MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity

Assignment Title & Partner Organization: SALT/YAMEN: Food Security Project Assistant – DDS-NK

Term: August 17, 2021 – July 21, 2022
FTE: 1.0
Location: Kotido, Karamoja, Uganda
Date Required: August 17, 2021

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 serve with the Diocesan Development Services – Northern Karamoja (DDS-NK) assisting with the implementation of a Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Project. The participant will help to address gaps in the areas of documentation, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.

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 or Associate degree in International Development, International Agriculture or related field.
- Excellent English language skills, both written and spoken, required.
- Knowledge and/or experience in program monitoring and evaluation is an asset.
- Knowledge in agriculture, water, or peace programs and livelihoods is an asset.
- Ability to travel for long distances.
- Ability in navigating through complex situations.
- Willingness to learn about and speak in front of groups, students, communities on issues of peace, education, food security, hunger and related topics.
- Environment or conservation agriculture background required.
- Interest, knowledge and experience in community development programs.
- Willingness to work outdoors under harsh climate conditions (it’s a very dry area).
- Openness to learning the local language.

Assignment Narrative:

Diocesan Development Services – Northern Karamoja (DDS-NK) is implementing a Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Project which began in 2014 to build farmers’ capacity to be able to
produce enough food using the best agronomic practices of conservation agriculture, water and environmental conservation.

The SALT/YAMEN participant will support the DDS-NK project team as the Capacity Building Assistant to bridge the gap in the areas of documentation, reporting, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. This includes sharing knowledge on the basics of proposal writing, report writing, activity planning, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The participant will also be required to provide technical support, as necessary, as well as write reports and help monitor the Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Project.

Duties:

- Support in the documentation of the best practices during project implementation.
- Assist with the monitoring and evaluation of projects.
- Support the Project Coordinator to review reports on quarterly basis, both narrative and financial, to ensure quality reporting.
- Work with partner organization to develop project proposals, as opportunities arise.
- Work with MCC team members to develop monitoring and evaluation tools to be used for monitoring MCC related projects.
- Participate in MCC Uganda team meetings and events.

Location Description:

Kotido town gained municipality status in July 2016 and it’s a small town in north eastern Uganda. It is one of the districts among the seven that form Karamoja. Kotido town is 546 Kms from the capital city of Uganda, Kampala, which is where the MCC Uganda country office is located. It is also located 144km from Kidepo National Game Park. The population of Kotido district is over 200,000 people. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) estimates the population of Kotido town at over 22,500.

Kotido is a low-lying area with a minimum annual rainfall between 600-900mm. The area is hot during dry seasons (January-February & July) because it is along the equator and rainy during wet seasons (March-May & October-December). Kotido receives erratic and unreliable rainfall. A mixture of periodic rainfall and dry spells allows for one defined agricultural season.

The key staple foods in Kotido are posho from maize and sorghum, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, rice, and meat. Other local foods found in the rest of Uganda are available, except for intercontinental dishes.

Kotido has one sub-district health center managed by two medical doctors and seven Grade III Health Centers managed by clinical officers. There are modern hospitals and clinics in Kampala. More specialized treatment and services are available in Nairobi, Kenya.

Kotido is one of four districts in Uganda without electricity. Most people in the area use solar energy for lighting and for computer purposes. This should change in the next several months as a contractor is already working on connecting Kotido to the national grid. The internet is fairly stable, though occasional outages are common, especially during rainy season. The speed and bandwidth of internet is slower than what is available in the urban centers like Kampala.
Kotido town is a relatively safe town with no major security concerns. The police and army are available within the area and usually responsible for keeping peace and managing law and order. Before the disarmament exercise in Karamoja, the practice of cattle rustling provided major conflict among the different ethnic groups in the region. The region is currently peaceful. However, the participant is to avoid any political gatherings or demonstrations.

English is the main language of education and business in Uganda and Kotido and the work with partners would be done in English. However, many people, especially in the rural areas surrounding Kotido, do not know English and/or prefer to use their local languages such as Ngakarimojong, Langi and Acholi. Therefore, the participant is strongly encouraged to learn one of the local languages.

There are buses from Kotido to Kampala which travel daily. However, within town the major means of transportation are boda bodas (motorcycle taxis) and bicycles. Travelling outside town is also possible through taxi. Traveling to nearby communities may involve very muddy, dusty roads.

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.
- Extreme heat is experienced around the months of January and June. During the dry season, it can get very hot and dusty. There are heavy rains and occasional flooding during the rainy seasons.
- There may be limited contact with people outside of the local community.
- U.S./Canadian standard dental care not available but can be accessed in Kampala. Professional counseling and mental health services are extremely limited but can be accessed in Kampala.
- Malaria is endemic in this area, but it can be prevented by using malaria medicine, sleeping under a mosquito net, and using bug repellant.
- Electricity, water, and internet outages are common.
- There is heavy use of peanut products in daily food preparation.
- There is a common perception that foreigners have a lot of money, and foreigners are often presented with many requests for money and financial assistance. Current participants work with their host families and supervisors to determine the best way to respond to these requests.
- Openly LGBTQ+ individuals may find it challenging to feel supported by the local community and church who largely hold conservative views on issues related to sexuality. LGBTQ+ lifestyles are considered illegal. Support of or participation in such lifestyles can be dangerous.
- 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, inquisitiveness, 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".