

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: Environmental Education Assistant – Environmental Education Centre

Term: August 15, 2023 – July 13, 2024

Date Required: August 15, 2023

Location: Beit Jala, Palestine and Israel

Project Theme: FS Food Security Sustainable Livelihoods Salt/Yamen

Job Synopsis:

The SALT/YAMENER will serve as a member of the team at the Environmental Education Centre (EEC) to assist with visiting groups, program activities, report writing, and social media. They will also assist with advocacy around the topics of creation care, ecology, and climate justice.

Qualifications:

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith; active participation in a Christian community or church; and dedicated to nonviolent peacemaking.

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

- Degree, or diploma in agriculture, ecology, climatology, or environmental studies is beneficial, but not essential.
- Deep-rooted belief and commitment to creation care is essential.
- Knowledge of climate justice required; experience is an asset.
- Excellent English communication skills, both written and spoken.
- Experience working with raptors, bird banding/ringing, composting, use of grey water, and agriculture would be ideal, however, not essential.
- Knowledge in writing technical proposals and fund raising is an asset.
- Strong commitment to learn Arabic.
- Ability to network with people from a broad spectrum of backgrounds.
- Ability to work under pressure.
- Ability to take initiative and collaboratively work as part of a team is essential.
- Skills in social media, photography or videography is an asset.
- Commitment to learn about the situation in Palestine and Israel.
- Possess strong self-care skills and healthy coping mechanisms.

Key Responsibilities:

The SALT/YAMENER will assist the team at ECC in a variety of ways including the following tasks:

- Assist with external communications in English.
- Assist with meetings and tours held for international groups.
- Assist with advocacy on creation care, ecology, and climate change.

- Assist with activities with school groups and members of the public.
- Participate in activities such as raptor care, bird banding/ringing, etc.
- Support the Centre with advertising on social media.

Assignment Narrative:

The Environmental Education Centre (EEC) began in 1986 as an educational project launched by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) Schools and Bir Zeit University. Education for Awareness and Involvement (EAI) was a cooperative project to integrate themes of civic responsibility and environmental issues into the existing school curriculum. The program emphasized political and social norms, while encouraging students to become involved in various activities that would improve their communities.

The activities formed the basis for Children for the Protection of Nature in Palestine (CPNP), in 1992. This organization formalized and strengthened the ELCJHL's commitment to environmental education. The CPNP program worked within the ELCJHL schools as well as other local public, private, and UN-administered schools. It introduced young people to their Palestinian natural heritage and biodiversity by envisioning them as future stewards and caretakers of the environment. It taught them conservation measures and environmentally conscious lifestyles. In 1998, the CPNP moved into office facilities on the spacious campus of the Talitha Kumi School in Beit Jala and became a formal educational program of the ELCJHL.

A permanent office space and a large area of natural land allowed the CPNP to broaden its educational offerings. A botanical garden featured local plants from both biblical and modern times. A Palestinian natural history museum, an interactive environmental exhibition, and a ringing and monitoring station for studying bird migration trends was also established. The list of groups served by the program included teachers, women, and local graduate students.

To reflect the program's growing vision and offerings, the CPNP was renamed the Environmental Education Center in 2002. Educating the next generation of Palestinian citizens and leaders is still central to the EEC's mission as a leading provider of environmental and educational facilities.

The SALT/YAMENer will report directly to the EEC Director. Working hours are from 8am until 4pm with Fridays and Sundays off.

Location Description:

Beit Jala is part of Bethlehem, sitting around 10km south of Jerusalem in the West Bank.

The area has a Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summers, and mild, wet winters. Winter temperatures (mid-December – mid-March) can be cool and rainy. January is the coldest month, with temperatures ranging from 1 – 13 °C (33 – 55 °F) but coupled with rain and an absence of central heating in homes and workplaces, it is important to have plenty of warm clothes. Sweaters for layering, rain jacket, and warm rainproof footwear as important. From May through September, the weather is warm and sunny. August is the hottest month, with a high of 30 °C (86 °F). It is important to remain hydrated, wear a hat and sunscreen when out and about. Evenings tend to be cooler and comfortable. Bethlehem receives an average of 700 mm (28in) of rainfall annually, 70% of which falls between November and January.

The Israeli construction of the separation barrier has affected Bethlehem and the surrounding area politically, socially, and economically. Most entrances and exits from the Bethlehem agglomeration to the rest of the West Bank, occupied East Jerusalem, and Israel are subject to checkpoints and roadblocks. The level of access varies based on the security situation.

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

There are no Mennonite or Brethren in Christ/Be in Christ congregations in Palestine and Israel. There are, however, many churches representing a variety of denominations. There are some services held in Bethlehem with English translation and there are English speaking congregations in nearby Jerusalem.

MCC workers often feel frustration at not being able to change a situation of deep systemic injustice. This position requires the ability to create and maintain healthy boundaries. It is important to acknowledge the need for self-care and to craft disciplines that enable one to cope in healthy ways.

The MCC Palestine and Israel office and Representatives are located in Beit Hanina which is 22km from Bethlehem. There are frequent bus connections to Beit Hanina from Bethlehem via Jerusalem daily.

Challenges:

- COVID-19 remains unpredictable both at home, and around the world. MCC strongly recommends vaccination against COVID-19 as it is 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, a local partner organization, etc.
- The Palestine and Israel context is 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.
- Living in a high-stress, densely populated environment, especially in the areas geopolitically named area A, which is located inside the West Bank and controlled by the Palestinian Authority, while area B is partially controlled by the Palestinian Authority and Area C is completely occupied by Israel.
- Living in a militarized society 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.
- Water, electricity, and internet disruptions.
- 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.

- Visiting areas with aging infrastructure requires navigating uneven streets or sidewalks.
- Significant cultural/religious differences/perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals. Local church and local area are not supportive to LGBTQ+ 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 or mcc.org/yamen