most days, a van travels between Mesang and Phnom Penh. Public transportation from Mesang to Prey Veng town is limited. Most people in the countryside travel on small motorbikes, bicycles, or motorcycle pulled carts.

Theravada Buddhism is the national religion of Cambodia with approximately 95% of the population adhering to it. 2% of Cambodians are Muslim, most belonging to the Cham ethnic minority, and about 2% of Cambodians are Christian. Ancestor worship and Animism are also extremely common, but usually practiced alongside Theravada Buddhism. There are a few house churches in rural Mesang district, as well as more established churches in Prey Veng town, which you are encouraged to attend if you are in town over the weekend.

Medical facilities outside of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are well below international standards and are absolutely not recommended. Medical care is continually improving in Phnom Penh. Recently, two Bangkok Hospital Medical Center-affiliated hospitals opened in Cambodia, providing reputable, basic care: one in Phnom Penh and one in Siem Reap. Additionally, there are several clinics with expat doctors. In the past, MCCers have traveled to Thailand for more extensive and specialized treatments. Major health concerns in Cambodia are malaria, dengue fever, typhoid fever, and Japanese encephalitis. However, the most common illnesses are from food and water and bouts of diarrhea will occur occasionally throughout your MCC term. Most prescriptions can be filled in Phnom Penh.

There are many national holidays, which provide plenty of opportunities for visiting and exploring Cambodia. The Temples of Angkor near Siem Reap are a must-see and will give some perspective on the great history of art and culture of Cambodia.

Challenges:

- COVID-19 remains unpredictable both at home, and around the world. MCC strongly recommends vaccination against COVID-19. Safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 are a vital part of prevention, by reducing individual risk of disease and risk of transmission to others. Vaccination is particularly important for those who are interacting closely with members of the community, those staying with host families, who are traveling, who live in contexts with limited healthcare resources, or who are at higher risk of serious disease. Proof of vaccination may be required in individual cases to fulfill job expectations, for example, if it is required for travel by an airline, a government requirement to enter a country, required by a local partner organization, etc.
- To prioritize wellness and limit risk to our participants and the local community from COVID-19, assessments of each task will continue on a regular basis. If an assignment is found to be no longer viable, we will do our best to help you secure an alternative assignment.
- Living with a host family can be challenging for young adults who have experienced independence, as most host families are very protective of both their biological and host

children, particularly daughters. (For example, host families do not feel comfortable if their host child is out past 8pm.) Patience, understanding, and mutual respect are needed as the participant navigates life within a Cambodian family.

- The SALT/YAMENer will be the only MCC staff member living in Mesang district. The nearest MCC workers live in Prey Veng town, a 1-hour moto ride from Mesang. The MCC office is in Phnom Penh, which is roughly a 2.5-hour van ride.
- The rural environment has unique challenges from those in the city. Electricity and internet will be intermittent, access to nutritious food requires effort, running water is not always available, and travel to city and surrounding areas can be difficult.
- A bicycle will be the main mode of transportation provided for getting around Mesang. The weather may sometimes be inclement, leaving the roads worse for wear.
- Professional counseling and mental health services are available, though only in Phnom Penh. Professional physiotherapy is limited, and reputable chiropractic services are not available. Medical facilities outside of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are well below international standards and are absolutely not recommended.
- Finding appropriate spiritual support may be a challenge living within a Buddhist community and host family.
- MCC service workers have been able to form meaningful relationships with MCC national staff, Cambodian staff at partner organizations, and other Cambodians in general. But these relationships can take time to develop, and—in the meantime—you may experience significant periods of time alone. Learning Khmer will help to enhance relationships with Cambodian people and is important for building these relationships. MCC provides 60 hours of language study at the beginning of your term, and continued study after this is encouraged.
- Significant cultural/religious differences exist regarding gender roles, interfaith relations, stereotypes, etc.
- Generally, perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals are negative and more so in Christian communities. An LGBTQ+ Christian may face challenges in feeling supported in this context.
- 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.
- For those who are very task oriented, it can be a challenge to recognize the importance of "being" instead of always "doing" as building healthy relationships and mutually transformative learning is an important part of the participant 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".

Benefits:

For all SALT/YAMEN assignments, MCC provides:

- All basic needs related to assignment i.e., travel to and from assignment, food & household costs, housing, in-country transportation, etc.
- Modest monthly personal allowance
- Modest monthly worker care allowance
- Full medical coverage—no co-pay

- Educational loan reimbursement
- Vacation days
- Orientation and Re-entry Retreat costs
- MCC in-country meetings and retreat costs
- End-of-term benefits

For more information, see mcc.org/salt or mcc.org/yamen