

MCC Service Opportunity

Assignment Title: SALT/YAMEN: Vocational Trades Youth Worker – Lieux de Vie

Term: August 19, 2015 – July 16, 2016

FTE: 1.0

Location: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Date Required: August 19, 2015

Synopsis:

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

Program details see salt.mcc.org or yamen.mcc.org

The Community Worker will lead skill building workshops in order to promote employment prospects and build self-esteem for at-risk boys. The worker will also meet with imprisoned youth to provide support and encouragement on a weekly basis.

Qualifications:

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

1. Knowledge or expertise in one or more technical skills is preferred i.e. Plumbing, carpentry, welding, masonry, electrical work, auto/motorbike repair, etc.
2. Intermediate or higher French language ability desired.
3. English fluency is mandatory.
4. Post-secondary education in Peace/Restorative Justice, International Development desired.
5. Must be able to work independently, take initiative and be a self-starter.
6. Creativity, flexibility and an interest in working with current and formerly imprisoned youth is necessary.
7. Computer literacy (Word, Excel, etc.)
8. Good organizational skills.
9. Teaching experience is an asset.

Assignment Narrative:

MCC Burkina Faso partner, Lieux de Vie is seeking a participant to work with current and formerly imprisoned youth. Lieux de Vie is an organization that supports current and formerly imprisoned youth ages 14-18. Its facility houses up to 5 boys at a time. The local Lieux de Vie coordinator connects youth with skilled workers in Ouagadougou to participate in apprenticeships in plumbing, carpentry, welding, masonry, electrical work and auto/motorbike repair.

Youth are also supported through learning literacy skills, encouragement to build relationships with their families and through developing social and education skills for better reintegration in society.

Lieux de Vie works with non-violent offenders at their facility, but also supports violent offenders in the local prison. Lieux de Vie organizes meetings with imprisoned youth to discuss building strong relationships with their family, facilitates bible study and supports the development of plans for reintegration to society upon their release.

Lieux de Vie also works within Burkina Faso's penal system to raise awareness about restorative justice and encourages methods of holistic rehabilitation.

Duties:

1. Depending on the skills and interest of the participant, the assignment would focus on developing and leading an apprenticeship program with boys living at Lieux de Vie (depending on the chosen trade of the successful candidate). In addition to the trade skills, the participant will teach at the Lieux de Vie facility and would also visit and encourage youth in their apprenticeship assignments led by other trainers in Ouagadougou.
2. The participant would serve as a non-judgmental mentor to build strong relationships with youth.
3. Meet regularly with youth in the local prison to visit, encourage and serve as a positive influence in their lives.
4. The participant could also spend time teaching English and developing various literacy skills with Lieux de Vie youth.

Location Description:

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is surrounded by six countries, Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin to the southwest, Togo and Ghana to the south and Cote d'Ivoire to the southwest. Its size is 274,000 square kilometers (105,900 square miles) with an estimated population of more than 15 million. Formerly called the Republic of Upper Volta, it was renamed on August 4, 1984. The inhabitants of Burkina Faso are called Burkinabé. The capital is Ouagadougou.

Medical Facilities: Burkina Faso has limited high level medical services, but there are plenty of clinics and pharmacies. MCC staff usually go to Clinique les Opportunités. Malaria medication is recommended during the term of service.

Staple Food: The diet in Burkina Faso consists mainly of *Tô*, a dish made of millet or white corn with sauce. Rice is also commonly eaten and it is easy to buy tasty street meat. Vegetables are usually eaten and cooked into sauce. Delicious fresh fruits and vegetables are seasonally available.

Geography and Climate: Burkina Faso is made up of two major types of countryside. The larger part of the country is covered by peneplain. The average altitude of Burkina Faso is 400 meters (1,312 feet) and the difference between the highest and lowest terrain is no greater than 600 meters (1,969 feet). Burkina Faso is therefore a relatively flat country.

Burkina has a primarily semi-arid and tropical climate with two very distinct seasons. In the rainy season the country receives between 600 and 900 millimeters (23.6 and 35.4 inches) of rainfall. In the dry season, the harmattan – a hot dry wind from the Sahara – blows. The rainy season lasts approximately four months May/June to September and is shorter in the north of the country.

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

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

Challenges:

- The climate as described above can be difficult, particularly during the hottest season. Loose cotton clothing is imperative as is adapting expectations based on reduced energy levels. The air can be very dusty much of the year so asthma, allergies and respiratory illnesses should be considered. Malaria and typhoid fever are common in Burkina Faso but with appropriate precautions can be avoided.
- Ouagadougou continues to be a relatively safe place where crimes against individuals are minimal. Local colleagues are very conscientious in offering safety advice.
- The political situation in Burkina has been relatively stable for 20 years although there has been increasing social unrest. Elections often create the possibility of unrest with the next elections taking place in 2015. Burkina is one of few countries in Africa that have not experienced war in over 25 years.
- Living with a host family in a densely populated area means privacy (in the North American sense) is considerably reduced. There are few places to "get away" in Ouagadougou and entertainment options are very limited. The MCC representatives are based in Ouagadougou and provide support through routine visits and meetings.
- Limited internet connectivity. The MCC office has internet and participants usually access their internet there. Resources are limited, so workers are encouraged to think creatively and with flexibility in achieving the goals of their placement.
- Good local friends, close and trusting relationships with local partners, tolerance, and a willingness to laugh all help counter these challenges. Most who visit and live in Burkina Faso find it to be a hospitable and enjoyable country, where the benefits of the local warmth and culture outweigh the challenges.