

## ESRC End of Award Report

**For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009**

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to [reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk) on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. We reserve the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

<b>Grant Reference</b>	RES-062-23-1613		
<b>Grant Title</b>	Becoming literate in faith settings: Language and literacy learning in the lives of new Londoners		
<b>Grant Start Date</b>	01/09/2009	<b>Total Amount</b>	£630,364.31
<b>Grant End Date</b>	28/02/2013	<b>Expended:</b>	
<b>Grant holding Institution</b>	Goldsmiths, University of London		
<b>Grant Holder</b>	Professor Eve Gregory		
<b>Grant Holder's Contact Details</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Email</b>	
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		<b>Telephone</b>	0207 919 7304
<b>Co-Investigators (as per project application):</b>		<b>Institution</b>	
Dr. John Jessel		Goldsmiths	
Dr. Charmian Kenner		Goldsmiths	
Dr. Vally Lytra		Goldsmiths	
Mrs. Mahera Ruby		Goldsmiths	

## 1. Non-technical summary

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by us to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

Faith communities are an important source of social and educational support for many families, especially those who have migrated to a new country. This project has investigated how sixteen children aged between four and twelve, from the Bangladeshi Muslim, Ghanaian Pentecostal, Polish Catholic and Tamil Hindu communities, become literate through faith activities in London. The children are active members of their faith communities, using different languages and literacy skills as they participate in faith activities in the Church, Mosque and Temple as well as in faith classes and their homes.

Findings from the project (see [www.belifs.co.uk](http://www.belifs.co.uk)) have revealed the remarkable scope and nature of learning through faith related activities in children's lives. Faith permeates children's everyday lives and underpins many language and literacy activities, fostering both bilingual and biliteracy skills. Children were found to learn together with their families as well as with the wider community and to practise both alone and with siblings and peers. Although practices and settings have changed across countries and generations, faith provides a thread of continuity whereby different generations share common knowledge, texts, symbols and narratives as well as common festivals and other ritual events. Crucially, it was found that becoming a member of a faith secures children's identities through a sense of 'belonging' to a community which comes together regularly and where belief in a more powerful and eternal being provides strong motivation to learn as well as one can.

## 2. Project overview

### a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to us. *[Max 200 words]*

Our aims and objectives were as follows:

1. to extend theoretical insights on literacy learning to the unique multilingual environments offered by different faith settings;
2. to investigate and analyse the scope and nature of faith literacy activities in which children participate at home and in faith settings;
3. to examine the impact of faith literacies on the shaping of participants' identities across different generations;
4. to develop collaborative ethnography through a range of shared activities;
5. to provide guidelines informing practitioners and policy-makers on children's literacies in different faith settings.

### b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with us. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

The project benefitted from the following changes: i) We increased our sample from 12 (3x4) to 16 (4x4) families, allowing for attrition over 3 years. However, no family left the project and we decided to analyse data from the whole sample; ii) An academic member of our Advisory Group recommended the purchase of Flip cameras (simple video cameras) for each family to film home activities. We purchased these in addition to camcorders for use by the researchers. They were highly successful and allowed the filming of informal home learning events for analysis; iii) The resulting much larger body of video rather than audiodata to edit and sub-title led to a request for an unfunded extension of 6 months, granted by the ESRC; iv) Olga Barradas, a postdoc with expertise in quantitative as well as qualitative methods, assisted in the preparation of comparative graphs; v) a web-site was produced by Zahir Rafiq (community artist) to disseminate children's art work, films and photos from the project ([www.belifs.co.uk](http://www.belifs.co.uk)); vi) SHAREPOINT was not used; instead we used Ning as a social networking programme to share data.

### c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max 500 words]

Particular sensitivity is required of researchers entering faith settings, as detailed in '*Translating Faith*' (see outputs: *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* and RDI meeting). Collaborative ethnography was developed: i) *Between the 11 team members*: the team met fortnightly throughout the project to exchange ideas on field-work, data collected, comparisons between groups and any ethical issues arising. Importantly, all team members visited the four faith settings, afterwards writing extended narratives including questions for the appropriate researcher; ii) *With families and an older person*: As co-researchers, families filmed, audiotaped and photographed children engaged in faith activities at home and older members of each community shared their life-histories with the children; iii) *With faith teachers and faith leaders*: These important mediators shared the activities and history of their setting with the research team and Advisory Group, discussing issues of faith related to migration as well as their own faith history. Close collaboration meant any ethical concerns were discussed immediately. One family did not permit the use of video and we presented audio recordings accompanied by photos of artefacts from the research site. Collaboration also informed the selection of our sample. We discussed the proposal from its inception with faith leaders, chosen because they represented 4 large communities new to London. All were interested in participating. For Phase 2, faith leaders and teachers helped us choose sixteen children (4 from each community), 2 boys and 2 girls across the age range from 4 to 12. All families were keen to participate.

Within this approach, analysis was continuous throughout the project, informing new data collected and how we interpreted it. Involvement of families allowed access to more intimate data ethically, since parents themselves filmed and gave us episodes for analysis. For example, families photographed faith artefacts alongside everyday household items which we would not have seen; they made films of their children praying at bed-time as well as listening to faith-related bed-time stories; they filmed important faith rituals at home, such as the Pongal (Harvest) festival celebration in one Tamil Hindu family or the Christmas Eve prayers or Easter celebration in Polish Catholic families. Hence, use of Flip cameras (see 'Project Changes') enabled us to acquire unexpected visual data which became important evidence showing how faith permeated everyday life. Scrapbooks and mindmaps made by children containing very personal photos, narratives and poems also reinforced this idea. Different types of data therefore addressed our question on the importance of faith to children's developing identities. In this way, data informed, extended and questioned theory throughout the study.

Our final analysis was multi-layered. Using examples from all our different data collected (field narratives, interviews, mindmaps, scrapbooks, photos and films of activities at home and in faith classes), we wrote detailed accounts of faith literacy practices and case-studies of each child. Tables were compiled detailing activities in terms of scope, type of activity, frequency, interaction patterns, language use and skills/knowledge learned for each child. From these categories graphs highlighted indicative similarities and differences between groups.

#### d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on the ESRC website. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

Faith permeates the lives of many children, weaving a thread through their languages and literacies, narratives, social, cultural and moral learning as well as their artistic and aesthetic knowledge. Paradoxically, research into faith as a mediator of learning remains extremely limited, perhaps because it is considered a private and intimate part of family life. This study has uncovered a remarkable breadth and depth of learning effected through faith in the lives of 16 children living in London ([www.belifs.co.uk](http://www.belifs.co.uk)).

Across all settings, we identified and examined important overlapping themes: beauty and emotion; the learning of skills and knowledge; syncretism and intergenerationality, continuity and belonging:

- i) Beauty and emotion infuse learning in the places of worship, and learning is multimodal and multisensory. Children regularly perform music, mime, dance and text recitation which become part of their bilingual repertoires (see output '*Practice, Performance and Perfection*'). Faith is steeped in symbols which children learn in the faith classes, alongside the history, culture and stories of their heritage country. Children learn by participating in celebrations and rituals then enacted in their sociodramatic play.
- ii) The learning of languages and literacies is interwoven with artistic, aesthetic, social, cultural and moral learning. Children learn a range of formal oral and written texts with difficult lexis, complex narratives and intricate rituals where high expectations demand mature behaviour and performance; simultaneously, they act these out in a supportive environment, rehearsing texts and concepts with parents or through sibling play. We argue that faith is thus 'imbibed' rather than formally learned, yet its structure means that faith activities provide a bridge between the informal early learning of the home and the formal learning of school.
- iii) Children syncretise aspects of culture from both their heritage and London worlds. Although faith itself offers a body of permanent texts, rituals and traditions, our study shows how children draw upon different languages, literacies and narratives as well as the internet, other media and their own experiences to make *personal* sense of these (see output: *Syncretism as a creative act of mind*). This is illustrated through children's mind maps revealing complex interwoven aspects of school, home and faith in their everyday lives ([www.belifs.co.uk/children](http://www.belifs.co.uk/children)).
- iv) Faith activities link generations, providing recognition of the expertise of older people who mediate the heritage language, history and culture. At the same time, children transform their heritage tradition, using new media to interpret their faith.

Our work advances knowledge in the areas of socialisation and the mediation of learning. We question existing dichotomies between informal home and formal school learning; in their faith classes children learn a formal body of knowledge within a moral frame, yet they become part of a large 'family' of worshippers. For communities new to London, faith provides an 'anchor point', giving children a sense of security and belonging with which to face new worlds. We are designing a Knowledge Exchange proposal to investigate this aspect with other faith communities and schools. A book *Faith Literacies and Children's Learning* has been agreed with Routledge.

### **e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)**

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. [Max. 200 words]

The project has contributed to the ESRC funded Researcher Development Initiative (RDI) 2010-2013 *Researching multilingualism, multilingualism in research practice* (RES- 046-25-0004 £80,000. A Regional Development Day was hosted at Goldsmiths on Research Methods in Faith Settings (March, 2012). This extended knowledge into research methodologies in sensitive settings which was later published in 'Translating Faith: Field narratives as a means of dialogue in collaborative ethnographic research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2012, 11 (3): 195-213.

## **3. Early and anticipated impacts**

### **a) Summary of Impacts to date**

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on the Research Outcomes System (ROS). This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max. 400 words]

Our work is achieving considerable academic, societal, community and individual impact:

*Academic impact:* New scientific knowledge has been developed in the areas of early socialisation in cross cultural contexts, faith as a significant cultural practice in promoting young children's learning and syncretic learning in migrant communities. Methodologically, the work has offered new insights to collaborative ethnography in sensitive settings. Work has been disseminated widely through key-notes at the National Family Literacy Conference, Edmonton, Canada, 2010; the Literacy Research Association, Jacksonville, US, 2011; the Research Group on Literacy and Nutrition, Sao Paulo, 2012 and 2013; the University of British Columbia, Canada, 2013 as well as through conference papers in the UK, Singapore, France, Spain and Norway. A podcast is in *Language Arts* and a Vimeo film on Youtube. Additionally, methodological insights have been disseminated at the ESRC Research Development Initiative Regional Training Day (see outputs). Academic journal articles have been published in the *International Journal for the Sociology of Language*, the *International Journal of Qualitative Research Methods* and the *Journal of Early Childhood Education* (see outputs). Two research assistants have started PhDs in our Department on issues related to the project and a third research assistant completed her PhD during the project. Work is also being used for MA and doctoral training sessions.

*Societal, community and individual impact:* Impact has been achieved on societal, community and individual levels. On an individual level, faith teachers have taken forward ideas developed during the project, for example on intergenerational work as well as scrap-books made by parents and children.

Families, who reported an increased awareness of the skills displayed by their children, have received our report of findings distributed to all the communities and accessed our web-site ([www.belifs.co.uk](http://www.belifs.co.uk)) showing the activities. On a community level, our three Advisory Group meetings and Celebration Day drew together faith leaders and teachers as well as families from the four communities to discuss commonalities and differences in their children's learning. All communities expressed appreciation shown through their letters of support for a future Knowledge Exchange project. On a societal level, our Report for Communities has outlined guidance for policy in recognising children's faith learning and our work has attracted articles in the local press, thus contributing to wider social cohesion through interfaith activities.

*Future plans:* an ESRC seminar series Religion and Language, a Knowledge Exchange proposal and a book Faith Literacies and Children's Learning (Routledge) will be written.

#### **b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts**

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

We form part of a team application for an ESRC seminar series *Religion and Language* (decision pending) and an AHRC research network *Heavenly Acts* (under preparation). A Knowledge Exchange proposal for submission to the ESRC with the Schools' Section of St. Paul's Cathedral is under discussion. Our aim in the proposal will be to disseminate our findings on children's learning to other faith communities, to teachers and future teachers. Letters of support from families, faith leaders and teachers from all communities have been collected to support a Knowledge Exchange project which would be an excellent opportunity to increase our impact on society, communities and individuals. Our web-site is being updated as appropriate. On an academic level, a paper will be presented at the International Symposium on Bilingualism, Singapore, June 2013. A further paper is in preparation on the role of faith in early socialisation. A book *Faith Literacies and Children's Learning* (Routledge) is in preparation and a proposal for an edited collection: *Investigating Language, Literacy and Identity: International Perspectives* is being planned. A podcast is in preparation for pod academy and talks disseminating findings from the project to practitioners at both the British Museum and St. Paul's are planned.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

#### **4. Declarations**

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are **not** required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

**A: To be completed by Grant Holder**

Please read the following statements. Tick **one** statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section (this should be an image of your actual signature).

**i) The Project**

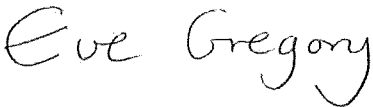
This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

**ii) Submissions to the Research Outcomes System (ROS)**

Output and impact information has been submitted to the Research Outcomes System. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.   
**or**  
This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to the Research Outcomes System as soon as they become available.

**iii) Submission of Data**

Data arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the UK Data Service.   
**or**  
Data that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the UK Data Service has been notified.   
**or**  
No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.

  
**Signature:**  
**Name: Professor Eve Gregory** **Date: 14 May, 2013**



B: To be completed by Head of Department, School or Faculty  
Please read the statement below then sign with an electronic signature to confirm your agreement.

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts.

Signature:



Name: Professor Ken Jones

Position: Head of Department

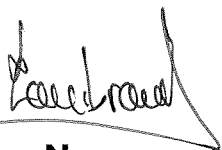
Date: 14 May, 2013

C: To be completed by Finance Officer of Grant-Holding Research Organisation

Please read the statement below then sign with an electronic signature to confirm your agreement.

ESRC funds have been used in accordance with the ESRC Research Funding Guide. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

Signature:



Name: José Zambrano-Navarro

Position: Research Finance Manager

Date: 13/05/13