

## **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: Storytelling Assistant –RPC

**Term:** August 16, 2022 – July 15, 2023

**Date Required:** August 16, 2022

**Location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Project Theme:** ES Education Salt/Yamen

### **Job Synopsis:**

The SALT/YAMENER will serve alongside the Remember the Poorest Community (RPC) to help share the stories and the impact of RPCs work with orphans, vulnerable children, and women's empowerment groups that have had a tremendous impact on family livelihoods. The participant will document the history of the organization, investigate individual stories, take photographs, design publicity materials, and support RPC with good methods of knowledge management.

### **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.*

- Post-secondary degree in English, Communications, Graphic Design, or another related field.
- Strong Computer skills. Experience working with publishing software an asset.
- Ability to work in a relatively unstructured setting.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate well in a variety of settings and work both respectfully and professionally with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- Ability to adapt to new cultural norms and difficult settings regarding language, living conditions, and office resources (or the lack thereof).
- Self-motivated, able to creatively identify/create resources to promote and document the work of RPC.
- Ability to exhibit positive and healthy relationships.
- Good interpersonal relations and communication skills.
- Ability to work as part of a team and willingness to learn from others.
- Willingness to learn some Amharic or Afan Oromo, two of the languages used in the region.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Research and document the history of RPC as an organization, with an eye to storytelling.
- Visit beneficiary communities in Adama and Addis Ababa to speak with women and children, write up stories, their stories.
- Develop means to disseminate stories including printed material, publications, social media, and mainstream media.

- Be flexible to take on and engage in other opportunities for supporting the work of RPC, based on the skills of the candidate and the needs of the organization.

### **Assignment Narrative:**

Remember the Poorest Community (RPC) is a local Ethiopian non-governmental organization (NGO) that works in education as well as community development. RPC has their roots in the mercy ministry of the Mennonite church in Adama (the birthplace of the Meserete Christos Church in Ethiopia). MCC has supported RPC's kindergarten in Adama for the past 15 years. Other donors support additional preschool programs and women's empowerment programs, such as self-help savings groups.

The SALT/YAMENer will be based at the head office of RPC in Addis Ababa. The participant would work on resources to map and share the history of RPC. This will be done through collecting photos and stories of beneficiaries that demonstrate impact over the years of the organization's programs. The participant will also help develop brochures, annual reports, and other publicity materials. S/he would travel to Adama and to different beneficiary communities in Addis Ababa to interview participants. Based on the skills of the candidate, other capacity building activities relevant to RPC and its programs may also be explored.

The SALT/YAMENer will be accountable to the Executive Director of RPC. Relational, emotional, and other support will be provided by the host family and the MCC Ethiopia team.

### **Location Description:**

This assignment is located Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, home to approximately eight million people (and five million donkeys!). There are many buildings and roads being constructed and, increasingly, the capital has a modern feel. A light rail system crosses the city North to South and East to West.

There are many products available in Addis including a variety of locally grown and imported food, technology, and hygiene products. Imported items are quite expensive. There are several malls and English movie theaters. Bowling, laser tag, and a skate-board park are available. There is a riding stables nearby with decent horses. Gyms are available although the membership is high. There is a vast botanical garden and arboretum at the edge of town, as well as lovely hiking possibilities in the hills that circle the city, although caution is always necessary when leaving downtown. Vandalism to vehicles and robberies have been reported in the mountains so it is important to go with local friends. Personal safety in the city is generally good, although pickpocketing and petty crime are increasing.

Addis is situated in the mountains and, therefore, has very moderate temperatures ranging from 10C at night to 28C during the hottest months. The rainy season is from June – September (it rains reliably every day) with occasional rains the rest of the year, generally in February and March.

There are a number of English-speaking congregations in the city with a variety of worship styles. Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) services are held in Amharic.

Medical care to a Western standard is available at two recommended clinics in Addis. Dental care is adequate. Nairobi is a two-hour flight away and is recommended for major surgeries and/or medical issues.

## 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.
- Even with new 4G networks, internet is often very slow, and sometimes not available at all. Ethiotel is the government-owned provider but has recently sold minority shares to external companies which should improve the situation. Currently the government can and does occasionally shut off communications in the interests of political security.
- Water often comes to a neighborhood for several days a week, but not all the time. Most residences have a water tank so water to the house is continuous. If water runs out, it can be bought very cheaply and can arrive in quantity by truck or in small containers.
- Electricity infrastructure is old and inadequate in many places, and power rationing sometimes occurs during the dry season. Many places of work and residences have generators.
- While the countryside has good air quality, high levels of pollution (vehicle exhaust) exist in the city streets. Plastic trash is abundant.
- Gastrointestinal issues are common, especially in the first months as bodies adjust to new flora and fauna. Medicine is readily available.
- Amharic is a very difficult language to learn but is necessary for communication outside of the office environment. Most Ethiopians speak a bit of English, but not many are fluent.
- Political instability is a greater risk than theft or violence. However, Addis is generally safe even when other parts of the country are experiencing turmoil. The well-publicized violence in Ethiopia is still located far from Addis Ababa, though the impact of conflict is being felt in terms of economic hardship and massive internal displacement.
- Professional counseling and mental health are available but limited. If needed, on-line services with an MCC-recommended counselor might be a better fit than finding someone here.
- Ethiopia can be hard on a tender heart. Street kids and beggars are a common sight, and there is no shame in begging. Recently Ethiopia passed legislation to make living on the street illegal. If that is enforced, who knows what the fate of the street people will be. Large cities are full of animals, some for food, some for labor, and many simply strays. Often, they are abused or neglected. There are many NGOs that offer options to street kids and employment to beggars including RPC, but there is not much assistance for the animals. Exceptions are The Donkey Sanctuary in Merkato and the Addis Animal Project.
- Significant cultural/religious differences exist regarding gender roles, interfaith relations, stereotypes, etc.

- In Ethiopia, perceptions of LGBTQ+ individuals are almost universally negative, and more strongly so in Christian communities. An openly LGBTQ+ Christian would face significant challenges with acceptance in this context.
- 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)*