

## **MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity**

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

**Assignment Title & Partner Organization:** SALT/YAMEN: Disability Equity Program Assistant – PVFDF

**Term:** August 17, 2022 – July 21, 2023

**Location:** Prey Veng, Cambodia

**Date Required:** August 17, 2022

**Project Theme:** FS Food Security and Livelihoods Salt/Yamen

### **Job Synopsis:**

The SALT/YAMENer will work alongside the national staff of Prey Veng Female Disabled Federation (PVFDF) to grow their capacity to teach the community on topics related to disabilities, helping extend the organization's outreach by assisting with project fundraising and reporting, as well as researching grant opportunities and communications.

### **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.*

- Preference for a degree in disability studies and/or experience assisting people living with disabilities.
- Strong English language skills (spoken and written).
- Ability to self-direct work and manage independent deadlines.
- Ability to work well with teams (collaborative work and tolerance for group decision making).
- Ability to dream, brainstorm, and creatively find ways to implement ideas.
- Ability to take initiative and work with little day-to-day direct instruction.
- Knowledge and/or experience in grant and project proposal writing is an asset.
- Willingness to diligently study the Khmer language and culture.
- Willing to use local transportation for travel.
- Willing to train and transfer skills (share knowledge) to PVFDF staff.
- Flexible and adaptable to change.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- Able and willing to use a bicycle for transportation.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

#### *Primary Duties:*

- Seek ways to promote education on disability issues in the community.
- Network with other NGOs doing disability work in Cambodia.

- Attend trainings related to disability rights and resources.
- Assist with project fundraising and reporting.
- Assist researching grant opportunities.
- Support English communications, including teaching English at times.
- Basic computer training to staff.
- Problem solve and adapt tasks for people with disabilities when needed.

*Secondary Duties:*

- Attend MCC Cambodia team meetings and staff events.
- Contribute stories of impact and experience for the MCC Cambodia Blog.
- Be a contributing member of the MCC team that supports and cares for one another.
- Maintain a cooperative spirit and commitment to becoming involved both at PVFDF and at MCC Cambodia.

**Assignment Narrative:**

PVFDF's mission is to integrate those with disabilities into society to lead a full and enriched life. The organization works towards to change the perceptions about disability in the country.

PVFDF was established in August 2008 as a nonpolitical, non-religious and national non-governmental organization. It was under the management of the Governance Board with the partnership with Veterans International Cambodia Prey Veng (VIC PV), Rose Cambodia Rehabilitation Center (RCRC), and Friends Association for Cambodian Education Support (FACES) from Japan.

PVFDF targets two provinces, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. In 2010, the total population of the two areas was 1,430,160 people, 38,516 being people with disabilities. This demonstrated the need for services and resources to help reintegrate them into society and to change the perceptions about living with a disability.

PVFDF supports people with disabilities through different life stages, supporting access to mainstream education for children and as they get older, and aiming to support access to university and employment. Their mission is to integrate those with disabilities into society to lead a full and enriched life. This includes reintegration into school, providing school materials and equipment such as wheelchairs, and overcoming transportation obstacles to and from rural areas.

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in South-east Asia, and the SALT/YAMENer will be in contact with one of its most vulnerable populations. The conditions are extreme, as the people with disabilities at PVFDF live below the poverty line. The PVFDF team finds strength in knowing that they can make difference in the lives of their beneficiaries, and that their work is vital to several families and to Cambodia.

The Program Development Support Worker will report to PVFDF Manager, Him Sengdee, and to the MCC Cambodia Connecting People Coordinator.

For more information about PVFDF, see: <https://www.facebook.com/PVFDF-Prey-Veng-Female-Disabled-Federation-311863889255430>

Holidays for this position will follow the PVFDF calendar (please note this calendar allowance might differ from the MCC Cambodia calendar). The SALT/YAMENER may take MCC's Christian holidays (Christmas Day and Good Friday), if desired. In addition, this position will receive 10 days of vacation, which must be approved in advance by supervisors at PVFDF and MCC.

An important component of the MCC SALT/YAMEN term is life with a host family. During the SALT/YAMENER's year in Cambodia, the participant will be expected to assimilate into the life of the host family. This includes engaging with their church, home, and social life. The participant will be living as an "adult son or daughter" and the goal is for the SALT/YAMENER to be considered as a member of the host family for the assignment.

### **Location Description:**

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia between Vietnam and Thailand and bordered on the north by Laos. The population is about 15 million, with about 80% living in rural areas.

The country is still emerging from the genocide era of the Khmer Rouge that killed nearly 1.7 million people. The educational, health, and legal systems were all destroyed, along with the general infrastructure within the country. This conflict created an atmosphere of mistrust, fear, and hopelessness. Open conflict with the last remaining Khmer Rouge faction ended well over a decade ago and Cambodians are thankful for the peace and stability that has reigned throughout the 2000s.

The SALT/YAMENER will be based in Prey Veng town, the provincial capital (Prey Veng town is a 2-3-hour van or bus ride to Phnom Penh city). The town has a local market, a bank, and a few small shops and places to eat (Khmer food mostly). The location is rural, although most households in town now have electricity and some form of running water. Although the central streets of the Prey Veng town are paved, travel to some areas around may be on dirt roads alongside beautiful rice paddies. Daily vans and small buses travel between Phnom Penh and Prey Veng town.

Homes in the rural are often made of wood. SALT/YAMENERS in Prey Veng live with host families. Electricity in the town is widely available and usually consistent; however, power outages do occur somewhat regularly during the hot season (March-May), though, these usually only last for a few hours at a time. Most homes do not have phone lines; however, MCCers have cell phones.

The Cambodian diet consists primarily of rice, soup, vegetables, fish, meat, and fruit. It can be challenging to find vegan/vegetarian dishes, as almost all dishes contain meat or fish in some form or another. A well-balanced diet will ensure SALT/YAMEN participants stay healthy and strong throughout their MCC terms in Cambodia. Particularly while living with a host family, the expectation is that the SALT/YAMENER will eat the meals that have been provided. Keeping an open-mind and an open-palate while trying new Cambodian dishes and delicacies is advisable. Scheduled buses travel daily between Prey Veng and Phnom Penh. Bicycles are the main mode of transport at the disposal of SALT/YAMEN participants. On occasion, participants may need to ride in a tuktuk or on a motodop, both of which are readily available.

Ninety-five percent of Cambodians are Buddhist, 4% are Muslim, and about 1% is Christian. There are some churches in Prey Veng town, which participants are encouraged to attend. SALT/YAMENERS are expected to go with their host family to church or connect with an alternative Cambodian church. (If the host family is not Christian, the understanding will be that the SALT/YAMENER will regularly attend a local Christian church.)

Medical facilities outside of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are well below international standards and are absolutely not recommended. Medical care is continually improving in Phnom Penh. Recently, two Bangkok Hospital Medical Center-affiliated hospitals opened in Cambodia, providing reputable, basic care: one in Phnom Penh and one in Siem Reap. Additionally, there are a number of clinics with expat doctors. In the past, MCC volunteers have traveled to Thailand for more extensive and specialized treatments. Major health concerns in Cambodia are malaria, dengue fever, typhoid fever, and Japanese encephalitis. However, the most common illnesses are from food and water and bouts of diarrhea will occur occasionally throughout your MCC term. Most prescriptions can be filled in Phnom Penh.

There are many national holidays, which provide plenty of opportunities for visiting and exploring Cambodia. The Temples of Angkor near Siem Reap are a must-see and will give some perspective on the great history of art and culture of Cambodia.

### **Challenges:**

- COVID-19 remains unpredictable both at home, and around the world. MCC strongly recommends vaccination against COVID-19. Safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 are a vital part of prevention, by reducing individual risk of disease and risk of transmission to others. Vaccination is particularly important for those who are interacting closely with members of the community, those staying with host families, who are traveling, who live in contexts with limited healthcare resources, or who are at higher risk of serious disease. Proof of vaccination may be required in individual cases to fulfill job expectations, for example, if it is required for travel by an airline, a government requirement to enter a country, required by a local partner organization, etc.
- To prioritize wellness and limit risk to our participants and the local community from COVID-19, assessments of each task will continue on a regular basis. If an assignment is found to be no longer viable, we will do our best to help you secure an alternative assignment.
- Living with a host family can be challenging for young adults who have experienced independence. Most host families are very protective of both their biological and host children, particularly daughters. (For example, many host families do not feel comfortable if their host child is out past 8pm.) Patience, understanding, and mutual respect are needed as you navigate your life within a Cambodian family.
- Professional counseling and mental health services are limited. Professional physiotherapy is limited, and reputable chiropractic services are not available. Medical facilities outside of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are well below international standards and are absolutely not recommended.
- Finding appropriate spiritual support in this context may be a challenge. Some MCCers have found they need to seek additional spiritual nurturing and support outside of regular church attendance. Small groups and house churches are available and can help fill this need.
- MCC service workers have been able to form meaningful relationships with MCC national staff, Cambodian staff at partner organizations, their host family, and other Cambodians in general. These relationships can take time to foster, and in the meantime, you may experience significant periods of time alone. Learning Khmer will help to enrich relationships with Cambodian people and is an important tool for building deeper connections. MCC provides 60 hours of language study at the beginning of your term, and continued study after this is encouraged.

- Significant cultural/religious differences exist regarding gender roles, interfaith relations, stereotypes, etc.
- Generally, perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals are negative and more so in Christian communities. An LGBTQ+ Christian may face challenges in feeling supported in this context. Although, it is worth mentioning that nowadays it can be perceived how the mentality of the people is changing towards a greater acceptance of this community.
- Developing strong bicycle-riding skills will be imperative to the safety of the SALT/YAMENER, as a bicycle will be the main mode of transport provided for navigating the town.
- Corruption is rampant, and can be seen in daily life, but violence in Cambodia is rarely a problem and usually easy to avoid. Within Prey Veng town there is the occasional mugging or theft, but these are not usually violent. Participants should be diligent in keeping wallets, cameras, purses, backpacks, etc. under personal control; and, if possible, should avoid carrying these items after dark. Even in an office or house, participants should secure their valuable items. MCC can provide a locked cabinet, if needed, to store valuables.
- 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 gifts 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".

### **Benefits:**

For all SALT/YAMEN assignments, MCC provides:

- All basic needs related to assignment i.e., travel to and from assignment, food & household costs, housing, in-country transportation, etc.
- Modest monthly personal allowance
- Modest monthly worker care allowance
- Full medical coverage—no co-pay
- Educational loan reimbursement
- Vacation days
- Orientation and Re-entry Retreat costs
- MCC in-country meetings and retreat costs
- End-of-term benefits

*For more information, see [mcc.org/salt](http://mcc.org/salt) or [mcc.org/yamen](http://mcc.org/yamen)*