

## **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: Health and Communications Assistant – WOI

**Term:** August 15, 2023 – July 13, 2024

**Date Required:** August 15, 2023

**Location:** Bujumbura, Burundi

**Project Theme:** HS Health Salt/Yamen

### **Job Synopsis:**

The SALT/YAMENer will serve alongside World Outreach Initiatives (WOI) assisting in the areas of health clinic management and communications. The participant will focus on improving the systems and daily management of two health clinics in Bujumbura. They will also assist WOI in the promotion, marketing, and content creation for WOI's website, social media, and other forms of public communication.

### **Qualifications:**

*All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith; actively participate in a Christian church or community; and dedicated to nonviolent peacemaking.*

*An invitation to an assignment is contingent on the successful completion of a criminal background check.*

- Post-secondary degree or current student in communications, marketing, public health, nursing, pre-med, international development, or another related field
- Fluency in English and willingness to learn Kirundi is required. French language ability is an asset.
- Interest in maternal and child health. Experience preferred, but not required.
- Aptitude for critical thinking, organization, and efficient systems.
- Strong computer skills, including website design.
- Knowledge and skills in photography, writing, website maintenance, and use of social media for promotional purposes.
- Demonstrated interest to work in the field of development or with marginalized communities.
- Respect for east-African culture, and willingness to learn and be flexible.
- Able to work with a team and learn from others.
- Ability to be creative and take initiative during slow times at work.
- Willingness to take chances and make mistakes.
- Strong interpersonal and communications skills.
- Able and willing to walk long distances, including hills.
- Strong self-care skills and healthy coping mechanisms.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Assist WOI to create an internet presence through the creation of a working website and social media platforms that highlight the work they are doing and have done for their community in Burundi.
- Accompany WOI at their Life Clinics, home visits, and visits to their Care Groups.
- Work with WOI to improve the management, organization, and functionality of their two Life Clinics in Bujumbura.
- Provide an outside perspective on the work that WOI is doing to help them better achieve their project goals in both the short and long term.
- Support WOI through ongoing challenges/opportunities in WOI's organizational structure and programming.
- Assist WOI in the development of project proposals and grant applications to diversify project funding.
- Actively participate in all planned MCC team activities and retreats.

There is flexibility in this role. A schedule of responsibilities will be developed in consultation with WOI and the MCC Representative to assist in any tasks that would be mutually beneficial for the participant and the partner.

#### **Assignment Narrative:**

World Outreach Initiatives (WOI) is a Burundian national NGO that started in 1998. They have served the country through many different initiatives including health and education sensitization, reconstruction and rehabilitation of base social infrastructure, health clinics, potable water, income generation, struggle against HIV/AIDS, peace, and reconciliation. WOI has had much success with their projects and support from multiple donors to complete their goals.

MCC has partnered with WOI since 2001. Some of the first MCC-funded projects were after the Burundian Civil War where they organized prayer breakfasts for national political leaders to facilitate dialogue and a way forward. In recent years, MCC has supported WOI to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Burundi.

WOI operates two community health clinics in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi. The two clinics are located near some of the poorest neighborhoods in the city.

WOI has now moved towards operating a Care Group model for distributing maternal and child health information to vulnerable populations. Information is disseminated down an expanding chain of community-based educators. Each of WOI's two clinics has a doctor on staff that acts as the coordinator of the program in their commune. Both doctors work with two health mediators who serve as Care Group supervisors. Each health mediator supervises 3 community. These community mobilizers promote targeted health information to the Care Groups.

Each Care Group is made up of 10 community volunteer leaders (total of 120 leaders are part of the project). Each leader is responsible to accompany a group of 10 female neighbors. The advantage of a Care Group is that information is contextualized and quickly disseminated to many vulnerable people. Each month, community mobilizers meet with their volunteer leaders to discuss what topics they will teach over the following weeks. The volunteer leaders then meet with their neighbor groups once per week to reinforce messaging and provide peer support.

WOI also operates a Radio Station that is broadcast across the country. They offer programs on several different topics including environmental protection, reconciliation, peace, development, health, and culture. WOI reports that their radio station is the 4<sup>th</sup> most listened to station in Burundi.

There is flexibility in this role and the participant will work with both WOI and MCC to assist in any other tasks that would be mutually beneficial for the participant and the partner. On a day-to-day basis, the participant will report directly to the National Director of WOI. The participant will spend most days working out of the WOI office located in the Kigobe neighborhood of Bujumbura. The participant will also travel with WOI to their Life Clinics and other site visits as directed by the organization. It is expected that travel for this position would occur approximately 30% of the time.

The SALT/YAMENER will be a full member of the MCC Rwanda and Burundi team. MCC has 6 partners in Burundi that work in the areas of agriculture, health, education, and peacebuilding. The MCC team in Burundi is made up of the MCC Representative for Rwanda and Burundi, three international service workers, and a national staff member. MCC Rwanda and Burundi also has three national staff in Rwanda. We hope to have one or two other SALT/YAMENERS in Rwanda and Burundi. The entire team usually meets in-person 2-3 times a year for team meetings and once a year for a partner gathering.

### **Location Description:**

Burundi is a small, densely populated, mountainous country located in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa. It is bordered by Rwanda, DR Congo, and Tanzania. The country experiences two seasons, a long rainy season from October to June, and a shorter dry season from July to September.

Bujumbura is the capital city located along the shores of beautiful Lake Tanganyika. WOI's offices are based in Bujumbura and most of their programming is also there. Bujumbura is a warm, bustling, yet small city.

Burundi has suffered from a history of ethnic based violence since they won independence from Belgium in the 1960s. Political coups, genocide, and lack of stability have greatly hindered Burundi's development. Currently the political situation in Burundi is stable as there were peaceful elections in 2020. The population is confident that the new regime will propel the country forward as they work to limit corruption and improve relations with the international community.

Burundi operates mostly in a cash-based economy, although it is slowly transitioning to mobile money. The economy is largely agriculturally based. There is little manufacturing, mining, etc. The main exports are coffee, tea, sugar, cotton, and hides. The exchange rate between Burundian Francs (BIF) and USD is approximately 2000:1. The SALT/YAMENER will need to become accustomed to carrying a large amount of bills.

Burundi does not have western-standard medical services. But there are several good hospitals in Bujumbura that can diagnose and treat most illnesses. For serious medical emergencies, MCC subscribes to an Air Ambulance service that will take patients to Nairobi within four to six hours of a phone call.

Burundi is a majority Christian country, with almost 90% of the population identifying as either Catholic or Protestant. Neither Burundi nor Rwanda has an Anabaptist presence or an MWC-

recognized church. There are many options for churches in Bujumbura with services in French, Kirundi, and English. Many services are also translated from one language to another.

MCC and WOI will work together to place the participant with a Burundian host family that will welcome them into their home. The lodging will likely be basic but comfortable. Homestays are a rich and important part of the SALT/YAMEN experience. The host family will be close to the WOI offices to limit the daily commute.

Bujumbura does not have a developed public transportation system. There are public buses, but they are often overcrowded and infrequent. Most people walk from destination to destination. Bikes, motorcycles and tuk-tuks were outlawed in Bujumbura in 2021 to help with traffic congestion.

The MCC Representative for Rwanda and Burundi is also based in Bujumbura. The MCC office is located right in the center of town, about a 10-minute drive from the WOI offices.

MCC Rwanda and Burundi also has an office in Kigali, Rwanda about 6 hours away by road. Rwanda and Burundi share a very similar language, culture, and history of ethnic violence. However, they are also very different. The similarities and differences are very interesting to study and the participant will have the opportunity to visit Rwanda and the MCC programing there during their term.

### **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.
- High levels of heat in Bujumbura especially when in direct sun and at high elevations.
- High levels of pollution from motor vehicle exhaust.
- High standard of dental care is not available. Local professional counseling and mental health services are extremely limited.
- Road transportation is extremely dangerous as the infrastructure is not built for the number of cars and pedestrians that exist in the country.
- Malaria and other mosquito-spread illness are present in Bujumbura, but services to prevent and treat those illnesses are widely available.
- Burundi does not have a large expatriate presence. Foreigners are rare especially outside of Bujumbura and often given a lot of attention and special treatment.
- Public spaces in Burundi are dominated by men. Women are generally not treated with the same level of respect as men.
- The poverty in Burundi is extreme and shocking. It is important that the participant practice self-care in the face of this challenge.
- Working among some communities sometimes generates frustration and confusion because of poverty, lifestyles, and ways of learning which may be different. It is expected that the

participant has patience and utilizes skills of active listening while they can gain the confidence and trust of the local community.

- The culture in Burundi is very conservative, both culturally and religiously. It can be dangerous for someone who openly identifies as LGBTQ+ as rights are not respected, and same-sex sexual activity is criminalized. Anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment is not uncommon.
- 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".

### **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)*