MCC SALT/YAMEN Service Opportunity

Assignment Title & Partner Organization: SALT/YAMEN: IT Intern – Young and Powerful Initiative

Term: August 17, 2021 – July 21, 2022
FTE: 1.0
Location: Kasese, 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 Young and Powerful Initiative (YAPI), an organization that primarily focuses on HIV and STD prevention as well as seeking to improve young people’s reproductive health. The participant will assist in building the capacity of the organization in terms of information technology.

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.

- Degree in information technology, computer science, monitoring and evaluation, result based monitoring, data management, statistics and any other technology studies (or current studies in one of these areas).
- Knowledge and ability in webpage design and maintenance.
- Vested interest in publication, information technology, computer science and any other technology related programs.
- Critical thinker and quick learner, able to work despite resource limitations and challenges.
- Flexible and adaptable, able to cope with lack of power, running water, or internet from time-to-time.
- Some background or interest in working with non-profits or in research and publication companies would be helpful but is not required.

Assignment Narrative:

The Young and Powerful Initiative (YAPI) is the development arm of South Rwenzori Diocese. South Rwenzori Diocese is part of the Anglican Church of Uganda, started in 1974 and located in Western Uganda, with a total of 7 Archdeaconries covering the entire Kasese district.
YAPI is one of the pioneer HIV/AIDS organizations in Kasese District (in Western Uganda) whose primary focus is to fight HIV and STDs and to improve reproductive health among youth aged 24 years and below. It is a nonprofit organization founded by the Anglican Church that maintains neutrality with regard to religion, political, tribal, and racial and gender inclinations while delivering services. It has been operating since 2000 with support from different development partners including Pathfinder International, UNFPA, PATH, PEPFAR, UAC, HIPS, SCiUG, Bantwana Initiative, NDI and Care international.

The vision statement of YAPI states, “A community with social economically empowered and productive youth of 24 years and below”. The mission statement of YAPI is, “To improve the health and livelihoods of the youth of 24 years and below through provision of friendly education rights protection, economic empowerment, family health, guidance and counseling services”.

The Information Technology Intern will work closely with the YAPI Coordinator to build the capacity of YAPI in the areas of data management, information sharing and publication as well as process documentation. The participants may be asked to help on day-to-day tasks and participate in other areas of YAPI’s programs.

**Duties:**

- Develop organizational brochures, fliers, information education and communication materials (IEC) and posters with YAPI key activities and massages.
- Development of client feedback mechanisms.
- Create informative communications materials to be disseminated amongst community members to inform them of YAPI-SRD activities and the various services available.
- Help to establish documents which outline a strategic plan for YAPI.
- Build the capacity of YAPI staff on how to develop a database for the organization.
- Help YAPI in designing website or managing YAPI webpage from the Diocesan website.
- Help in the publication of YAPI work as well as the South Rwenzori Diocesan work.
- Help in the development of monitoring and evaluation tools for different programs.
- Training staff on documentation, data management, analysis.
- Participate in staff on documentation, data management, analysis.
- Participate in MCC Uganda team meetings and events.

**Location Description:**

YAPI is located in Kasese Town, a medium-sized town of around 100,000 people in the western part of Uganda close to Queen Elizabeth National Park and the Rwenzori Mountains. It is about 6 hours’ drive away from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda where the MCC offices are located.

Kasese 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). However, it is composed of a mixture of periodic rainfall and dry spells that allow for two defined agricultural seasons.

The key staple foods in Kasese are matoke (steamed banana), cassava, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, rice, meat and fish from nearby Lake Edward and Lake George. However, because of booming tourism in the area, there are a number of intercontinental dishes prepared in hotels and restaurants.
Kasese has a district hospital and 4 sub-district hospitals and a number of private medical clinics around town. Equally, South Rwenzori Diocese owns Kagando Hospital which is the biggest in the district and other church health facilities managed by medical doctors in Kasese town which will be sufficient for common illnesses. However, for more serious medical conditions, there is Mbarara regional hospital and Buhinga hospital which are between 70-90 kilometers from Kasese. There are modern hospitals and clinics in Kampala, with more sophisticated medical treatment available in Nairobi, Kenya.

The SALT/YAMENer will live with a host family in a modern cement house with running water and electricity. Water, electricity, and internet are fairly stable, though occasional outages are common, especially during rainy season. The speed and bandwidth of internet is slower than what is available in North America.

Although the participant would have to be careful about petty theft, Kasese town is a 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. There are some tensions between different ethnic groups in the region which resulted in some skirmishes following the February 2016 elections. The region is currently peaceful though tensions remain, and the participant would be advised to avoid any political gatherings or demonstrations.

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

There are buses from Kasese 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 and traveling to nearby communities may involve very hilly, bumpy and/or strenuous travels.

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.
- Kasese lies on the equator, 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".