

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: YAMEN: Peace and Hospitality Assistant – Corrymeela

Term: August 16, 2022 – July 15, 2023

Date Required: August 16, 2022

Location: Ballycastle, Northern Ireland

Project Theme: PS Peacebuilding Salt/Yamen

Job Synopsis:

The YAMENER will serve alongside Corrymeela, a community that has over 50 years of working alongside fractured communities to address relational, societal, structural, and power dynamics. As part of their Horizons Program, the YAMENER will participate in a unique opportunity to live at Ballycastle Centre, assist with programming for groups with different backgrounds, and receive mentoring, coaching, and training to develop their skills in group work, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation.

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.

- Commitment to the ethos, values, and mission of Corrymeela is required i.e., some knowledge of their work and understanding of their mission and values.
- Experience working or volunteering in one or more of the following:
 - community development, *or*
 - youth work, *or*
 - peacebuilding
- Ability to communicate well with a people from a wide range of backgrounds, communities, and cultures is required.
- Demonstrable experience in group facilitation required.
- Ability to work on your own initiative is required.
- Ability to reflect and learn from experiences is required.
- Previous experience in a leadership role is preferred.
- Knowledge and understanding of Northern Irish history are an asset.
- Awareness of conflict transformation and resolution is preferred.

Key Responsibilities:

Key Tasks:

- Participate in Centre meetings and the rhythms of shared life.
- Assist Programme staff, facilitators, and group leaders in programme delivery.

- Learn to facilitate sessions for children and young people.
- Actively participate in preparation and debrief meetings for group's residentials.
- Assist and support in the hospitality and registration tasks for groups.
- Attend programme team meetings and trainings.
- Organise meetings, take notes, and provide administrative support as required.

Ballycastle Centre Program:

- Work with the Guest Relations Manager to deliver programmes within the Centre, working alongside youth and school groups, international universities, and community groups.

Community-based Program:

- Work with Program Managers to deliver programs in the Northern Irish community.
- Assist and support ongoing research and analysis based on the four programme areas:
 - Legacies of Conflict
 - Sectarianism
 - Marginalisation
 - Public Theology

As an MCC worker, the YAMENer is expected to:

- Communicate regularly with the MCC Ukraine Representative(s) and Connecting People's Coordinator for Europe.
- Attend all regional retreats and meetings planned by MCC Ukraine Representatives.
- Link with other MCC Advisory Committee in the region, using these ties to promote reconciliation and multi-ethnic cooperation as possible.
- Interpret the realities of the region to the broader MCC constituency through regular written reports and occasional articles for Mennonite publications.
- Develop connections with related local organizations and represent MCC through these interactions.

Assignment Narrative:

Corrymeela was begun in 1965 by Ray Davey, a former chaplain in World War II, and a group of students from Queens University. During the war, Ray was captured and incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp in Dresden and there bore witness to the bombing of that city. This experience profoundly changed him. He returned to work as a chaplain in Belfast and became concerned at the tensions brewing between people of different political, religious, and ideological differences in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela grew out of this concern. It began before "The Troubles and continues on after "The Troubles," promoting tolerance between people of differing backgrounds and beliefs. Corrymeela offers space for an analysis of the underlying dynamics of conflict, fracture, scapegoating and violence that we see across so many spheres of our world today.

In our increasingly divided world, Corrymeela is a movement of people rallied around one inspirational idea: 'Together is better'. Every year they welcome over 8,000 people from all walks of life to their beautiful Ballycastle home and into our programmes in communities around Northern Ireland.

Corrymeela works alongside people from youth and school groups, family and community organisations, faith communities and political parties. Group sessions use dialogue, experiential play, art, storytelling, mealtimes, and shared community to help groups embrace difference and

learn how to have difficult conversations. They work alongside visiting university groups as well as groups from other parts of the world who wish to learn from our experience and learn how to apply the Corrymeela lens to fractures in their own societies. This work helps groups learn how to work well together.

Corrymeela believes in the power of people telling their stories, of shared hospitality, of telling the truth about the present, of turning towards each other and finding strength, life, and hope in each other. Ultimately, the work of Corrymeela helps groups learn how to be well together.

Corrymeela deeply believes that everyone is welcome, whatever their background, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, or nationality. Their welcome statement is:

We welcome everyone — because together is better.

From programmes enabling young people to tackle sectarianism, to supporting survivors of racism and homophobia, we work relentlessly to tackle intolerance, hatred, and oppression.

We challenge injustice — because together is better.

As we hear each other's story, we learn how to live well with each other.

We change ourselves — because together is better.

And we'd love to welcome you.

Because Together is better.

The YAMENER will join the global volunteer team geared for young adult leaders who are interested in being exposed to the broad continuum of peacebuilding practices and services as part of a living/learning community. A core methodology is that the participants become part of a living/learning community.

For more information about Corrymeela, see: <http://www.corrymeela.org/>

The YAMENER will be supervised by the Volunteer Manager at Corrymeela and receive formal and informal pastoral support from staff, community members, and host families.

The point person for MCC support for the YAMENER is the Connecting Peoples Coordinator (CPC) for Europe based in Ukraine. While the YAMENER will live in a different country, they will have regular check-ins and be available if the need arises. The MCC Representatives for Ukraine will also be available as an additional level of support, as needed. Plans to join in a retreat in another location with other MCC staff will depend on developments around ease of travel related to obtaining visas and COVID-19 restrictions.

Location Description:

The Corrymeela Centre has over 50 years of experience working across community divides in Northern Ireland. Inspired in 1965 by Rev. Ray Davey, the original vision was to create opportunities for people to gather and experience a sense of community. These initial gatherings quickly grew into a movement of passionate young adult leaders who attempted to counter the sectarian tensions that eventually manifested into violence during The Troubles. Concerned by emergent extremism and the terror felt in urban areas such as Belfast and Derry, they established an "open village" near Ballycastle, on the northern most coastline of Co. Antrim (about 100 kilometers from Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland) where all people of good will could come to dialogue and learn together.

The YAMENER will be part of a group of volunteers at Corrymeela from around the world. Accommodation is provided on-site. The participant will share a bedroom with one other volunteer and will also share bathroom facilities. The Volunteers Building also contains other shared facilities, such as a kitchen, dining area, and TV lounge. Food will be cafeteria home-style meals (vegetarian options available).

There are daily prayers and Sunday worship services right at Corrymeela, which the YAMENER will be expected to participate in. The participant will also have a local Host Family to relate to, and church attendance with the family is expected. It is planned that they would also have support from the MCC Advisory Committee and alumni member's family living in nearby Holywood.

Very good health facilities are available and with the help of Corrymeela, the participant will be able to register with the local General Practitioner (doctor) at the Ballycastle Medical Centre.

Northern Ireland has a temperate or oceanic climate, with rainfall throughout the year and a narrow range of temperatures. It is significantly milder than some other locations in the world at similar latitude, due to the warming influence of the Gulf Stream. Winter temperatures reach 7°C daytime on average, falling to 2°C overnight. During summer, the average high temperatures are 18°C and low temperatures are 10°C.

Challenges:

- COVID-19 remains unpredictable both at home, and around the world. YAMENER is required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 with WHO approved vaccine. 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, 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 in community, in shared accommodation with other volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds, and varied experience of previous volunteering/shared living – some people you will be sharing with have never been away from home before, and some may have had a lot of different experiences around the world. Understanding each other's differences and 'showing up' for each other with intentionality is key to having a great year of learning and growth (and making some best friends!).
- Ballycastle Centre is busy, and the schedule is dictated by bookings for residentials and programmes by external agencies and organizations, the work can be incredibly busy one month and really light the next. We require people to be flexible and adaptable to the nature of our work.
- Significant cultural/religious differences i.e., gender roles, interfaith relations, stereotypes, etc. Corrymeela welcomes everybody from all walks of life and background. Being warm, welcoming, and celebrating our differences and our shared humanity is vital.
- West Europe is more expensive than many other regions where MCC has programming. The monthly stipend that MCC provides does not stretch as far as in other assignment locations.

- 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".

For more information, see mcc.org/yamen