MCC SALT Service Opportunity

**Assignment Title & Partner Organization:** SALT: Emergency Response Assistant – MCC Lebanon/Syria/Iraq

**Term:** August 17, 2021 – July 21, 2022  
**FTE:** 1.0  
**Location:** Beirut, Lebanon  
**Date Required:** August 17, 2021

Program information and policies can be found at mcc.org/salt

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

**Synopsis:**

The SALTER will provide support to the humanitarian aid and peacebuilding projects that MCC is undertaking as a result of the current crises in Syria and Iraq. Based in Beirut, the participant will assist the MCC Representatives with program planning, reporting, and development of communications pieces for MCC projects in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. Other opportunities to assist MCC partners in their emergency response efforts may also be available.

**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.*

- Bachelor’s Degree in emergency response, international development, social work, or related field preferred.
- Strong writing and communication skills essential.
- Experience with project planning and report preparation a strong asset.
- Ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing.
- Strong administrative and organizational skills required.
- Comfort in working as part of a team, often ‘behind the scenes’, in support of MCC’s mission.
- Acknowledgement of the complexity of the Syrian conflict, openness to listen to all perspectives without judgment, and ability to focus on a politically neutral, humanitarian response.
- Appreciation for the variety of faith perspectives in Lebanon and Syria and ability to respectfully interact with people of all faiths.
- Willingness to learn about the Lebanese and Syrian contexts.
- Friendly, faithful, respects the confidential information of the employees and association.
- Maturity, flexibility, sense of humor necessary.
- A capacity to show compassion in crisis situations, balanced with a capacity to be objective enough to overcome distress and adhere to stated program goals.
- Able to get along where English is not the first language; willing to study and learn Arabic.
• Cooperative and comfortable in working as part of a team, in support of MCC’s mission.
• Strong coping skills and ability to balance self-care with workload.

Assignment Narrative:

The MCC Lebanon Syria and Iraq (LSI) program has had a large humanitarian response to the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts over the last nine years. The program has included work in food aid, distribution of NFIs, cash assistance, WASH, livelihoods, education, health, psychosocial support and peacebuilding. In addition to responding to the Syria & Iraq crises, the program also works with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and vulnerable Lebanese communities. The person filling this assignment will assist the LSI Representatives in the preparation of plans and reports related to MCC’s emergency response. The worker will also assist in developing stories and resources to help with education, advocacy and fundraising efforts within the MCC North American constituency.

As needed, the worker may also be requested to work with MCC partner organizations and churches on other non-MCC work related to partners’ emergency response efforts. Examples might include proposal development, editing of news articles and reports, and data analysis. In addition to the main tasks above, the worker may also aid in preparing and organizing events and workshops for MCC LSI.

At certain times of the year, reporting deadlines may lead to heavier than normal workloads. Meetings with partners, especially international partners traveling to Lebanon, can occur in the evenings or on the weekends. Flexibility will be needed.

Daily work tasks are highly administrative. Though the worker has occasional opportunities to work in partner offices or do field visits, this may be difficult to some people who struggle with working behind the scenes on these projects.

Unless there is a significant change in the situation inside Syria, the Emergency Response Assistant should not expect to travel to Syria during the assignment period.

Duties:

• Assisting in the preparation of reports for emergency response projects.
• Assisting in the development of new plans for emergency response work.
• Preparing and organizing events and workshops for MCC LSI.
• Working with the MCC Representative to compile and edit stories, media, and other reports related to MCC’s emergency response that can be shared with the MCC constituency.
• Working with partner organizations, as requested, to support their emergency response work through both administrative and collaborative tasks.
• Communicate regularly with the MCC LSI Representative(s).
• Attend regional and in-country retreats, weekly team meetings, partner conference and other possible MCC events.

Location Description:

Lebanon is a small but extremely diverse country in the heart of the Middle East. Beirut is Lebanon’s capital and largest city, home to 1.5 million of the country’s 4 million people. The city is composed of diverse faiths, including Shia Islam, Sunni Islam, Druze, and 17 different Christian communities.
Lebanon has a history of both civil war and regional war. Because of this, some old buildings still show signs of war, though these are quickly being outnumbered with large apartment complexes. Lebanon presently hosts over 2 million Syrian Refugees and many Palestinian refugees (some estimates show a half million Palestinian refugees). Due to the large population of refugees, the infrastructure is strained. There are also problems with social cohesion between the different populations.

The climate ranges from extremely hot and humid in the summer to very rainy and cold in the winter (homes do not have central heating).

MCC staff are expected to dress appropriate to the culture. This sometimes means wearing more modest clothing than would be the norm in Western countries.

Lebanese are extremely well-educated and often speak at least two languages (Arabic and either French or English), making it easy to navigate the city and most of the country in English. Very good health care is available, and it is easy to find most over the counter medications. Beirut has three English-language churches in the Protestant tradition, as well as countless other Christian worship options (Orthodox, Maronite, etc.) in Arabic and other languages.

Local transportation by shared taxi or minibus is common in Beirut. There are also minibuses that go to other parts of the country.

The SALTer will be living in a seminary setting alongside other students from the region. S/he will be required to audit courses at the seminary during the term under their Studies in the Middle East program which will help broaden one’s knowledge as well as provide opportunities for informal relationship building with other students from the region.

Lebanese culture has certain expectations for the ways unmarried males and females relate to each other; spending time with the other gender in mixed groups is a safe way to steer clear of missteps.

Lebanon ranks as one of the most expensive cities in the Middle East. MCC covers basic living and assignment costs for simple and healthy living. SALTers should be aware that their monthly MCC stipend for personal expenses may not go as far as it would in other countries where MCC has programming.

Internet service is very expensive, can be slow, and is charged by the amount of data used. While email and occasional Skype calls are encouraged, the SALTer should not expect to spend large amounts of time on Skype calls or streaming music and videos.

Challenges:

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect countries around the world. While we remain hopeful that the pandemic will have stabilized by August 2021, to prioritize the well-being and limit risk to our participants and the local community, assessments of each assignment will continue on a regular basis. If it is deemed that an assignment is no longer viable, we will do our best to help you secure an alternative assignment.
- There may be hyperinflation within the country. This means access to imported goods (western coffee, cereal, and other food items) may be limited or expensive.
• If there are higher risks of COVID-19, the SALTer would be expected to abide by the host communities’ policies which may include a lockdown within the host community and remote working from the host community.
• There is political instability, frequent protests, and occasional possibility of armed conflict. The participant must be willing to adhere to security guidelines and heed the advice of the MCC Representative on security issues.
• Access to mental health services may be difficult though online options are available.
• Access to some medications is becoming challenging due to hyperinflation and limited supply; SALTers would be encouraged to bring needed medication with them for the duration of their SALT experience.
• Worker can expect to occasionally sit in rooms and meetings where others are smoking.
• Contact with people living in very difficult situations has the potential to bring about sadness and feelings of helplessness (Secondary Trauma). Strong coping mechanisms and balancing workload with self-care is needed.
• The SALTer will be eating many meals with the host community. Common foods served include wheat-based products and meat or chicken. Allergy or aversion to these foods would create challenges for the worker.
• Lebanon immigration law does not permit those who have visited or lived in Israel/Palestine to enter Lebanon. Questions about this restriction can be discussed with the SALT Coordinator in advance to placement.
• Beirut is a very congested city with a lot of traffic and noise. There are not many green spaces or parks in the city. The SALTer may need to be intentional about finding green spaces.
• In Lebanon, perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals are predominantly negative, this is equally so in Christian communities. An openly LGBTQ+ individual may face significant challenges with acceptance in this context.
• Managing frustration when things don’t turn out as expected can be hard. While we do our best to determine and outline job responsibilities with our local partners, assignments really come alive based on the passions, skills, and giftings of an individual. Responsibilities may change or be refined over time in communication with supervisors to meet the ongoing changes and needs within a local context. As such, the greatest characteristics a participant can bring to an assignment are adaptability, flexibility, patience, a willingness to get your hands dirty, and humility to complete even mundane tasks.
• For those who are very task oriented, it can be a challenge to recognize the importance of "being" instead of always "doing" as building healthy relationships and mutually transformative learning is an important part of the participant experience. We hope participants will come with a desire to walk alongside local communities, rather than see the assignment solely to "get things done".