

## **Guidelines for PhD fellowships from Kindness for Kids foundation in collaboration with EuroBioBank and RD-Connect**

By awarding a PhD fellowship Kindness for Kids aims to motivate highly qualified students to advocate for basic research in the area of rare pediatric diseases. In Europe, there are estimated over 7 000 rare diseases with only about 70 designated orphan drugs to fight them. 30% of the affected children do not reach their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. This emphasizes the urge for more treatments. 80% of rare diseases are of genetic origin. Modern genetic techniques have unraveled mutations in different genes underlying various diseases. This is the first step in tackling a rare disease. Kindness for Kids wants to intervene at a later step. With this fellowship, Kindness for Kids aims to fund a PhD project that uses an in vitro experiment to help develop a new treatment in the area of rare pediatric diseases. **For the project to be eligible, patient biomaterials from EuroBioBank and/or RD-Connect should be used in the study.**

### **Requirements:**

- The PhD project should develop or test a new treatment, identify therapeutic targets or employ a screening platform in the area of rare pediatric diseases using in vitro experiments.
- The experimentations of the PhD project must be to a major extent based on samples from a biobank associated with EuroBioBank and/or RD-Connect. Further collaborations with these two initiatives are strongly encouraged. (For usage of samples please check with the relevant biobank or organization prior to submission. However, we do not expect a formal approval process at this stage.)
- The fellow must have successfully completed his Bachelor or, more preferably, his Master degree in biology, biochemistry, medicine, molecular biology, physiology or similar field by July 2015 and not longer than one year ago by the time of application.
- The fellow has above average study achievements.
- The PhD study will be conducted at a first class host institution located within the European Union.
- The fellow must have an established investigator at the host institution as a sponsor for the PhD project.

### **Endowment of the fellowship:**

- The fellowship consists of € 1.750 (or currency equivalent) stipend per month for a total of three years. Tuition fees are not covered within this fellowship.
- The fellow should engage in teaching activities (e.g. 2 hours per week per semester).
- The fellow cannot accept additional funding.
- The sponsor obtains a onetime fund of € 5.000 for material and travel expenses associated with the PhD project.
- The fellowship will be paid to the host institution in three installments. The first installment will be provided at the beginning of the funding period. The following two installments will be paid upon the receipt of an annual activity report at the beginning of year two and three, respectively.

### **Application:**

Following documents are required:

- Detailed research plan composed by the applicant [title, name of applicant and sponsor, summary and goals (1/2 page); introduction / current state of research, planned experiments (3 pages), timeline (table, 1 page)]
- Statement of support from sponsor at the host institution (max. 2 pages)
- CV of sponsor and applicant (2 pages per person)
- List of most important publication from sponsor (max. 1 page)
- Most important publication or Bachelor or Master thesis from applicant

- Certificate of highest scientific degree of the applicant or an academic transcript from your degree if you are due to complete in July 2015
- Contact details of three references for the applicant

Scientific qualification of the applicant will be evaluated by means of the following criteria:

- Scientific background and current scientific achievements (determination, interdisciplinary approach, scientific productivity)
- Uniqueness and innovative potential of the project proposed (importance for the advancement of the research area, solid evidence for choice of research methods, possibility for scientific advancement, clear focus and feasibility within the proposed timeline and location)
- International collaboration
- Future potential of the applicant (scientific potential, scientific advancement, career perspectives).

The application has to be submitted in English. Page numbers are based on: font type Times New Roman, font size 12, single-spaced line pitch. The documents have to be emailed as pdf attachments by **June 15th 2015** to Dr. Julia Barske (j.barske@kindness-for-kids.de). The receipt of application will be confirmed via email. The applicant is responsible to supply all documents required. The application will be reviewed by a scientific committee. The three final candidates will be interviewed. Results will be announced by end of August 2015.

*Kindness for Kids: Kindness for Kids, a charitable foundation for children with rare diseases, has been founded in 2003 aiming to improve the health care and quality of life for children living with a rare disease. Kindness for Kids supports children and their families by organizing vacation trips and camps throughout Germany, where children and parents are able to gather new forces to face the daily challenges of a life with these often devastating illnesses. In addition, Kindness for Kids promotes and supports medical research targeting rare diseases. The funding program including awards and fellowships focuses on basic and health care services research. More information can be found on [www.kindness-for-kids.de](http://www.kindness-for-kids.de)*

*EuroBioBank: The EuroBioBank network is the first operating network of biobanks in Europe providing human DNA, cell and tissue samples as a service to the scientific community conducting research on rare diseases. It is the only network dedicated to rare disease research in Europe. About 130,000 samples are available across the network and can be requested via the online catalogue. Approximately 13,000 samples are collected each year and 7,000 samples distributed in Europe and beyond. The biological samples are obtained from patients affected by rare diseases, including rare neuromuscular disorders. More information on EuroBioBank can be found via the website [www.eurobiobank.org](http://www.eurobiobank.org)*

*RD-Connect: RD-Connect is a global infrastructure linking up data from rare disease research projects in a central resource for researchers across the world. It has developed an integrated platform in which omics data is being combined with clinical phenotype information and biomaterial availability, accessible online and queryable with a suite of analysis tools. By developing robust mechanisms and standards for linking and exploiting existing data and research results as well as data generated in new research projects, RD-Connect will support rare disease research worldwide. More information on RD-Connect can be found via the project website [www.rd-connect.eu](http://www.rd-connect.eu)*