

2024-2025 Yearbook



•IVEP

International Volunteer Exchange Program

•SALT•

Serving And Learning Together

YAMEN!

Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network

**“God for us, God alongside us,
God within us.” – Richard Rohr**

I remember attending orientation in Akron, Pennsylvania, and then going on my SALT assignment. Even though I had traveled before, this was the first time I was traveling by myself with the plan to be away from home an entire year. It seemed like an eternity! My flights were all confirmed, and when I landed in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, I followed the instructions given to me ahead of time for immigration and visas. I waited for the MCC Cambodia representative to meet me inside to get the visa, but no one came.

Eventually all the people from the plane had gone through immigration and it was quiet again. I decided I should just get a tourist visa and proceed to gather my luggage. Maybe I had misunderstood, and the person couldn't come inside the airport. After finding my suitcase, I went outside. The crowds gradually dissipated, but no one was there holding an MCC sign or calling my name. Various taxi drivers offered to take me to my destination, but I declined their offers, being too nervous to trust them in a new city.

How many times in your year of service did something go differently than you had planned for or expected? My guess is that you each have had many surprises along the way and you've had to improvise, figuring out what to do or say in the moment and wondering if you were choosing the right path.



I think the Christian faith can also be like that at times. We have a map, of sorts, in the Bible, but it doesn't give us exact actions to take in every situation. Instead, we have to know as much of the context as possible and give it our best try. Sometimes we will succeed and sometimes we will fail, but most of the time we will end up somewhere in the middle, hoping that what we did made some sort of impact on the positive side of things.

While we might never know exactly who or what we have influenced during our year of service, let's embrace that we did our best with the tools we had at the time. And I imagine that you now have many more tools at your disposal than you did just 11 months ago.

Back to my arrival in Cambodia. At the airport, I eventually borrowed a taxi driver's phone and called the MCC office. They answered and upon learning who I was, they offered a hasty apology and said they would be at the airport as soon as possible. I don't remember if my flight got in early or if they got my arrival time mixed up, but it all worked out in the end.

May you look back on your year of service and rejoice, knowing that you gave your best with the skills and tools you had at the time. You learned new things, you had new experiences, and you grew personally more than you realized was even possible. Blessings on the journey!

*Andrea Geiser Leaman
International Volunteer Exchange Program Lead*

GLOBAL SERVICE LEARNING

MCC Global Service Learning Department Staff



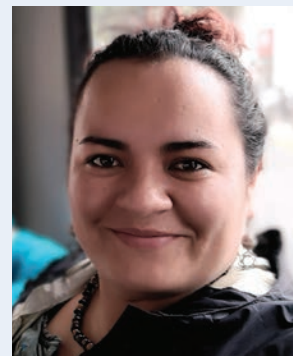
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Global Service Learning (GSL) Department's purpose and mission are to develop and resource short-term, introductory service-learning opportunities within MCC with the aim of facilitating increased understanding and relationships among communities worldwide. Current programs include: SALT, IVEP, YAMEN, Seed and Seek. GSL also resources Work and Learn Teams and Learning Tours, Service Opportunities with our Partners (SOOP), Summerbridge and Summer Service.

SALT participants



SALT orientation in Akron, Pennsylvania, U.S.

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Alexandra Ortiz-Avila



Andrew Smucker



Anjali Mishra



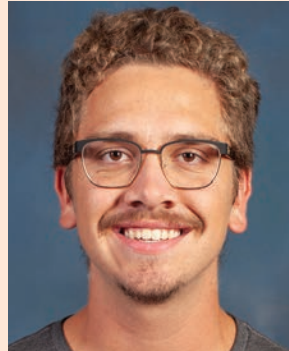
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Marta Jantzi



Mary McBride



Micah Schellenberg



Miriam Huebner



Olivia Hazelton



Rachael Lamman



Rykia Guenther

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Alexandra Ortiz-Avila (U.S.)

Partnership Assistant, Anglican Diocese of Egypt
Cairo, Egypt



First Impression or Differences:

So hot! Getting out of the airport in Cairo I felt the wave of heat coming at me. I had a shirt under my sweater, so I took off my sweater. As I looked over at Anjali, my flatmate for the year, she also had a sweater. When I asked her why she didn't take it off, she

said she couldn't because she had a tank top on, which wouldn't have been culturally acceptable in Egypt. That's when it truly hit me how different our lives were going to be for the next year.

Memorable or Funny Experience: We were in Alexandria enjoying the best seafood risotto in our lives. This was about two months into our assignment, so we were still learning Arabic. I didn't realize that I had mistakenly gone into the men's restroom, and when I went to wash my hands there was a man beside me washing his hands as well. I was like, "Oh interesting. It's a dual gender bathroom. I wouldn't think that would be a thing in a Muslim dominant country." As I finished my thought, I realized the female bathroom attendant was being scolded by one of the waiters, who was pointing at me. Then it dawned on me that I was in the wrong restroom. The female bathroom attendant hurried me out of the men's bathroom, while my hands were still wet, I might add, and I proceeded to dry my hands in the women's restroom. I went back to the table giggling to myself as I proceeded to tell the rest of the Egypt staff what had just happened.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: At times it may be very difficult when people are actively criticizing you based on what color your passport is. Learning to listen and ask questions regarding hurtful comments can ease the tension. Also, not taking things so personally helps because then an individual does not feel the need to lash out and potentially burn a bridge that they could have built. My understanding of social justice has deepened with this quote by Lilla Watson, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." This quote displays how intrinsic I feel we are when we see how social injustices affect our brothers and sisters, and that affects us all.

Faith Journey: I was surprised that the Anglican Diocese that I attended brought me back to my Catholic roots. At first, I didn't like it at all. It brought back feelings of being shushed and gender-inequality. Then, as I continued to attend the services, I found myself enjoying the structure of the service. I found that I felt a sense of

peace knowing the familiar prayers and customs from my childhood. Also, I began to see the reverence that the service offered, which humbled me before God and others. I was not expecting a connection back to my past, especially an understanding and new appreciation for my Roman Catholic upbringing.

New Perspectives: My view of myself has definitely been challenged to be better informed and also to know the history of my country and how that affects other countries. In addition, I learned how environmental changes are happening all around the world and they are very concerning, but the hope has been seeing that many people are still striving to protect and care for the environment.

Skill Development: The skills that I have developed include being a better listener and learner and having an increased, firsthand knowledge through experiences with Egyptian culture, which have made me a more empathetic and understanding individual. I have a deeper appreciation for "the other" and an ability to better understand and transform "the other" into a friend. This is a great characteristic for a peacebuilder, to build intercultural bridges.

Future Plans: When I return home, I plan to further engage in Anabaptist communities to further my social justice calling. I feel the skills that I gained in peacebuilding and conflict resolution have allowed me to view the world in a different way and have a better sense of different perspectives. I see how interfaith work is crucial in understanding individuals from different faith backgrounds and coming together as shared communities.

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Andrew Smucker (U.S.)

Child Care Worker, Talita Cumi Home
Santa Cruz, Bolivia



First Impression or Differences:

Here in Bolivia, I use the buses to get around, which I enjoy. In the U.S., I use a car. I enjoyed the first time going to the market. It was great seeing all the lines of watermelon, bananas and tomatoes, as well as seeing the varieties. This was a dream come

true, seeing all of the options of fruit available to eat for the year.

Memorable or Funny Experience: For Christmas during the evening my host family and I went to the city center. Here there were loads of people dressed in costumes. I wanted to see how many Santas I could take a picture with. It started with a Santa that was in a kids' toy store.

It ended up being five Santas. It was a fun extra thing to do on Christmas, a unique experience.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: I have learned to notice my own power in a culture other than in the United States. In this Latin American culture, my role being a white male from the U.S. is different. I have power and am seen by others as one having more money. I have taken this in consideration during the day when I interact with others, making sure I respect and give value to others.

Faith Journey: An initial struggle coming into the church came from learning to understand values and a new culture with Spanish. After spending some time with the church and host family, I understood more of what a church service looked like. I think I came to some more conclusions that faith and values are not one sided. There are many perspectives coming from even the same community.

New Perspectives: I have less of a strict idea of what can and can't be done. Coming into the Bolivia SALT experience, I was expecting it to be harder to connect in the community. I came into the experience with an openness to throw myself at a community, and then hope to be accepted. With the help of the host family, I had a community.

Skill Development: I have learned how to roll with plans changing and to be flexible in the moment. This has been a theme with people in Bolivia, making plans and after time they fade away. Rolling with changing plans helps in high-stress and low-structured jobs. Being flexible is helpful in any job.

Future Plans: I will probably go back to work and take some time to process the year. After this, I think I'll talk more with people in the community about the experience. Integrating the experiences and learnings into the U.S. perspective will be exciting. Afterwards, I'll start thinking about next steps for a job.

Anjali Mishra (Canada)

Refugee Caseworker, St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS)
Cairo, Egypt



First Impression or Differences:

Hot! We arrived on a sweltering summer day. After spending an hour in my thick travel sweater on the streets of Cairo, my first sip of cold water was, to this day, the best thing I have ever tasted.

Memorable or Funny Experience: After a team outing on the outskirts of Giza, we realized our plan to get 20 staff home by Uber wasn't going to work. We started walking, and a few kilometers in, a tuk-tuk passed by. Several of us piled in and zoomed toward the city. Eventually, we all made it back safely and even shared some delicious Yemeni food for dinner! It was my first-ever tuk-tuk ride and definitely one I'll never forget.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: I have learned to better hold the heaviness inherent to social justice work. My work as a refugee caseworker at StARS both removes barriers for refugee children to access their rights and regularly collides with the realities of a world gone astray. It is hard not to feel the weight of working in a world where children are displaced from their families and forced to navigate systems designed to cause pain so severe that it acts as a deterrent for other children. While I am thrilled when a youth can access assistance, I lament the systemic injustice that places them in precarious circumstances in the first place. I've learned that to keep doing this work, despite its many challenges, is an act of defiant hope. It can be so incredibly hard, but even in those hard places there is still rich beauty to be found.

Faith Journey: My work has exposed me to diverse expressions of faith – from contemplative Coptic Orthodox mass to lively South Sudanese worship, complete with dancing until the late hours of the night. My faith is enlivened by participation in church outside of the confines of Canada, where I feel validated in seeing that Christianity is not just a religion for those with pale skin. I feel more secure in my faith, knowing that the choice to follow Jesus is not an erasure of culture but welcomes me into a deep tradition led by Black and Brown people who hold their histories and love for God together.

New Perspectives: I have been challenged to own the privilege inherent to my birthplace and citizenship. While my sense of identity and belonging can feel complex at home, my assignment has forced me to grapple with the extent to which that complexity can be collapsed: I have Canadian citizenship, freedom of movement and access to opportunities that many people I work with do not. In this global context, I am learning to get comfortable owning privileges that I had not previously identified with, a crucial first step in responding attentively to those around me and loving them well.

Skill Development: I have strengthened skills in psycho-social support, legal advocacy and project management in the nonprofit context. I hope to use these skills to offer holistic support to refugees in Canada and help cultivate effective nonprofits, equipped with organizational infrastructure that best serves those we love.

Future Plans: After returning home, I hope to continue walking alongside those who have experienced forced displacement, whether by living as neighbors or offering direct support. My assignment has exposed me to many aspects of the refugee experience I wasn't previously aware of. It is my hope this experience will help me better serve and continue learning. Beyond that, I'm excited to grow in a faith that believes injustice will never have the final say. And, of course, I'm looking forward to getting married (with the wedding just two months after SALT ends)!

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Beth Heppner (*Canada*)
 Peacebuilder, St. Francis Peace Center
 Gangjeong Village, Jeju, Republic of Korea



First Impression or Differences:
 The culture of hurry-hurry, which is basically doing things quickly, was difficult for me. It's something that I experienced while working in Canada, but I had never experienced it while doing personal things like being a tourist. It seems to be a mindset that people have all the time about basically everything.

Memorable or Funny Experience: I was observing an anti-President Yoon Suk Yeol rally in Jeju, as the second vote to impeach him was happening. When the vote came back for impeachment, I cannot describe how happy people were and the relief that was felt. It was amazing to be a part of the moment and observe firsthand people changing the world.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: When things are wrong, you might think, "Others will go." People will go, but there are many that are thinking the same. We often say, "There is strength in numbers," but what happens when we think, "Others will go?" Those numbers dwindle to the few who are easy to snuff. Think, "Few will go," and take action in whatever way you can.

Faith Journey: I attended house churches, which was a first for me, and attended a few Catholic masses. Both have really stretched me in how I understand what a church service is. A specific thing that I am still thinking about is protesting and the church. I went to two different churches where protesting was an active part of the church experiences.

New Perspectives: It would be so much easier to not care. Do you think that I want to care? Some days I want to walk away and leave, but that means leaving myself behind. Which is worse? Which is better? Why is caring so painful? Why is it so hard? Why am I the one to carry

this burden? My spirit, my soul cries out in agony for the injustice of the world. It cries for how we as humanity have chosen to deal with injustice. It's painful to care but that's when done in loneliness. Caring in community means that the pain doesn't go away, but it's shared and supported by each other. It also shows that the world isn't all bad, that there is still good in the world.

Skill Development: I am learning how to be a part of a community and how to welcome newcomers. To easily integrate into a community, it helps to know the language, but really it mostly depends on the willingness of the people to work to include newcomers. This means that if the community doesn't work to include the new people, the responsibility of integrating solely rests on the newcomers. This can be very lonely or even isolating. The newcomer also has to put in work and reach out, but ultimately, how one integrates is based on how the community works to accept that person.

Future Plans: I don't know what is next for me, but I know God will lead me in whatever he has planned for me. One thing I do know is that peace activism will be a part of my life in some way.

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David Sprunger (*U.S.*)
 Conversational English Assistant, Eyon Misr School
 King Mariut, Alexandria, Egypt



First Impression or Differences: It was hot and chaotic, but exciting. We arrived at the end of the hot season during a heat wave. The chaos came from how Cairene traffic works and learning to walk across the street. It was, however, exciting to arrive in a new place and start learning about the culture in which we would be living.

Memorable or Funny Experience: I had the honor of meeting His Holiness Pope Tawadros II. It was a private meeting with just him and me. I learned much from him. He was grandfatherly and a great listener, not exactly what I would have expected from the religious leader of the Coptic faith, but I am encouraged by his love for his community and people.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: The school where I am working in Alexandria does peacemaking at a grassroots level. The school has both Muslim and Christian students and teachers. Tolerance and peace are encouraged and reinforced throughout the school year. The theme for the school this year was love and peace. I have heard a great deal from teachers and students about the loving community of the school.

Faith Journey: I have found myself praying more often while here. I live in a room by myself in a compound where there is a large language barrier. It often feels difficult to engage in the community when there is a lack of communication. I have been able to engage with the local Coptic faith by joining in fasting. Coptic Christians fast on Wednesdays and Fridays and also for days or weeks marking significant times in the Egyptian Orthodox liturgical year. Fasting here is not like Islamic fasting, where you do not eat except before sunrise and after sunset. Egyptian Orthodox fasting is more like going vegan. Their menu becomes much simpler and cuts out meat and animal products for most major fasting periods. The Nativity Fast, the fast before Christmas, does allow fish.

New Perspectives: As I have gone through the year, I have started to feel more like a teacher. That is my role here. As I gain experience, I feel more stable in it and start to view myself in the way the students and teachers see me. I have been challenged by the students when they become rowdy or overly excited. Some students are a handful. It makes me understand that being easygoing isn't always the best way to work with students.

Skill Development: I have learned more about how to be a teacher in a foreign setting. I have taught classes from kindergarten 2 to senior 2, the equivalent of juniors in high school in the U.S. I have had to learn about how class structure works and how to work with students. I have learned more about grading and the challenges of working with government exams.

Future Plans: My future plans, at least in the short term, are to meet up with my family and friends for a break. I have missed them. After that, I hope to find a position either doing more international work, teaching or both.

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Emma Groff (U.S.)

Deportee Reception Centre Support Worker,
Migrant Shelter of Scalabrini Guatemala (CdMSG)
Guatemala City, Guatemala



First Impression or Differences:

There are many differences that I noticed upon arrival, such as friendlier greetings, the large presence of the informal economy and the extreme level of traffic. Other differences took longer to notice, for example the lack of necessity to make travel plans

far in advance, norms around food, the importance of politeness and a relationship-first mentality.

Memorable or Funny Experience: In February I climbed Acatenango, the third largest volcano in Guatemala. We knew that the weather had been rainy earlier in the week, but it seemed to be clearing up. We began the hike at 11 p.m. and climbed through the night, reaching the top a little before sunrise. This, in and of itself, was a memorable experience. Add onto that the constant sprinkling of rain that left all of us soaked by the time we got to the top and the final ascent with winds so strong I felt like I was going to blow away, and you have an unforgettable experience. After all these hours of climbing in the dark, we were rewarded with absolutely nothing. Standing on the top of the volcano, we were completely enveloped in a cloud with nothing but misty white as far as the eye could see. Although it may not sound enjoyable from this description, I still had a good experience. I hope to return and actually see the view.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: I have interned and volunteered for organizations that work with asylum seekers and refugees in the U.S., but this experience has given me a broader perspective about working with migrants traveling towards the U.S. It has deepened feelings I already had about the privilege it is to be born into a country, town, family and body where I have always had many viable options for financial stability and have rarely felt unsafe. I have never had to worry about survival, which is the main concern of most, if not all, of the migrants I interact with. I feel grateful for the life and opportunities I have, and my drive to seek out ways to accompany others is stronger than ever.

Faith Journey: The most impactful part of my SALT term in regard to my faith has been seeing the way the faith of others inspires and motivates them to transformative action in their community and the world. The work is not easy, but a foundation in God and the belief in doing good to all people alters one's perspective. I am only one small piece of the puzzle, but in community we can make a greater change.

New Perspectives: I've appreciated the opportunity to experience Guatemalan culture and see the ways in which it is similar to and different from my own. It is always helpful to gain new perspectives and learn other ways of doing things. One cultural aspect that I have begun to implement and will continue when I return is placing a high importance on relationships. Of course, my family and friends are important to me, but there have been many times I've called to ask someone a question without first asking how they are. This is a small example, but overall it's a perspective change in knowing that the little things can make a big difference in relationships.

Skill Development: The area in which I've grown the most is confidence. While I feel fairly comfortable now, at the beginning of my term I experienced uncomfortable moment after uncomfortable moment. I don't mean

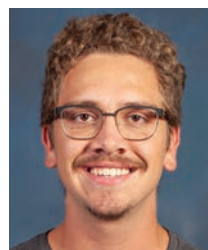
uncomfortable in a bad way, just something out of my comfort zone. With every small challenge that I overcame, the more prepared I was for the next one. I also grew in my ability to navigate cultural differences. I practiced analyzing situations by asking Guatemalans and myself questions to uncover the values behind our actions and how we could work together to achieve our common goals. Additionally, my Spanish improved immensely. I began with very basic knowledge but am now able to communicate comfortably for hours on end.

Future Plans: I hope to continue to work in the migration field, but the current political situation in the U.S. is making that less and less of a possibility. In whatever position I find myself, I will benefit from the skills I've developed and lessons I've learned. I will search for opportunities to continue to speak Spanish.

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Garrett Walker (Canada)

Youth Worker and Teacher, Youth Equipped with Skill of Internship Center (YES-IC)
Phnom Penh, Cambodia



First Impression or Differences:

The weather is pretty different; one might say the heat is a wee bit oppressive. And the traffic here could throw a fella off for a little while. Rice is an every-meal ordeal.

Memorable or Funny Experience:

I joined in a retreat with my men's group, and each group had to put a skit together about different ideas related to legacy. When my group was presenting, everyone suddenly started panicking and jumped or ran away. I wasn't sure what was going on, so I turned to look and saw a snake about two feet away from me. I wasn't quite so worried and just stepped back slowly. It was hearing the shrieks of the other group members, which were octaves higher than their regular voices, which was funny, and the snake slowly went back into the bush. We later found out it was highly poisonous.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: Serving others isn't always easy, but when you can take a step back and see you gave it your all, it can be enriching. I have volunteered at church before, maybe giving one to three hours a week, but here, I am on the go for seven and a half hours daily. It can be exhausting but rewarding.

Faith Journey: Connecting at church here and finding a local group to discuss faith has been huge for me. I've been able to share my story and hear others' journeys as well. I think I have grown in knowing my priorities and where my faith and God are on that list. The church

community I found has been so life-giving and full of awesome, loving people. It has been a home away from home from the beginning.

New Perspectives: My view of myself has maybe changed in that I feel capable and ready to take on the unknown. I feel that if it's in the plan, God will make a way. The views of my home country have made me realize how focused and orientated people are on themselves and how, for the most part, we are very individualistic even within families.

Skill Development: I have learned how to create lesson plans, lead a class, edit videos, and write articles and stories of change for newsletters. This has influenced me by the reminder that I enjoy writing and storytelling. I might not have a future in teaching English, but teaching in itself can be rewarding, and it's a joy to pass on knowledge and your own experiences. I have learned the importance of self-care in regard to prioritizing exercise, early bedtimes, and taking time to read and prioritize activities that bring joy and focus on self-improvement.

Future Plans: What's next for me is uncertain at this point. I am planning on taking a month or two for friends and family and do some cycling across Manitoba. Professionally, I am seriously considering Bible school or a similar program. However, I might apply to a university in an agricultural program or pursue photography. Whatever happens, I plan on taking some time to try and listen to where God is calling me.

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Hannah Buhr (Canada)

Community Facilitator for Child Development,
Mennonite Social Action Commission (CASM)
San Pedro Sula, Honduras



First Impression or Differences:

I stayed for the first month in a hotel in a different city to learn Spanish, where they provided meals for me. It really stood out to me how, when I was eating and when people staying at the hotel would walk past me, they would nearly always say "*Buen provecho*," which means

enjoy your meal. I think it stood out to me so much because I didn't really know enough Spanish to know how to respond, and in my experience in my city in Canada, generally people don't talk to strangers around them or say anything specific like, "Enjoy your meal."

Memorable or Funny Experience: Some of my most memorable experiences are the opportunities that I had to volunteer with other organizations in the community – helping at a homework club in a small town in the

mountains, handing out food in another city or doing fluoride treatments for children as a part of a medical brigade. It was really fun to explore beautiful towns and cities in Honduras, break out of my routine, build relationships with people and receive cute questions from children like, “Are there buildings in Canada?”

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: I think that my biggest learnings of global citizenship and peacemaking have been how complex social justice work can be. Doing justice seems to be so grounded in context. Prior to my year of SALT, with my experiences as a nursing student, I felt that there are different ways of addressing the same inequality – for example, the importance of having both rehabilitation and harm-reduction services readily available for substance users. This view was reinforced during my time doing SALT. There were times when I didn’t understand why something was prioritized or done a certain way, but I realized strongly that the context of the communities and the cultural context informed the “what” and “how” of social justice work. Interestingly, I gained a somewhat opposite perspective with the closure of USAID. It affected many people at my workplace and in the communities. It also highlighted how the global context has a significant impact on social justice work as well.

Faith Journey: I really appreciated my local church and loved being a part of the youth group. I have had incredible opportunities to see a great variety of church environments. Even as there were both things I really appreciated and things that I struggled with a bit more, I feel that I am all the richer for having experienced all of it, and all of it drew me towards my own spiritual disciplines.

New Perspectives: In terms of new perspectives, I think that my biggest new perspective is patience. I realized how much I underestimated the importance of patience over and over again – during culture shock, during friendships and during a day in the office. I needed to remind myself to be patient with my feelings, with myself and with others. Not too much is certain, but I know that I will make mistakes, others will make mistakes and that things will change; all these certainties require and reward patience. I think my perspective on death has changed as well. Due to cultural differences as well as experiences I have had throughout the year, I think I have come a bit more to accept death as something which is inevitable and uncontrollable, which I am very grateful to have learned.

Skill Development: I now can speak Spanish conversationally, and I have had lots of experiences forming relationships with children, adolescents and parents individually and in a group setting. Additionally, I feel that my experience with SALT has clarified my passion for helping people to care for their physical health.

Future Plans: When I return to Canada, I plan to work as a registered nurse. I really hope that I will carry with me my transformed perspectives on patience and death, as well as an increased curiosity to explore different expressions of Christianity and different church environments.

Josiah Guenther *(Canada)*

Parish Assistant, St. Paul’s and St. Luke’s Church
Amman, Jordan



First Impression or Differences: The landscape was dry and had little vegetation, similar to Saskatchewan after the harvest. And the city felt chaotic.

Memorable or Funny Experience: Going to Bethlehem for Christmas. The city was very empty because of the war in Gaza, so it was a very unique time to be there for Christmas.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: I’ve learned that doing this work can feel just as normal, even mundane, as any other job. It isn’t always wild and life-changing; sometimes it’s a slow trudge of endurance – doing the work in front of you and hoping/trusting that it’s making a difference.

Faith Journey: I have learned more about keeping the habits of praying and reading my Bible. Serving in a liturgical church has taught me about the habit of spirituality and relationship with God.

New Perspectives: In Canada, our cities and ways of going about public life, like driving, are very organized and ordered, while public life here is very disordered. For example, the driving, or the location where someone may put their business: I saw a store set up in the stairwell of an old apartment building many times. However, the worship of God and spiritual life in Jordan is very ordered and organized, while it is a lot more disorganized in Canada. Another interesting thing was how much God is in everyday normal life; many greetings or phrases here carried a reference to God or some kind of blessing.

Skill Development: I’ve been slowly, very slowly, developing my patience while teaching children. It has made me realize I don’t want to be a teacher and that I should have a lot of respect, or maybe sympathy, for people who do teach as their career.

Future Plans: I may try to come back to the Middle East if I get an opportunity or I may go backpacking after this. As for my church community, I'd be interested in exploring what it would look like to bring more liturgy into the church back home.

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Kate Warkentin *(Canada)*

Inclusive Education Researcher, Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS)
Lalitpur, Nepal



First Impression or Differences:

The first few weeks in Nepal were a blur of being overwhelmed and of overstimulation. It wasn't until about a month in that I truly started to take in my surroundings. Once I did, I began noticing quirks, like the specific abundance of hardware and paint stores. Nepal

felt different from Canada, of course, but not always in the ways I had expected. The same was true for the familiarities.

Memorable or Funny Experience: Dancing with colleagues at an MCC all-partner workshop, as well as in Ramechhap (rural mountain region of Nepal) while on a project site visit with SAHAS staff. I was taught Nepali dances, and I taught others Albertan line dancing, and all aspects were both funny and memorable.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: In rural communities of Nepal, witnessing the tenacity of people and their emphasis on collective change was both inspiring and eye-opening, especially coming from the more individualistic perspective that many Westerners tend to follow. This approach was particularly evident in conversations around climate change and justice, issues that are woven into all aspects of daily life rather than seen as separate or isolated concerns.

Faith Journey: It's beautiful to see how people find community and richness in their faith in different ways. While in Nepal, I've appreciated the opportunity to witness a broader variety of beliefs and practices. One of the most fascinating aspects has been learning about faith duality, specifically the intertwined nature of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the empathy that comes with these unique perspectives.

New Perspectives: This year has stretched my flexibility, adaptability and resilience in ways I never could have anticipated. I've deepened my understanding of teaching and learning, seeing them as ongoing, reciprocal processes. My perceptions of privilege are also reshaped on multiple levels, constantly challenging me to see the world – and my place in it – with fresh perspective.

Skill Development: Coming into this role with no prior research experience, I can confidently say I have grown immensely in that area, especially having conducted research in a language unfamiliar to me. Beyond that, I've stretched many skills valuable in both personal and professional contexts, including communication, empathy, collaboration, service learning, critical thinking and problem solving. I look forward to applying these lessons in new contexts moving forward.

Future Plans: As of now, I am exploring job opportunities in fields related to education, climate action and youth advocacy, with a master's program potentially on the horizon. I look forward to seeing how my growth and learning from this past year translate into both my personal and professional life.

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Marta Jantzi *(U.S.)*

Environmental Justice Support Worker, Church of Ibagué Ibagué, Colombia



First Impression or Differences:

When I first arrived, I noticed how busy, loud and congested the city was. Even in big cities in the U.S. it is a different atmosphere, and it was interesting to see how much was going on. Definitely a great place to people-watch. I was grateful to have an extremely

welcoming MCC Colombia team who made me feel at home quickly.

Memorable or Funny Experience: There are so many to choose from but one that sticks out is when Damaris, the YAMENer from Bolivia, and I were working on making some *salchipapas* (combo of French fries and thinly sliced beef sausages) for a friend. It was all plated, but we realized we hadn't put the cheese on, and so she just slapped a cold slice on top. Obviously, we couldn't serve cold cheese, but we also didn't want to ruin our immaculate plating, so Damaris told me to wait a second and pulled out a lighter. She then proceeds to try and melt this cheese with a tiny lighter for minutes. By that point our friend had walked over with suspicion because we had suddenly gone quiet, and from that point on, all of us couldn't stop laughing. BUT, the cheese melted, and it tasted pretty good, so I'm calling it a success.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: One of the biggest things I have learned about working for peace within my assignment is that the relationships I make within the community are almost more important than the job I had been given and are most definitely more valued. Through the growth and deepening of my relationships within this community, I was able to find more success in my assignment too. The culture of peacemaking is just

as much about relationship building as it is about the progress of an assignment.

Faith Journey: My faith journey has definitely been different than I expected it would be. My time in Colombia has nurtured me in many ways, like trusting God in times where things are truly just in his hands. This faith journey is something I am still actively going through, but this year has pushed me to trust that I am here right now for a reason and that no matter what I am going through, I need to put my faith in God. It is also nurturing me in finding friends and relationships with people I might not typically spend time with or with people who may have different ideologies than me.

New Perspectives: I have always had a deep respect and yearning to learn and experience the cultures outside of my own, and while it is never an easy path to step into the unknown, this year has shown me that I am more capable than what I thought. I had to adapt to new forms of communication, new priorities and new manners of relationship building. This has opened my eyes to strengths that I value from my own culture but even more, strengths from this new one. My view of myself and my community has evolved in a positive way, and I hope to take all these things and integrate them into my community back home.

Skill Development: In living in a different country and culture, I've had to figure out how to work through different situations in ways that align with the culture I am in. I've also been pushed to develop my skills of living in the present. There were a few events back home that forced me to learn to be comfortable with not being in control. Through this, I have had to strengthen my ability to know what is important and to put all that I have in what I am doing now instead of focusing on what I will be doing in the future.

Future Plans: When I return home, I will be getting my Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification, and then in the fall I will do a year-long program as a paramedic. I hope to bring the strength and resilience that I have developed this past year into this new chapter. I hope to be able to look at things from new angles and from the perspective of a larger culture when making decisions and relationships. I also hope to use compassion and resilience to affect my community in a peacemaking fashion.

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Mary McBride *(Canada)*

Psychosocial Support Assistant, Embakasi Mennonite Development Programme
Nairobi, Kenya



First Impression or Differences:

Coming from a small town in Northern Canada, being in Nairobi was at first a complete assault on all my senses. Chaotic, loud, bustling. Everything seemed to be the opposite of what I was used to. Noises like yelling, honking, music, the scents of street foods and open-

air markets, the bright sun and heat. At first, I thought I would never feel calm in this city, but somehow I have found many pockets of peace here.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: My time in Kenya has deepened my understanding of peacemaking and humbled me in ways I never imagined. I have learned that despite all our differences, there is a certain humanness that we all possess. It is hard to put into words, but we are all created in God's image, and so bestowed in that is something precious. In my learning here I have seen that peacemaking is possible if we are able to connect to that piece of precious humanity that is present, if not sometimes hidden, in all of us. I will come away from this journey with the knowledge that the work of peacemaking is also the work of the divine.

Faith Journey: This year more than ever I have been challenged to trust in God's plan. During my most difficult and despairing moments, I have been challenged to dig deep into that faith. As promised, God has led me to the other side, ever faithfully, and allowed me to open my eyes to see the glory of creation in a way I never imagined possible. This year is a testament that through challenges, our faith in Christ can only deepen, opening our hearts and minds to God and understanding Christ in new and explosive ways.

New Perspectives: This work term has changed my perspective of generosity. Here in Kenya, I have witnessed the ways in which people give unabashedly. With open hearts, minds and often wallets, there is a spirit of generosity that is not self-righteous or proud but truly humble. People work hard and give back to their community not to grandstand or to gain favor but simply because they know it is the right thing to do. There is a spirit of mutual aid and community that underscores all of the work that is done.

Skill Development: Every day this year I have been challenged with coming to work humbly with a listening spirit. As a result, I have learned so much about delivering and developing material related to gender-based violence in a cross-cultural setting. As someone who comes from a Western feminist background, having the privilege of seeing and working with people fighting against misogyny within a completely different cultural framework has been not only been inspiring but truly lifechanging. During my work term here, I have also been challenged to incorporate aspects of my own Christian faith into the work which has only served to deepen my relationship with Jesus.

Future Plans: When I return home, I hope to pursue my master's degree in social work.

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Micah Schellenberg *(Canada)*

Sport Coach Assistant, Masehi School and Wijna Jepara, Indonesia



First Impression or Differences:

The first two things that stood out to me when I got here were the driving and the heat. So many of my friends that I've met here drive like someone in the car needs to get to the hospital immediately, and it's great. When I first got here, the heat seemed to be melting my

poor Canadian bones, but at the time of writing this, I've already adapted somewhat well.

Memorable or Funny Experience: I remember a vacation that I took in Thailand with another SALT'er, Garrett Walker. On our trip, our main goal was to be "immersed in the culture," joking, of course. Garrett really showcased his immersion when a tuk-tuk driver pulled up beside us as we were leaving a market and asked if we wanted a ride. As he was in the process of swallowing an entire ice cream cone, my buddy mumbled "mgmggbhh!" to the driver to turn him down which really made us seem like locals.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: As a teacher I haven't been too involved in peacemaking, but the experience of living in a different part of the world has really helped me create a wider worldview that will live with me when I head back to Canada. This place is a piece of my home now.

Faith Journey: Faith has been a struggle out here for me. It's difficult to find meaning in sermons given in a foreign language; however, the experiences I've had with kids and teachers at the school have been glimpses of God in everyday life.

New Perspectives: I don't think I will really realize how many changed perspectives I have until I'm back at home in Canada, but as someone who had never left Canada before this program, I feel like I was just born for a second time. Many things are different here, and it's eye-opening. Though I've often felt lost navigating a new language and culture, I've learned so much, and I feel as though I've grown into a new person.

Skill Development: The main growth I feel is self-confidence. After many days of showing up to the school and having teachers tell me, "You'll teach this class by yourself today," I've learned how to trust in my abilities more. This experience tests your skills in many different ways, and I've learned that you can't always expect to win, but with time, you'll do better.

Future Plans: I reckon I'll just enjoy the people I love for a little while. It'll be good to feel the comfort of my home and my family again. I also preordered my favorite dish from my mom about three months into my term, so I'll probably also eat that.

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Miriam Huebner *(Canada)*

English & Communications Assistant, Habibi Association Amman, Jordan



First Impression or Differences:

I was struck by sound when I first arrived in Amman. From the song of the gas truck to the call to prayer, I found it so interesting that even when I was in the privacy of my home, reminders of life beyond my house were constantly present.

While many locals that I spoke to found this annoying, I appreciated the reminder that even when I was at home scrolling on social media other people still existed and were going about their lives.

Memorable or Funny Experience: I got a tattoo from the oldest tattoo parlor in the world while visiting Palestine over Christmas. The Razzouk family has been tattooing Christian Pilgrims at their tattoo shop in the Old City of Jerusalem for the past 700 years. My tattoo became even more meaningful after I showed it to my host mom and found out that she is part of this tattooing family!

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: This year of work has confirmed for me how important it is that projects aimed at supporting or uplifting vulnerable people/communities need to be led by these communities. It was disheartening to see that many nongovernmental organizations are still coming into a country or community that they are not previously connected with and imposing their own solutions without leadership or guidance from community members. However, I also

learned that even when there isn't much I can do to radically change oppressive structures, the simple act of walking with people being oppressed and standing firm in my solidarity and witness has more meaning than I realized.

Faith Journey: Spending time in Bethlehem over Christmas was definitely a highlight. Learning from Assyrians, Copts and Palestinian Christians about how much older and larger the church is than western evangelical Christianity helped me to not give up on Christianity entirely. I also found the call to prayer to be a meaningful reminder to take moments for reflection and gratitude throughout my day.

New Perspectives: Stripping people of their cultural ties is central to the white supremacist colonial project. I didn't realize that this affected me too until I had a meal with some of my students. After spending time learning Assyrian dancing, they asked me to share my cultural dances, and I realized I had nothing to offer. When I get home, I want to make more of an effort to learn Russian Mennonite circle games, cooking, and quilting practices that have been central to my ancestors' resilience.

Skill Development: I have learned that you can never invite someone to your house without giving them coffee or tea and a little snack. This simple but meaningful gesture of hospitality is something I want to bring back to Canada with me.

Future Plans: Spending this year in Jordan has furthered my resolve to fight oppression and injustice, but it has left me with many more questions about what that looks like. I hope to continue learning Arabic and to deeply connect with my community wherever I end up living.

Olivia Hazelton (U.S.)

Migrant Shelter Support Worker, Migrant Shelter of Scalabrini Guatemala (CdMSG)
Guatemala City, Guatemala



First Impression or Differences: At first, I had to really focus on and practice the classic Guatemalan greeting of a light hug and a kiss on the cheek. We don't kiss each other that much in the U.S. I think I've gotten pretty good at it.

Memorable or Funny Experience:

On a day my connecting people's coordinator (CPC) was visiting my organization, my co-workers were trying to teach me how to make a heart with my hand and I accidentally kept showing them a culturally obscene gesture. Forgetting that one of the *padres* (priests) was in the room, I shouted to my CPC as a joke, "Look,

they are teaching me *groserias* (bad words/gestures)!" I will never forget the panic in the padre's eyes as he immediately looked at my CPC and quickly shook his head as if to say, "I promise we aren't teaching your volunteer bad things!" Oops.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: Showing up is a big part of the work. Just being there, witnessing, sharing experiences and offering the energy you have in the moment – all of this creates change, even if it's just in you.

Faith Journey: I learned I really struggle with church. I don't like sitting still for more than 10 minutes, repetitive messages, similar tones of voice, or one guy talking for an hour and having to listen. I actually find those things very spiritually draining. I had to figure out ways on assignment to fuel my spirit and to spend time with God and Christian community in my own way and to accept that maybe God designed my brain and spirit to seek church outside of four walls and a service, rather than within it.

New Perspectives: It was rough witnessing the political aftermath of the U.S. election directly in the faces, experiences and lives of the people I was working with. I did a lot of reckoning with my privilege, identity, role in this world and the simultaneous vulnerability and resilience of life.

Skill Development: My Spanish has improved a lot! I am way more comfortable finding agency and action in spaces where I am just completely confused.

Future Plans: I really don't know what is next! I bet it will be great, though. In its own way.

Rachael Lamman (U.S.)

Groundwater Availability and Quality Researcher,
Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS)
Kathmandu, Nepal



First Impression or Differences: I quickly learned how much religion and family structure influence life and culture in Nepal, and how these aspects contrast with the Western world. Most Nepali people believe in karma. This religious ideal is embodied. People trust one another and extend that trust even

to strangers. Crime is rare. In part to this, Nepal has been the safest place I've ever lived. The kinship structure of Nepal extends far beyond that of Western society. People often call their friends "cousins" and call their cousins "brothers and sisters." Even in the language, the friendly way to greet a stranger is by addressing them as brother or sister.

Memorable or Funny Experience: I was traveling to eastern Nepal to take some water samples as part of my research project. Some of the parameters I was testing for required a nitric acid preservative. A lab in Kathmandu provided the acid and the sample bottles. I have transported a lot of samples in the past for work, but I'm used to the bottles being sealed in accordance with U.S. standards. I neglected to think about how the Kathmandu lab likely did not have the same standards, and I did not double check the seal on the bottles. During the travels, the nitric acid escaped, and it was hungry. It ate away at the stitching on my suitcase, and after the fact I don't think it can legally be called a suitcase anymore. When nitric acid gets exposed to humid air, it can steam for some time, and the steam is incredibly toxic. This is when I had to try and explain to a village in my second language why I was carrying a steaming pile of suitcase remains into a field and no one was allowed to go near it.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: This year I have seen how people in developing nations contribute very little to climate change but are affected the most by it. Climate change is a monster they did not create but is going to eat them first.

Faith Journey: It was eye opening to be of the minority religion. I saw how historic religious oppression can cause people to isolate themselves within their own faith community. Christians in Nepal typically do not intentionally seek out connections with people from other religions, likely as means for self-preservation.

New Perspectives: I know that the U.S. has a lot of global influence, but until this year I did not realize how much of a weight that influence has, even on remote areas in developing countries. From canceling gender programs to dismantling USAID, the new U.S. administration has directly negatively affected the people of rural Nepal. Why are people who have never even experienced life in a developing country making decisions for marginalized communities all over the world?

Skill Development: This year was my first time living in a community where most people do not speak English. I learned how to express empathy, excitement and interest with my limited vocabulary. When words were lacking, I learned to communicate with hand gestures and sounds.

Future Plans: For the time being, I will return to a U.S. environmental firm and continue working as an engineer. I have thoroughly enjoyed and learned a lot from this experience and hope to do something similar in the future. I intend to gather some more technical skills in industry, and in a few years apply them to another assignment in the development sector. I will bring what I learned home, and I will continue to remind myself and others that the climate decisions we make in the U.S. affect many people far removed from our communities.

Rykia Guenther (Canada)

Capacity Building Assistant, Friends Peace House
Kigali, Rwanda



First Impression or Differences:

The importance the culture gives to properly introducing people and greeting everyone intentionally. They are intentional to show all people recognition and attempt to make all feel welcomed and as though they belong.

Memorable or Funny Experience: One of my favorite memories of my time in Rwanda was making *chapati* (thin flatbread) with my host sister and host father. It was the first time I had seen my host father cooking, and we had so much fun doing that activity together.

Global Citizenship and Peacemaking: What I have learned about working for a peacebuilding organization while working in Rwanda is that the more we focus on similarities, the easier peace becomes. It is common for people to subconsciously, or consciously, create different labels for people that can be unhelpful when it comes to working for peace. Instead of working from a "victim/oppressor" label system, what I learned from the Rwandan experience of peace and reconciliation is that focusing on our common humanity was significantly more effective than trying to put labels on people. To label someone as a victim and another as a part of the oppressor group only served to divide people further in the aftermath of 1994. This nation is a miracle example of what it means to put aside the labels of "victim/oppressor" and work toward a common goal of "we are all Rwandan." This is something I believe peacebuilding efforts in Canadian and U.S. contexts could learn from.

Faith Journey: I found that attending a church that did not speak my language encouraged me to take ownership of my spiritual growth and become serious about my faith journey.

New Perspectives: Through my time in Rwanda, I've seen myself become more confident in my ability to adapt and grow. I've also seen a significant reduction in the amount of fear I have around making mistakes; most things don't look as daunting anymore.

Skill Development: I've grown a lot in my skills for professional administrative work, and I am excited to see how this gained experience can launch me into other roles working in the Christian nonprofit field.

Future Plans: My future plans are to search for career positions that can take me back to East Africa so that I can continue utilizing the skills and knowledge I have gained during this experience in a more permanent way.

Connection

This year, I have made many new friends while deepening existing friendships. The people I have met through work and other groups I have connected with have brought me joy, laughter, growth and memories.

(Garrett Walker, Canada to Cambodia)

Esperar

It has multiple meanings. To wait. To expect. To hope. I found a lot of meaning in the waiting, this year. A lot of heartbreak and hope, too.

(Olivia Hazelton, U.S. to Guatemala)

Eucharist

To be broken and poured out in a world gone astray, while at the same time being filled, just as our Savior does that immeasurably more for us.

(Anjali Mishra, Canada to Egypt)

Hilly

Amman is a city built on many hills, so this year was marked by climbing lots of literal hills as well as the figurative hills that come with learning and growth.

(Miriam Huebner, Canada to Jordan)

Learnings

I came into this experience with the goal of learning and discovering more about Latin American and Bolivian culture. This has helped me reflect over how Bolivian culture compares with my own United States culture.

(Andrew Smucker, U.S. to Bolivia)

Life-changing

Life-changing. What I have learned and experienced this year has forever changed me. What I do in the future will be different as I know more about our world.

(Beth Heppner, Canada to Republic of Korea)

Lonely

Connecting with a new community, with a different culture and language, can be very difficult and isolating.

(Josiah Guenther, Canada to Jordan)

Newness

There was so much that was new – a new language, new people, new food, new way of living and a new area of work. I learned a lot from what I experienced, and I learned a lot about myself in the process of experiencing the newness.

(Hannah Buhr, Canada to Honduras)

Perspective

The world we see is always based on our perspective, and whenever we change that or shift it is when we are able to see a larger portion of the world around us. I have grown up with a certain perspective. As I have gotten older and grown as a person, so has my perspective, and this year does not stray from that pattern. My year in Colombia has shifted my perspective in so many positive ways, and I truly believe that this experience will continue influencing my perspective for many years to come.

(Marta Jantzi, U.S. to Colombia)

Presence

I tend to focus on what lies ahead, often overlooking the current moment. While in Nepal, I found myself frequently embracing mindfulness, cultivating a heightened awareness of the here and now.

(Kate Warkentin, Canada to Nepal)

Reborn

I feel that I am a completely different person than the person that came to Egypt in August 2024.

(Alexandra Ortiz-Avila, U.S. to Egypt)

Remain

Many times during my assignment I asked God my purpose for volunteering in Rwanda.

Though I have yet to receive a clear answer, I always felt a sense of anticipation for what God was going to do in and through my experience. So, the key thing throughout my assignment has been to remain on course and await his promises.

(Rykia Guenther, Canada to Rwanda)

Surprising

Before leaving the U.S., I was nervous that I would get homesick halfway through the term and feel miserable. I was determined to power through if this happened,

but after waiting in suspense for when this feeling would hit me, it never did.

I genuinely feel so grateful to be here and already know it will be hard to leave.

(Emma Groff, U.S. to Guatemala)

Trust

I had to trust that I was doing enough. I had to believe that my host family wouldn't let me starve. I had to trust that this is where God wanted me to be.

(Micah Schellenberg, Canada to Indonesia)

Understanding

The culture here in Egypt often revolves on short notice. I may not learn about something until the day before, or a schedule might shift very quickly, which makes me very understanding of shortcomings.

(David Sprunger, U.S. to Egypt)

Vibrant

From the food to the festivals to the landscapes, vibrant color is everywhere in Nepal.

Even the air is colorful, with yellow dust from the pollution. My year was also filled with wonderful vibrant friends from all over the world, and I feel extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from them.

(Rachael Lamman, U.S. to Nepal)

Vulnerable

This year has opened my heart and soul in a way that has left me changed. I am thankful that in the end my spirit is filled with good things.

(Mary McBride, Canada to Kenya)



From right, SALTer Andrew Smucker (U.S. to Bolivia) and YAMENers Vilma Pop Botzoc and Yuri de Araújo Silva visit the Christ of Peace monument near Cochabamba, Bolivia.



From right, SALTer Andrew Smucker (U.S. to Bolivia) and YAMENers Vilma Pop Botzoc and Yuri de Araújo Silva visit Machu Picchu while visiting Peru to join the 500 years of Anabaptism celebrations there.



From left, Anjali Mishra (Canada to Egypt) and Alexandra Ortiz-Avila (U.S. to Egypt) visit Salt Mountain in Port Fuad, Egypt.



Anjali Mishra (Canada to Egypt) stands in awe while exploring the pyramids of Giza Necropolis in Egypt.



Beth Heppner (Canada to Republic of Korea) paints flags at the home of a peace activist to protest a new mobile fleet command at the Jeju Naval Base in the Republic of Korea.



Garrett Walker (third from right, Canada to Cambodia) was honored to be a groomsman for the wedding of MCC staff member Sreylen Rous, held in the province of Takeo, Cambodia.



From left, Alexandra Ortiz-Avila (U.S. to Egypt), Miriam Huebner (Canada to Jordan) and Josiah Guenther (Canada to Jordan) visit Bethany on the Beyond Jordan, reputed to be the site where Jesus was baptized on the Jordan River.



From left, Emma Groff (U.S. to Guatemala) and Olivia Hazelton (U.S. to Guatemala) take a selfie with co-worker Nery Osario at Casa del Migrante in Guatemala City.



From left, Hannah Buhr (Canada to Honduras) celebrates her birthday with her host mom, Aurora Perrera Castillo, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.



Marta Jantzi (front right, U.S. to Colombia) experiences El Páramo, a vital ecosystem native to Colombia and surrounding regions, with her host family.



From left, Hannah Buhr (Canada to Honduras) with Kenia Esperanza Calderón present a booklet explaining the child protection policy of MCC's partner organization, CASM, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.



Josiah Guenther (Canada to Jordan) assists with the olive harvest in Dibein, Jordan.



Kate Warkentin (back right, Canada to Nepal) and research supervisor Jasmine Shakya interview a teacher (name withheld for research confidentiality) about youth climate action in Jajarjot District, Nepal.



Kate Warkentin (back right, Canada to Nepal) presents on arts-immersion learning during a conference held by MCC's partner organization, SAHAS, in Pokhara, Nepal.



Mary McBride (Canada to Kenya) hikes the trails of Mount Kenya.



Micah Schellenberg (Canada to Indonesia) sings a duet with his host father, Pak Slamet, during a church service in Jepara, Indonesia.



Mary McBride (Canada to Kenya) teaches local health promoters in Nairobi about the effects of trauma due to sexualized violence.



Olivia Hazelton (middle, U.S. to Guatemala) stands with members of her host family, Victoria Elias (left) and Ingrid Elias, in Guatemala City.



Miriam Huebner (Canada to Jordan) lights some candles during a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem.



Rachael Lamman (left, U.S. to Nepal) is welcomed to the finish line by Vidhya Maharjan (right) after completing the Sindhapalchok International Trail Race in Nepal.



Rykia Guenther (back left, Canada to Rwanda) and YAMENers Naomi Kinuthia (front left) and Reyquel Sangma (front right) explore Kigali, Rwanda, with their language partner, Simeon Noagijimana.



Rachael Lamman (U.S. to Nepal) enjoys the view of Machapuchare on her way to Annapurna Base Camp in Deurali, Nepal.



From left, Rykia Guenther (Canada to Rwanda) and YAMENer Naomi Kinuthia attend a Rwandan traditional wedding in Kigali, Rwanda.



From left, Alexandra Ortiz-Avila (U.S. to Egypt) and David Sprunger (U.S. to Egypt) go sandboarding during a visit to Faiyum, Egypt, with Maadi Community Church.



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