

Developing Belief Network Request for Proposals: Large Grants Competition

The University of California, Riverside is pleased to announce a five-year research project: Developing Belief: The Development and Diversity of Religious Cognition and Behavior: Phase 1 (Project Directors: Rebekah Richert and Kathleen Corriveau). This John Templeton Foundation grant funds the development of the Developing Belief Network, a research initiative designed to bring together a network of scholars interested in cross-cultural study of the development of religious cognition and behavior. We seek proposals from individuals or teams interested in being inaugural collaborators in this network. The program of research will explore the development of religious cognition broadly, as well as focus on topics of interest to the global developmental science community. The network activities will be coordinated to investigate two general research questions:

1. How does the acquisition of religious cognition and behavior vary within and between populations? How is the acquisition of religious beliefs and practices facilitated and constrained by child-level developmental factors?

2. How does the transmission of religious cognition and behavior vary within and between populations? How do processes of social learning (e.g., testimony, text, instruction, imitation) support the development of religious cognition and behavior?

1. What is the Developing Belief Network?

The initial formation of the Developing Belief Network will consist of a minimum of 10 research teams, with the potential for 12 if there is available funding. In addition to the PIs (Richert & Corriveau), the network will be comprised of 8 to 10 additional research teams selected for subawards, and we anticipate a total of 12 to 24 unique research sites in the Developing Belief Network. Investigators will work across research sites over 5 years to develop a collaborative cross-cultural methodology, create culturally-validated measures, and collect data to contribute to a shared dataset on the development of religious cognition and behavior from children and families around the world. The Developing Belief Network will partner with Databrary to provide access to this rich dataset to the developmental science community broadly. The inaugural instantiation of the Developing Belief Network will be constructed through an open and invited RFP solicitation. Sites will be selected for their (a) demonstrated ability to collect developmental data and (b) representation of important dimensions of religious belief (e.g., supernatural agents, animism, atheism). Upon successful building of the research network and completion of the first round of data collection, we will apply for funding to expand the network to include multi-time point data collection (expanding the data set to be a semi-longitudinal data set on patterns of individual development over time) and new teams of researchers (expanding the cultural data set to incorporate even greater cultural variation).

2. What are the specific research questions of interest?

Broadly construed, the aim of the Developing Belief Network is to utilize collaborative measurement validation and data collection practices to measure basic developmental processes (especially, theory-of-mind, executive functioning, causal reasoning, beliefs about possibility, ontological reasoning, essentialism and concepts of the soul/spirit) as well as to gather information on diversity of religious beliefs and practices (e.g., supernatural agents, ritual practices, beliefs in magic and superstition).

Inaugural members of the Developing Belief Network will have the opportunity to shape the specific research questions that the collaborative network will address. Some specific processes and research questions of interest to the PIs and the John Templeton Foundation include:

- What are cultural variations in the development of folk theories? Do children need to have a foundational folk theory of humans or the physical world before they can develop concepts of supernatural agents or causes?
- How do cultural variations in religious concepts (e.g., beliefs about animism, the properties and functioning of spirit/life force/soul) relate to the development of ontological boundaries and the extent to which religious concepts are or are not minimally counterintuitive?
- How do natural and supernatural explanations develop to (co)exist in individual minds?
- How do cross-cultural and within-cultural variations in verbal, non-verbal, and textual information provided to children relate to children's concepts about and belief in natural and supernatural agents and causes?

Further information on the theoretical justification for these research questions can be found at <https://www.developingbelief.com/>.

3. Do I have to study religion to be a member of the Developing Belief Network?

No. We invite all scholars who have a research interest in the above questions and who have access to diverse populations of children to apply.

4. What is expected of members in the Developing Belief Network?

- a. Network members are expected to have an established site for data collection with children and parents at a location outside of the United States or with an understudied population within the United States.
- b. Network members will work with each other, the project leaders, and an advisory board to develop a collaborative methodology that can be used across the sites. At the kick-off workshop in Year 1, proposed methods will be presented to research sites. Site PIs selected through the RFP solicitation will be responsible for contributing culturally-relevant revisions/suggestions (e.g., names of supernatural agents, appropriate data collection methods with children), translation, and back translation of the methods for their research field sites. All measures will be piloted and finalized by the end of Year 2 so that data collection can begin in Year 3.

- c. All network members must commit to attending a kick-off meeting and 4 additional annual meetings. Site members will be asked to submit regular progress reports and be available for regular Skype or Zoom meetings.
- d. Network members must indicate their existing practices or plans to translate, back-translate, and culturally validate developmental tasks.
- e. Network members will be required to follow the guidelines set by the Project Leaders regarding open science practices, sharing of protocols (e.g., Study Swap procedures), and collaborative data sharing of key aspects of the collaborative data set.
- f. Network members will be expected to actively engage in dissemination of findings, through conference presentations and manuscript submissions.
- g. Network members will be asked to contribute content to a website devoted to this project. Content may include descriptions of their field site and lay summaries of key findings.

5. What is the timeline for Developing Belief Network Investigators?

Subawards should have a start date of **September 1, 2020** and an end date of **March 31, 2025**.

Year 1 (9/1/2020 - 8/31/2021):

- Fall 2020: Attend Workshop 1 to finalize collaborative research questions and tasks
- Winter 2021 - Summer 2021: Translate, back-translate, and revise tasks to be culturally-relevant; validate tasks; pilot tasks at site

Year 2 (9/1/2021 - 8/31/2022):

- Fall 2021: Continue to translate, back-translate, and revise tasks to be culturally-relevant; validate tasks; pilot tasks at site
- Winter 2022: Attend Workshop 2 & present validated tasks to Developing Belief Network; work with advisory board & network affiliates to finalize collaborative methodology; work with Databrary on developing collaborative data gathering and sharing procedures
- Spring 2022 - Summer 2022: First round of collaborative data collection at all research sites

Year 3 (9/1/2022 - 8/31/2023):

- Fall 2022: Continue first round of collaborative data collection at all research sites
- Winter 2023: Attend Workshop 3
- Spring 2023 - Summer 2023: Second round of data collection at all research sites; some sites will begin longitudinal data collection

Year 4 (9/1/2023 - 8/31/2024):

- Fall 2023: Continue second round of data collection at all research sites; some sites will begin longitudinal data collection
- Winter 2024: Attend Workshop 4
- Spring 2024 - Summer 2024: Begin third round of data collection at all research sites; some sites will continue longitudinal data collection

Year 5 (9/1/2024 - 3/31/2025):

- Fall 2024: Continue third round of data collection at all research sites; some sites will continue longitudinal data collection
- Winter 2025: Attend Workshop 5

6. Who Can Apply?

The Principal Investigator of the research site must have a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and be affiliated with an accredited college or university. Applicants should be listed on only one proposal for this competition. Site PIs will work together during the first year to decide on a shared number of tasks to be implemented across research sites, with translation and backtranslation, and validation in Year 2, and testing in Years 3-5 (see anticipated timeline below). Please note, the use of these funds may be subject to restrictions in OFAC sanctioned countries. Investigators should email PIs Richert & Corriveau with questions.

7. Subgrant Budgets:

Approximately \$4 million will be made available to fund 8-10 awards with a maximum request of \$500,000. The budget cap of \$500,000 is inclusive of overhead (indirect costs). The Templeton Foundation's maximum overhead allowable for these awards is 15%. We encourage proposals from a large pool of potential applicants, including teams of researchers who are capable of collecting cross-cultural data from a variety of religious communities to paint a broad picture of the development of religious cognition. Note that funding will be contingent upon appropriate documentation of IRB approval (dependent on country requirements), and approval of the research team.

8. What are *Required* Expenses?

Grant applicants are required to allocate some of their budget toward the following:

- Travel for the site PI to attend the kick-off meeting in La Jolla, CA, as well as 4 additional meetings (location TBA) to finalize the measurements and present on progress (1/year). [Lodging and meal costs will be covered by the large project grant.]
- Equipment for data collection. The collaborative methodology will involve developing a testing interface and links to networked data storage.
- A least \$5000 for fees associated with open-source publication.

9. What Are *Allowable* Expenses?

Grant applicants may consider allocating their budget toward the following:

- Salaries or contract stipends for research team members
- Compensation associated with participant recruitment
- Support for Research Assistants
- Statistical consulting
- Travel and lodging associated with field site data collection
- Equipment and materials costs
- Institutional indirect costs (Templeton caps indirect costs at no more than 15% of the budget).

10. Who Will Review My Proposal?

Proposals will be reviewed by the Project Directors Dr. Rebekah Richert (University of California Riverside) and Dr. Kathleen Corriveau (Boston University) and a Scientific Advisory Board composed of scholars from a variety of related disciplines:

- Dr. Karen Adolph (Psychology, New York University).

- Dr. Maureen Callanan (Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz).
- Dr. Rick Gilmore (Psychology, Pennsylvania State University).
- Dr. Paul L. Harris (Harvard Graduate School of Education).
- Dr. Deborah Kelemen (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Boston University)

11. Proposal Components

11a. Statement of Interest: In order to ensure Full Proposal submissions meet the goals of the Developing Belief Network, interested investigators will be asked to submit a Letter of Interest and Biographical Sketch for the Lead Investigator and other relevant project personnel (e.g., research site collaborators). All documents should be included in a single pdf submission.

(1) Letter of Interest: no more than 2 pages

- (a) Fit with project intent
- (b) description of the proposed research site (or sites) and an explanation for why that site would be particularly informative for the study of the development of religious cognition;
- (c) evidence of success in collecting data with children at the proposed research site (or sites), including IRB approval for data collection at the proposed site (or sites)
- (d) a short budget and budget justification

(2) Biographical Sketch(es): no more than 2 pages

- (a) Professional Preparation
- (b) Appointments
- (c) Personal Statement
- (d) Publications: 5 most closely-related to the project and 5 additional
- (e) Research Support
- (f) Synergistic Activities

11b. Full Proposal: For those invited to submit a Full Proposal, the Full Proposal will contain:

(1) Cover Letter: The cover letter should include:

- (a) Names and affiliations for all associated site investigators
- (b) Statement of commitment to attend annual meetings, submit required reports, and maintain regular contact with the Primary Investigators
- (c) Statement confirming history of IRB approval to collect data associated with the development of religious cognition (including feasibility to ask such questions at the site, and the possible risks associated with such topics) with children at all sites included in the proposal. Statement indicating a plan to follow participants longitudinally for at least 2 waves of data (ideally 3), and the possible risks associated with such a plan.
- (d) Statement confirming commitment to following the collaborative data collection, protocol sharing, data sharing, and publication practices determined by the PIs and Advisory Board.
- (e) To avoid conflicts of interest, we ask for confirmation that funding from this project will not be used to collect data for already funded projects (i.e., double dipping). To this end, we ask for a statement describing all current and pending research projects. We are especially interested in other collaborative work and

ask that the statement highlight a plan to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest, should they arise. We will utilize this statement to work individually with successful project teams to develop appropriate data sharing agreements.

- (2) Site Survey: For each site that is part of the proposal, investigators must complete the site survey (link on website). The site survey asks for the following information:
 - (a) General geographic information
 - (b) General demographic information (e.g., population size including number of children in proposed age range, educational attainment, economic status)
 - (c) Religious affiliation
 - (d) Specific religious/supernatural beliefs
- (3) Project Proposal: The main proposal document should be no more than 10 single-spaced pages and should address:
 - (a) Fit: The fit for the investigator(s) and associated research site(s) with the Developing Belief Network
 - (b) Site History: Summary of prior research conducted at the research site(s), including a brief overview of methods and measures, characteristics and numbers of participants, and citations to relevant publications
 - (c) Primary Research Questions: Which of the specific research questions (see Section 2 above) the investigators hope to address with their research. This section should include (1) a brief summary of the background literature that the investigators view as most relevant and (2) an explanation for how the research site(s) are relevant for the specific research question(s).
 - (d) Secondary Research Questions: Any research questions the investigator(s) think the Developing Belief Network is well-positioned to answer.
- (4) Budget & Budget Justification: See required and allowable expenses outlined in Sections 7 and 8 above. Consistent with guidelines set by the John Templeton Foundation, the budget should be broken into the following categories:
 - (a) Personnel (including benefits)
 - (b) Travel, Lodging, & Meal Expenses
 - (c) Data Collection & Analysis
 - (d) Equipment/IT/Software
 - (e) Open-Access Publication Fees
- (5) Curriculum Vitae (must include current and pending funding)

12. What is the Timeline for Review?

Webinars: January & February, 2020

Letters of Interest Deadline: March 15, 2020

Full Proposals Invited: April 1, 2020

Full Proposal Deadline: June 30, 2020

Final Decisions: August 1, 2020

Kickoff Workshop: November 12 - 14, 2020 (La Jolla, CA)

13. More information

- Website: Information on the goals and intent of the Developing Belief Network can be found at www.developingbelief.com. This website also contains brief white papers that outline the justification for the specific research questions that will guide the initial research goals of the network
- PIs invited to submit a full proposal are encouraged to reach out to Drs. Richert and Corriveau to arrange a skype or zoom meeting to discuss ideas. The goal is for all individuals invited to submit full proposals to submit the strongest possible case for their proposal.