

MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity

Assignment Title & Partner Organization: SALT/YAMEN: Kindergarten English Teacher – Indomenno/GKMI Welahan

Term: August 14, 2019 – July 11, 2020

FTE: 1.0

Location: Welahan, Jepara, Central Java, Indonesia

Date Required: August 14, 2019

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

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

Synopsis: .

The SALT/YAMENER will teach kindergarten for the Christian school and help develop church programming for youth and the church as a whole. The participant will also have an opportunity to teach English in the community, engage in cultural learning, and actively participate in the life of the GKMI Welahan in Jepara, Central Java, Indonesia.

Qualifications:

All MCC workers, including those seconded to Indomenno 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 a successful criminal background check.

- Strong interest in working with school-aged children and youth.
- Strong English speaker with an interest in sharing English skills in community settings.
- Willingness to live as a member of an Indonesian household, learning a new language, ways of living, customs, foods, communication patterns, modes of travel, and modes of worship.
- Willingness to serve in a fluid work setting under the direction of Indonesian supervisors.
- Willingness to be open to the mentoring and support of an Indonesian church community.
- Willingness to make your needs known.
- Flexibility and openness to new experiences.
- Interest in building healthy relationships with Muslim neighbors.

Assignment Narrative:

SALT/YAMEN assignments in Indonesia place a priority on building relationships, participation in the life of a local church, and community involvement. It is Indomenno's goal that the SALT/YAMEN program will result in a stronger commitment to the world-wide church family, both for the congregations and families that send young people and for the churches and families that host them in Indonesia.

Through living with host families and participating in host churches and service assignments, exchange program participants will:

- Realistically test their gifts, limitations, and their call for further training and longer term cross-cultural service.
- Grow spiritually as their faith is challenged and nurtured in a cross-cultural setting
- Broaden their understanding and appreciation of the lives of their brothers and sisters in their host country and further mutual trust, relationships and caring.
- Help to dismantle the stereotypes and prejudices that exist between cultures both during the exchange year and upon their return to their home communities.

SALT/YAMEN assignments in Central Java, Indonesia, have these elements in common:

- Six weeks of language study with other participants.
- Placement with one of three Mennonite church synods in Indonesia.
- Living as an adult “son” or “daughter” in an Indonesian Mennonite family.
- Expectation of intense church and community involvement.
- Assignment in school or program in the community near to a Mennonite congregation.
- Full participation and mutual support opportunities in the Indomenno team (living within 3 hours of other Indomenno workers)
- Inclusion in all aspects of Indomenno team life.

Central Java has a Mennonite history that goes back over 160 years. While the region is predominantly Muslim, the Mennonite churches have a historical and strong presence in the area. Most Mennonites live among Muslims and have Muslim colleagues, neighbors and extended family members.

Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI) is one of the three Anabaptist Synods in Indonesia and will host the exchange participant in this assignment. The synod represents approximately 24,000 baptized members. GKMI members are almost equally divided between those coming from both urban and rural setting. GKMI has produced strong Christian leaders for Indonesian churches and several for Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

GKMI Welahan will be the host for this assignment. The church has a quiet small, but active congregation of around 70 members. It is located in a suburb setting of Central Java. The church was established 85 years ago by a local missionary who also established the GKMI synod. The church is located in a china-town community and the oldest Buddhist temple in the area is across from the church. The surrounding of Welahan is 80% Muslim and the church has positive relationships with its neighbors.

In addition to Sunday services, the church has a full weekly schedule of events including Bible studies, and fellowship opportunities with teens youth, women, and men. The SALT/YAMEN participant would have opportunities to teach in public school, teaching English with the community, as well actively participate in the ministry of the church.

Duties:

There is flexibility within this assignment as to specific activities for a participant. The SALT/YAMENer will be expected to work with their placement supervisor to determine which activities fit best with the participant's skills and the community's needs. Some possible activities are as follows:

- Teaching English in the Christian Kindergarten that belongs to the church
- Actively join with ministry with the pastor
- Actively join/lead activities at the GKMI Welahan church, particularly youth
- Provide English language educational opportunities to church and community members as requested.
- Share in the work of the host home as a member of the family.
- Write at least two stories featuring Indomenno work, connections, and/or partners for MCC reporting.
- Function as an active member of the Indomenno team through regular reporting, team meetings, and retreats, visiting nearby Indomenno sites in Indonesia, and providing mutual care and support for other Indomenno team members.

Location Description:

Indonesia is a far-flung archipelago stretching from the tip of Aceh bordering on the Indian Ocean in the northwest to the end of Papua on the edge of the Pacific Ocean on the east. The distance is as great as from the Pacific Northwest to the Eastern Seaboard and the Maritimes on the American Continent. The archipelago is made up of over 17,000 islands and hundreds of distinct ethnic groups. Over 220 million people are spread over the country, making Indonesia the 4th largest nation in population.

The geographic challenges of working in Indonesia are staggering with large distances to cover over often rugged terrain and fickle seas. Indonesia has one of the largest domestic air fleets in the world to service far-flung islands. Distinct cultural, linguistic and religious differences add an additional layer of excitement for the venturesome.

Welahan, Jepara is famous with woodcraft. Welahan is approximately 3 hours from Salatiga, where the Indomenno offices in Indonesia are located. Many of the community members work as laborers. Many young people go to other towns to obtain better education, but most return to open a business.

It is quite hot for most of the year and humid during the rainy season. In Welahan, the average annual temperature is 81 °F /27.1 °C. The rainfall averages 2331 mm. Some buildings have air conditioning, but many places are open-air.

Appropriate clothing is very important for the teaching part of this assignment. This would include a button up shirt with collar, worn tucked in with a belt or on the outside if the hem is straight. Khaki pants (not cargo pants or jeans) are needed for teaching as well as closed toed dress shoes worn with socks. For a woman, appropriate dress would be a long skirt, button up blouse with collar, and closed toed shoes.

As seconded MCC workers, participants should expect to access in-country medical care, dental care, and vision care during their terms of service. A similar level of medical care is offered to Indomenno's national staff who also serve in Indonesia. If the local care is not adequate for the need, some cases may be sent to another Asian country upon referral of a doctor.

Challenges:

- Common foods in Indonesia include rice, noodles, fish, peanuts, soybean products, tropical fresh fruits, monosodium glutamate. While not entirely unavoidable, allergies to any of these foods would create significant challenge for a participant.
- In Indonesia mental health resources and professionals, as well as counseling services, are extremely limited and in some areas, non-existent. Some medications commonly prescribed in North America are not available here.
- It may be difficult to develop a routine of activities in this assignment. The SALT/YAMENer will need to take initiative in designing a schedule of activities that is energizing without being draining. Many opportunities exist, but these will need to be developed based on the SALT/YAMENer's interests and skills.
- It may be difficult to find spiritual nourishment in worship services held in Indonesian or Javanese languages. Spiritual growth will require a lot of self-care. MCC workers who partner with Indomenno can manage this by planning to come with devotional materials and books for spiritual challenge.
- The SALT/YAMEN participant will most likely feel much less independence than they felt in their home culture. The Indonesian hosts feel a real sense of responsibility for exchange folks and have a cultural expectation that they will know the families of a participant's friends, where the participant is going, when they will return and who will accompany them. This is simply a cultural difference and not a sign the participant is not trusted. Exchange participants have coped by erring on the side of over-informing their hosts of their activities and by observing the family dynamics, habits and expectations of Indonesian young people of the same gender and age in their host communities.
- The local area and churches are not supportive to LGBTQ+ persons. LGBTQ+ lifestyles are considered taboo. Support of or participation in such lifestyles can be dangerous especially in some Muslim dominated areas.
- 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".