

## **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: Intellectual Disabilities Caregiver – Al-Malath

**Term:** August 16, 2022 – July 15, 2023

**Date Required:** August 16, 2022

**Location:** Beit Sahour, Palestine

**Project Theme:** HS Health Salt/Yamen

### **Job Synopsis:**

The SALT/YAMENER will walk alongside Al-Malath Charitable Society to assist several young adults with intellectual disabilities. The participant will support Al-Malath's staff in their core programs including occupational therapy, physical therapy, special education, vocational work, and food production.

### **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 working with people with intellectual disabilities would be an asset, but not essential if the candidate has a heart for meeting people where they are and being present and engaged with them.
- An active and patient listener.
- Proactive and creative team player.
- Flexibility and openness to change and willingness to undertake new experiences.
- Excellent oral communication skills in English.
- Willingness to learn basic Arabic.
- A degree in physical therapy or vocational therapy or special education would be an asset, but not essential.
- Enjoy agricultural activities such as greenhouse gardening, tending poultry, soft fruit and olive picking.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Help the therapist(s) with day-to-day regular activities with beneficiaries, including daily life activities such as personal hygiene care.
- Accompany the beneficiaries during morning walks and shopping excursions.
- Help beneficiaries during meal and snack times.
- Take care of the beneficiaries during relaxation time (Snoezelen room use).
- Help the therapist(s) in educational/recreational activities especially during group sessions.

- Help beneficiaries in general garden activities including the feeding of chickens and helping in the olive harvest in October.

### **Assignment Narrative:**

Al-Malath Charitable Society is a non-profit organization with the aim of providing rehabilitation, education, training, and care for young adults with intellectual disabilities and help them emerge in their society and gain social acceptance.

The idea to establish the center came from a real need when mothers could not find a school for their children with intellectual disabilities. They started the center to provide suitable rehabilitation programs for their children.

Currently, Al-Malath's beneficiaries are young adults with intellectual disabilities who have difficulty understanding daily life concepts, processing of information, and sometimes facing negligence in their home environment. Classifications of disabilities include mild, moderate, severe, and profound. The presence of disabilities (motor, social, or sensory) are factors that influence the way a person functions, the kind of services needed, and support given by parents, family, and the community.

Al-Malath is currently taking care of 19 beneficiaries in three main therapeutic fields: Occupational Therapy; Physical Therapy; and Special Educational Programs including vocational training and agriculture related activities.

### **Location Description:**

Al-Malath Charitable Society is located in Beit Sahour, which is a Palestinian community, situated 1.5km to the east of Bethlehem and 8km south of Jerusalem. It has a population of approximately 14,000 people. Beit Sahour is located at an altitude of 663m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 454mm. The summers are hot, and winters are cool with an average annual temperature of 16.6°C. The average annual humidity is around 60%.

The name of this historic city (the house of vigilance) reportedly stems from the Canaanite words 'Beit' (meaning 'house'), and 'Sahour' (meaning 'night watch'). It reflects the city's importance for shepherds, both as a grazing site in the daytime and as a place of safety in the abundant caves available to the flocks at night. It is a pastoral setting, and the olive groves dominate the horizon. Christian tradition holds Beit Sahour to be the site of the Annunciation to the shepherds. There are two enclosures in the eastern part of Beit Sahour that are claimed by different denominations to be the actual 'Shepherds Field.'

The Israeli construction of the separation wall has affected Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and Bethlehem politically, socially, and economically. The barrier is located along the northern side of Bethlehem's built-up area, with proximity to houses in Aida Refugee Camp on one side, and the Jerusalem municipality on the other. Most entrances and exits from Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and Bethlehem to the rest of the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem are currently subjected to Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks. The level of access varies based on Israeli security directives.

Arabic is the main language spoken in Beit Sahour although many people speak at least some English. Good healthcare is available in the area and nearby Jerusalem. One can find a wide variety of western goods, including food products, clothing, etc. in Beit Sahour.

There are no Mennonite or Brethren in Christ (BIC) congregations in Palestine and Israel. There are, however, many churches representing a variety of denominations. There are some services held in Beit Sahour/Bethlehem where you can get English translation and there are English speaking congregations in nearby Jerusalem.

The MCC Palestine and Israel office and MCC Representatives are in Beit Hanina which is 22km from Beit Sahour. There are regular bus connections to Beit Hanina from Beit Sahour.

### **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. Currently, proof of vaccination is required by Israel to enter the country.
- To prioritize wellness and limit risk to our participants and the local community, 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.
- The Palestine and Israel context is often a challenging place to live and work, as one tries to negotiate between cultures, religions, and lifestyles. Every decision one makes often seems to have a political dimension, including where one buys groceries, where one goes for entertainment, what language one speaks and even what roads one drives on. This perplexing diversity can also be invigorating.
- Living in a high-stress, densely populated environment.
- Living in a militarized society with an apparent disregard for the rules of International Law and where human rights abuses are frequently visible or communicated in the media.
- Patience is needed to handle the bureaucratic and physical obstacles. Examples include a high level of surveillance, security checkpoints, and scrutiny of personal history such as travel, political involvement, or criminal record.
- Handling frustration at not being able to change situations of deep systemic injustice.
- Deliberate water, electricity, and internet disruptions due to the ongoing occupation.
- Communicating with and welcoming people with different political views non-defensively.
- Fish and seafood local diet. Seeds and nuts, including sesame, are widely used in the local diet, for both savory and sweet dishes. Those with allergies to seeds and/or nuts should be aware that it may be difficult to prevent exposure to seeds and/or nuts due to the high potential for cross-contamination.
- Significant cultural/religious differences/perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals. Local church and local area are not supportive to LGTBQ+ persons.
- 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](http://mcc.org/salt) or [mcc.org/yamen](http://mcc.org/yamen)*