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PEACE Grants–Request for Letters of Intent

Applications for the 2023 cycle open February 1

(Updated June 1st, 2022)

Research on contemplation offers a rich opportunity for understanding the mind and its capacity for change, and programs delivering contemplative training in various settings have expanded globally. Our knowledge of cognitive, physiological, and clinical effects of these practices has grown steadily, in large part due to the ongoing efforts of the Mind & Life Institute and our community of scholars. Expanding from awareness-based contemplative practices to the cultivation of virtuous, prosocial qualities and actions is clearly warranted to support not only individual well-being but also interpersonal well-being, societal flourishing, and human-earth connection.

Our mission has evolved in response to what we perceive to be a global crisis of disconnection: from loneliness and isolation to racism and tribalism, our disconnection from one another is causing tremendous suffering for people and the planet. Understanding the role of the human mind—both in creating these problems and in solving them—will be essential as we face today’s challenges. How do minds work, and how can they be transformed toward interconnection and positive action in the world?

To this end, Mind & Life is pleased to lead the development of this field through our PEACE Grants. This funding mechanism supports projects that advance our understanding of wholesome mental qualities and positive interpersonal and social action related to **Prosociality, Empathy, Altruism, Compassion, and Ethics (PEACE)**. Our use of the “PEACE” acronym is meant to encompass a range of wholesome characteristics, including gratitude, love, forgiveness, sympathetic joy, patience, and presence to others. With this program, we invite rigorous interdisciplinary research proposals that examine one or more of the following:

- practices, methods, or interventions that may **cultivate** PEACE qualities,
- **basic mechanisms** (psychological, physiological, social, developmental, etc.) underlying PEACE qualities and their growth, and
- the **development of measures** to rigorously assess PEACE qualities in various contexts (both in the laboratory and in the real world).

While projects do not need to have an immediate applied component, applicants should make clear how the proposed research could support positive action in the world. In addition, we have a special interest in funding PEACE projects within the following focus areas:

- **Personal Well-being**—Examining how to nurture positive emotions, including love, compassion, gratitude, and forgiveness, and the impact of negative emotions such as fear, anger, and anxiety in our lives.
- **Compassionate Communities**—Examining how the inner workings of the mind influence the formation of the views, behaviors, and social systems that separate us, and the role of contemplative practice in creating more compassionate communities.
- **Human-Earth Connection**—Investigating how the union of contemplative wisdom and science can lead to greater awareness of the interconnectedness of all life—and action—to support and sustain both individuals and the earth’s living systems.

In this context, “contemplative” approaches encompass a wide range of practices that involve introspection and awareness of mind-body states, including various forms of meditation, embodied or movement-based practices, reflective writing, contemplative prayer, and others. Note that projects do not need to include an actual contemplative intervention, but *the research must be able to inform the development of contemplative interventions, or increase our understanding of whether and how contemplative practice might promote PEACE qualities*. We encourage research proposals that work across traditional disciplinary boundaries, and use methodological approaches that meet the highest standards of rigor.

Grant Information

Two levels of funding are available through this program: up to \$25,000 and up to \$100,000 (USD). Grants will be awarded through a competitive application and selection process. Proposed research should be completed within a 2-year period, and annual progress reports are required for grantees to remain in good standing. Applications are reviewed by an external committee of experienced contemplative researchers and selected based on the following criteria:

- **Significance and Impact:** The project addresses an important issue related to mechanisms, cultivation, or assessment of PEACE qualities, and has potential to lead to advancement of contemplative research and positive action in the world;
- **Innovation:** The project offers something new or challenges existing paradigms, either conceptually or methodologically, or both;
- **Methodological Approach/Design:** Design, methods, and analyses are adequately developed, rigorous, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project;
- **Investigator(s) / Grant applicant(s):** The principal investigator(s) are appropriately trained and capable of coordinating and managing the proposed research, supported by a research team with complementary expertise, with high likelihood of success and future contribution to the field;
- **Research Environment:** The team has documented access to sufficient resources to carry out the research; , the project is supported by the host institution and community.

Research Values and Ethics

Mind & Life is committed to building a rigorous community of interdisciplinary contemplatives, scholars, and scientists that integrates diverse perspectives and experiences. Historically, contemplative research has been dominated by a largely racially and ethnically homogenous group of scientists, scholars, and practitioners from a handful of academic institutions. This homogeneity reinforces societal imbalances and biases, and diminishes the field’s capacity to adequately understand the human mind and investigate the mechanisms and impact of contemplative practices.

The PEACE Grants program is a natural extension of Mind & Life’s **mission** and reflects our commitment to leading the way in integrating rigorous investigation while also addressing larger societal issues with a **focus** in **anti-racism**. In line with our desire to expand the scope of our collective inquiry and begin to address existing imbalances, we encourage applicants to:

- practice sampling transparency by clearly describing participant demographics (including but not limited to age, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and education level);
- consider demographics of research staff, those delivering interventions, as well as participant populations;

- design ethical research protocols that take into account accessibility, cultural norms, and values of all involved;
- investigate research questions relevant to understudied populations—when care is taken to do so in a culturally responsive manner, and preferably with a community participatory design;
- consider the limits of generalization to other populations, and interpret any conclusions within the specific context of the study.

Eligibility

To be eligible to a PEACE Grant, the Principal Investigator (and Co-Principal Investigator, if there is one) must have completed a research doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD) and have sufficient training, experience and institutional resources to accomplish the proposed work. Mind & Life is dedicated to supporting increased diversity and inclusion in the field of contemplative research. We warmly welcome applicants from all backgrounds and identities; we are especially committed to supporting applicants from groups that are underrepresented in contemplative research.

Applicants to a PEACE Grant may not be actively funded through any Mind & Life research grant. Current Mind & Life research grantees must submit a final report and budget reconciliation for existing grants before applying for a new grant. Note that we do not allow two separate proposals in a given cycle from the same applicant (whether as PI or co-PI), or from different applicants for two aspects of the same project.

Application Information

Letters of intent must be submitted through the online application portal **between February 2 and March 2, 2022** (portal closes 5:00 PM Eastern Time on March 2). All applicants must submit a letter of intent to be considered for invitation to submit a full proposal.

The following elements will be required for the letter of intent application:

- Funding level you will be seeking (\$25,000 or \$100,000). Grant funds may be used to cover any research-related costs; salary and/or time buy-out is permissible.
- Project title
- Lay abstract (150 words maximum)
- Project description including:
 - Explanation of the overall aims of the research project (300 words maximum)
 - Brief description of the methodological approach, including (if relevant): population, procedures, and analysis (500 words maximum)
 - Significance and potential impact of the work, and relevance to contemplative sciences/studies (200 words maximum)
- Abbreviated CVs or NIH-style biosketches of key personnel (5 pages maximum per CV/biosketch)
- NOTE: In the online portal, the applicant's name must be the Principal Investigator on the grant—if you are submitting materials on behalf of another person, please create an account in her/his name.

Please read the *Grants Policies and FAQ* before preparing your application. During the PEACE grant application period, please visit the [online application portal](#) to start your application and review the forms **well before the deadline** to ensure a smooth process. **Applications missing any required materials or not following the instructions may not be reviewed.**

All applicants will receive email notification in [early June 2022](#) as to whether they have been selected to submit a full proposal. If selected to submit a full proposal, a detailed request for proposals (RFP) will be sent to you at that time. Proposals for the \$25,000 level will be 5 single-spaced pages maximum, and the \$100,000 level will be 10 single-spaced pages, each including figures, tables, and references (excluding appendices). Full proposals will be due July 29, 2022; grantees will be announced in November.



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