

MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity

Assignment Title & Partner Organization: SALT/YAMEN: Community Builder – Peace Building

Term: August 14, 2019 – July 11, 2020

FTE: 1.0

Location: Namyangju, Republic of Korea (South)

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 engage in life and work with Peace Building, helping with coffee-making and baking at Circle Coffee and Bakery. The participant will play a role in fostering a sense of community among those who live and/or work at the various organizations that make up Peace Building.

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.

- University degree (E-2 visa requirement).
- Love for people and energy for living and working in community.
- Interest in learning the Korean language and culture.
- Interest in service work such as coffee-making, baking, cooking, etc. Experience in coffee-making and/or baking is preferred.
- Servant leadership skills for coordinating community activities, such as leading small group gatherings. Small group leadership experience is an asset.
- Patience, flexibility, creativity and good sense of humor.
- Enjoyment for working independently and ability to take initiative.
- Openness to doing almost any kind of work, including new possibilities that arise throughout the year.

Assignment Narrative:

Peace Building was built in 2015; it is currently home to about 15 people and several organizations that have grown over the past several years, stemming from the organization Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC).

Peace Building is a three-story complex:

First floor:

- Circle Coffee and Bakery
- Community kitchen and lunchroom
- Workshop room

Second floor:

- Offices for Korea Peacebuilding Institute (KOPI), Korea Association of Restorative Justice (KARJ), and Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI)
- Peace Building School
- Apartment for one family
- Workshop room, and meeting space for Grace and Peace Mennonite Church

Third floor:

- Three apartments, home to 11 people

Peace Building Community is the group of people who live and/or work together in the different organizations in Peace Building. There are varying levels of involvement possible for the SALT/YAMENers within these organizations.

The Peace Building organizations are as follows:

Circle Coffee and Bakery: Circle Coffee and Bakery opened in November 2016. Through the café, we aim to welcome people from the local community to Peace Building. Part of the vision is to initiate programs at the café that will be meaningful for those living near Peace Building. We also hope to share about our other work with those who frequent the café. *Great involvement possible. Most of the participants' time will be spent here*

Grace and Peace Mennonite Church: Grace and Peace is a small community of believers who gather for worship at Peace Building on Sundays. Currently about 15 brothers and sisters gather for church, plus several small children. A typical worship service includes singing, scripture reading, time for sharing reflections about the scripture and prayer. There is a simple potluck meal after the worship service, with rice and side dishes that people bring. There is no pastor at Grace and Peace, so the brothers and sisters all share the responsibilities according to their gifts and willingness. There are a few non-Korean members of the church, and simple English translation is available.

*Great involvement possible

Korea Peacebuilding Institute (KOPI): Since 2011, KOPI has been providing lectures and trainings on restorative justice, restorative discipline and trauma healing – for teachers, NGO workers, pastors and other interested community members. KOPI is quite active in Namyangju city, but KOPI staff also travel all over the country for peacebuilding lectures and trainings. www.kopi.or.kr

Minor involvement possible

Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI): NARPI, an MCC partner from its inception, is currently the only peacebuilding institute for Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, Far East Russia), and the admin team for NARPI works out of Peace Building. Unlike KOPI, which runs peacebuilding trainings continually throughout the year, NARPI currently has just one two-week training per year, in August. Every year the training is held in a different

location of Northeast Asia. The 2019 Summer Peacebuilding Training will be held in Nanjing, China. www.narpi.net *Minor involvement possible*

Youth Peace Camp: This one-week camp for middle and high school students from China, Japan and Korea is held once a year, at rotating locations in the region. KOPI staff work in cooperation with partner NGO's in China and Japan to plan this program every year. *Minor involvement possible*

Peace Building School: Peace Building School opened in September 2018, a resurrected version of an English-language school called Connexus that closed in July 2018. While Connexus programs focused on teaching English to elementary school students from the local area, Peace Building School is now creating curriculum that combines peace education and English language education. *Minor involvement possible*

Korea Association of Restorative Justice (KARJ): KARJ, an association of Koreans who support the RJ movement with monthly membership dues, was formed in 2014. There are three KARJ staff people at Peace Building; they do networking within this group of members, as well as provide ongoing education opportunities and resources for the members. *No direct involvement for SALT/YAMENer*

There are numerous opportunities for the participant to utilize their unique skills and education with enough patience and initiative. The SALT/YAMENer will work with many different people in the above-mentioned organizations. Within each organization/project in which the SALT/YAMENer is involved, there will be clear communication about who will provide orientation, support, and accountability. A designated leader will provide overall support to the SALT/YAMENer throughout their adjustment to life at Peace Building.

Duties:

- Build relationships with members of the community, including Korean housemates, co-workers, and church members.
- Actively work to build a positive house culture within the shared apartment, including coordinating house activities.
- Attend free Korean language classes in Seoul, study Korean, and make efforts to use Korean whenever possible.
- Make community lunch once a week and help with cleaning chores.
- Assist the manager and barista of Circle Coffee and Bakery. Main roles include barista work, baking and cleaning.
- Support the work of Peace Building School when needed. Possibilities include substitute teaching of English classes for elementary school students (maximum of six per class) and tutoring students.
- Work on projects to enhance the community. For example, create simple monthly videos with pictures from the month's events/activities and make decorations for Peace Building.
- Join in a Bible study group in the community.
- Serve on the Community Team at Peace Building to help plan any special events, including retreats and the community monthly birthday parties.
- Actively participate in Grace and Peace Mennonite Church, a small church that meets on Sundays at Peace Building.

Location Description:

South Korea is a small country and any point can be reached within less than a day of ground travel. Public transportation is plentiful, reliable and relatively economical. Korea boasts many historic sites, cultural activities, hiking destinations, and rugged coastlines. Korea also enjoys four distinct seasons with spring and fall being particularly pleasant. Winters can be cold.

The MCC Northeast Asia office is located in Chuncheon, Gangwon Province, about two hours by Metro from Peace Building, or just one hour by car.

Peace Building is located in Namyangju-si (city), about 30 minutes east of Seoul. Their neighbor to the west is an Asian pear orchard, and neighbors to the east include two pork barbeque restaurants. The two nearby towns, Dosim and Deokso, are made up of mostly high-rise apartment buildings. Peace Building is located just north of the Han River, lined by a nice walking/biking trail. There is a medium-sized grocery store about a 5-minute walk from Peace Building. About a 10-minute walk away is a small cluster of shops, cafes, and restaurants. Peace Building is located about a 15-minute walk from Dosim Station, on the Seoul Metro System, making it convenient to travel to the city. Also, nearby Dosim station are local buses to Deokso, or city buses to Seoul.

The SALT/YAMENer will live in a group apartment with a couple housemates from the U.S./Canada, and a couple housemates from Korea. Because of language, it will be more natural to build deeper relationships with the non-Korean housemates. We encourage SALT/YAMENers to make an effort to build relationships with Korean housemates and co-workers, even though it may take initiative and patience.

There is a community kitchen on the first floor of Peace Building, and a kitchen in the group apartment. The staff at Peace Building eat lunch together every weekday. The SALT/YAMENer will join with a partner to cook lunch for the community once a week. The ingredients needed for lunch are provided by the community, within a set budget. It is possible to find almost any ingredients you may need here, and all varieties of food are welcome!

People living at Peace Building are generally responsible for their own breakfasts, dinners and weekend meals. In the SALT/YAMENer's group apartment, basic staples and household items (e.g., cereal, milk, bananas, bread, rice, kimchi, tofu, vegetables etc.) are shared. Shopping is done online for community groceries once a week, generally on Mondays. Families from the community will also invite the SALT/YAMENer to their homes for dinners.

Namyangju has hot, humid summers and cold, dry winters. August is the hottest month in the summer, with an average high of 30°C and low of 22°C. Most rainfall throughout the year comes during a rainy season in July and August. January is the coldest month in the winter, with an average high of 3°C, and low of -7°C.

The capital city of South Korea is Seoul. It is a large metropolis in the northwestern part of South Korea. Seoul proper is home to 11 million people and satellite cities around the capital add another 14 million people to this area, making it a very densely populated region. As a large city in a developed country, Seoul has almost everything one would expect in a world-class city – commerce, culture, religion, technology, education, etc. Peace Building is located about 30 minutes from Seoul by bus.

Korea is politically and socially stable and has a well-developed economy, so health and security risks are minimal. Theft and violent crimes are rare. “White Collar” crime is more prevalent, but it does not

directly impact ordinary citizens and visitors.

Korea's health care system is very good. Medical clinics and pharmacies are readily available in Namyangju. If the SALT/YAMENer is required to take prescription medicine, s/he should be prepared to bring along sufficient quantities of medication because there are no guarantees the same brand and dosage will be found in Korea.

In Seoul there are many places to shop for affordable clothing, but there are not many options for larger clothing or shoe sizes (above size 8 for women).

The diet is primarily rice as a staple and a variety of meat, seafood and vegetables. The participant may not have easy access to familiar foods and snacks. Korean food can often be very spicy. Kimchi, a traditional fermented Korean dish made of vegetables with a variety of seasonings, is eaten at almost every meal.

South Korea is a democratic republic. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held every five years.

Although Korea is very modern in a Western sense, it still retains its Korean culture in relationships, worldview, language, food and customs that are very distinct from Western culture. While Korea's strong traditional culture is gradually changing, relationships are still based on strong Confucian patterns, with deep respect for elders and deference to male leadership.

Challenges:

- Learning the language and culture are significant challenges. While many speak some English, Koreans at Peace Building will speak Korean when in conversation with each other and for public events. While the Korean alphabet is easily learned, the language itself provides a real challenge. Daily conversation will mainly be in Korean, so the SALT/YAMENer should expect to feel frustrated at not be understood or understand daily conversations. This can also lead to feelings of loneliness.
- The SALT/YAMENer will generally have less free (i.e. individual) time and private space than some cultures expect and appreciate. Introverts will be challenged by the community large group apartment. The worker should plan to take initiative in designing a schedule of work and activities that is energizing, without being draining.
- Most of the SALT/YAMENer's housemates will receive modest salaries for their work each month and have spending money for going out to eat or for entertainment. This could lead to some tension if the SALT/YAMENer is not able to join in some of the activities that their housemates enjoy.
- The SALT/YAMENer will be challenged to find spiritual nourishment in Sunday worship services held in Korean. However, the SALT/YAMENer's participation in a Bible study may help with this challenge.
- Though many people in the community and church are supportive to LGBTQ+ persons, the local area is generally not supportive.
- 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 community, open to whatever each day may hold.