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We’ve Come a Long Way:
Part 1, Meeting the Breastfeeding Experience Prerequisite, Then and Now

Lesley Robinson, LAD Council

As Leader Accreditation Department representatives, we are often concerned about the number of mothers who might be able to meet the prerequisites to applying for La Leche League leadership. We seek to be inclusive and may worry that the prerequisites might preclude leadership for many enthusiastic breastfeeding mothers. Is leadership open to enough mothers? Should our prerequisites be revised to reflect the realities of 21st century life?

Let’s take a look specifically at the breastfeeding experience prerequisite. How many women would have met this prerequisite when the Founders first saw the need for La Leche League in 1956 and how does that compare with the current situation? It is challenging to find statistics on breastfeeding in the 1950s. Of the information that can be found, much is anecdotal, based on mothers’ recollections. According to the information on the history of LLL on the LLLI website, breastfeeding rates in the USA had dwindled to around 20% by the time LLL was founded in 1956. With a mere 20% of all mothers initiating breastfeeding and little information available for them, the number of those who breastfed exclusively for six months and gradually introduced solids, continuing to breastfeed for a full year, must certainly have been small. The Founders of LLL were indeed pioneers who followed their hearts in a world where the mainstream just didn’t get it. The prevailing attitude in the 1950s was that breastfeeding was for the uneducated, who could not afford formula.

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care by Dr. Benjamin Spock was first published in 1946. Over the following decades the book came to be second in sales in the USA only to the Bible. In early editions of his book, Dr. Spock emphasised the value of breastfeeding only for nutrition. Even so, he offered a lot of encouragement to bottle-feeding parents and even gave a recipe for homemade formula based on evaporated milk and sugar. Breastfeeding had become a lost art and mothers were routinely advised to nurse on a bottle-feeding schedule rather than following the baby’s cues. Little wonder many of those who began breastfeeding were quickly undermined by well-meaning, but erroneous advice and soon gave up, thinking their milk wasn’t plentiful or good enough to meet the needs of their babies.

Let’s fast-forward to 2014. A Google search for breastfeeding information yields pages and pages of results. There are countless breastfeeding blogs, Facebook pages and Tweets. Breastfeeding “products” abound and breastfeeding has become fashionable. Stylish, educated and affluent mothers are choosing to breastfeed. In addition to all the information and encouragement that is available through the Internet and social media, health care and government authorities all over the world now strongly recommend breastfeeding. Mothers are urged to consider the health benefits to themselves as well as their babies and attention is now also paid to the emotional and psychological benefits of breastfeeding. The World Health Organisation (WHO) asserts that breastfeeding is the normal way to feed a baby and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) stresses the fact that breastfeeding is not only beneficial, but saves lives. There is even backlash from mothers who feel pressured to breastfeed.
The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publishes an annual Breastfeeding Report Card for the United States. According to last year’s report card, 76.5% of all U.S. mothers now initiate breastfeeding, with 16.4% exclusively breastfeeding at six months and 27% still nursing at one year. This yields a much larger pool of US mothers potentially meeting the breastfeeding experience prerequisite now than would have been possible in 1956. According to the WHO, figures are more encouraging in many countries. Even in countries where LLL has a limited presence, there are mothers who meet the breastfeeding experience prerequisite.

With these statistics in mind, it is clear that we have come a long way since 1956. The reality of 21st century life includes the fact that breastfeeding is once again becoming the worldwide norm, with a high proportion of mothers nursing exclusively until there is a nutritional need for other foods, about the middle of the first year and many continuing to nurse well beyond the baby’s first birthday. There is an increasingly large pool of mothers who meet the breastfeeding experience prerequisite.

Lesley Robinson lives with her husband, Mark, in Ottawa, Canada. Their three grown children, Kate (born 1985), Alex (1987) and Will (1989) have flown the nest. Lesley was accredited in 1987 and has been a LAD representative since 1991. She is currently a member of LAD Council.

How Would You Respond

Here is an extract from a Leader, written to the LAD representative about an application for leadership which was not accepted. Three sample responses have been compiled, based on discussion on LADialogue. There is no single right answer. Sharing our own possible approaches can help us to consider a variety of ways to respond. Special thanks to Lupe Forsang (CLA Pacific Horizons, USA/ RALA LAD West), Peggy Moran (ACLA, Eastern Pennsylvania, USA), Gorana Đergović (ACLA Croatia) and Eileen Harrison (ACLA France) for their contributions.

Dear CLA,

To be honest, I’m quite shocked that there wasn’t more questioning involved before coming to the decision to refuse Cathy Candidate’s application. She is an excellent candidate and is as present as she can possibly be in her situation. It’s true that her boys are in daycare for ten hours each day, and while I agree wholeheartedly that they need their mother and that the situation isn’t ideal, she just cannot financially afford to work part-time. I find it’s discriminatory to refuse her because of her financial situation. I know that many parents say they “have to” work, but can afford a big mortgage and vacations. However, this is not Cathy’s situation.

I know many Leaders who work—even full-time—and are accredited/have been accredited in the past. Other Leaders who know Cathy have expressed surprise at this decision because they know her to be a strong advocate of attachment parenting and breastfeeding.

Frankly, I’d like this decision revoked. I do understand the importance of our philosophy and of having harmonious discourse among Leaders, but I feel that the questions asked were not sufficient to determine Cathy’s mothering philosophy.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Lucy Lenard
Leader
Dear Lucy,

I am very sorry to hear how deeply disappointed you are that Cathy Candidate’s application for leadership was not accepted. This decision has evidently come as a big shock to you, and again, I’m very sorry about that. You would have liked us to explore certain aspects of Cathy’s experience more fully, and perhaps ask some different questions. As Cathy’s recommending Leader, you have witnessed her mothering firsthand, and you thought you had identified a mother who met the prerequisites and could go on to become an LLL Leader. Maybe it feels as though your own judgment and knowledge of LLL are being questioned. At the very least, you think there should have been more opportunity for Cathy to show how she meets the LLLI Prerequisites to Applying for Leadership.

Before reaching this decision, I consulted with my LAD support person and together we worked out some ways of inviting Cathy to share more of her experience. We appreciated the support you gave us by having some additional dialogue with Cathy and sharing her responses with us. You might find it helpful to read the following articles. These articles remind us of what we need to look for in a candidate’s experience of mothering through breastfeeding.

- Mothers Who Experience Separation from Baby: How to Determine Whether a Possible Applicant Meets the Prerequisites http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvjunjul04p64.html
- When the Answer is ‘No’ http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvaprmay00p26.html

If Cathy believes that she does indeed meet the prerequisites, she can appeal the decision. If she were to decide to do so, she would need to provide new information that has not yet been considered to show that she meets the prerequisites. I would be happy to discuss this with her further if she would want to do so.

Lydia Lamb, LAD

Dear Lucy,

Thank you for letting me know how you feel about the decision not to accept Cathy Candidate’s application. I’m so sorry to read that this came as such a shock and that you believe it was discriminatory to refuse her application because her financial situation contributed to the choices she had to make. You strongly believe that Cathy is an excellent candidate, and you think that if she had been given more opportunity to discuss her situation with a LAD representative, her application would have been accepted.

There is no doubt that Cathy has had to make difficult choices while being the best mother she can be: she is the expert on her children and evidently very aware of their needs. You and your co-Leader are supporting and affirming her experience of mothering through breastfeeding, and this is clearly something very valuable to her. It saddens Cathy enormously that she needs to work such long hours, and is thus separated from her young children as much as ten hours a day, five days a week.

LLL is different from other organizations because of LLL philosophy, which every Leader demonstrates in her life. It is so precious to have such a philosophy—we share it with other mothers by our actions as well as our words. Our choices help us gain awareness of what the concepts say to us, taken separately and all together. When considering a mother’s application for leadership, we look at her experience, as well as her understanding, of each of the concepts. We look for evidence that her experience reflects LLL philosophy. When it comes to the concept, In the early years, the baby has an intense need to be
be with his mother which is as basic as his need for food, it is important that the mother has met her child’s need for her presence, not just her milk.

We recognise that the concepts are guiding principles which remind us of a child’s basic needs, rather than some kind of idealised perfection. We use the concepts to guide our consideration of each application. It is true that there are some Leaders who work, and they may have been working when they applied for leadership. Each mother’s experience is bound to be different from every other mother’s, and this is taken into account with every application. However much we might feel for a mother’s circumstances, it is not relevant why she is separated from her baby; what is relevant is what she does in order to meet her child’s need for her presence. Unfortunately, a mother may not have the flexibility at her place of work that she would wish for. It may be difficult for her to meet her child’s need for her presence as much as her milk. Although this may bring great sadness to the mother, her feelings are not an argument that she meets the prerequisites. Instead, we look for evidence that her experience reflects LLL philosophy.

Lucy, I hope I have helped you understand the background to this decision. There is another step Cathy might take, which is to appeal the decision. If you would like some information about it, please let me know.

Laura Lyndsay, LAD

Dear Lucy,

I can see how shocked, surprised and disappointed you are at the decision to refuse Cathy Candidate’s application. You see her as an excellent candidate for leadership accreditation. You have also formed a friendship with her and have observed her mothering skills, her breastfeeding relationships with her young boys and her practice of attachment parenting. You would gladly welcome her as a co-Leader of your Group.

We recognise that Cathy is doing a wonderful job to balance the many different calls upon her time and energy. In our dialogue with her, we heard about some of the challenges she is facing, and how she strives to be the best possible mother to her boys in spite of being away from them for ten hours a day, Monday through Friday. It is unfortunate that Cathy’s place of work is not nearer home and does not allow more flexible working arrangements. As it is, Cathy has said that her schedule means she sees her young boys only in the evening, while also looking after the myriad chores that have to be done for a family each day—making dinner, doing laundry, bedtime rituals—and while trying to be mindful of her own sleep and nutrition requirements! We respect that Cathy has had to make difficult choices because of her financial situation. However, there were no indications that Cathy was able to be available to meet her boys’ intense need for her presence with any degree of flexibility during her working days. As far as we can see, her experience does not meet the Mothering Experience Prerequisite as required by LLLI.

As you have pointed out, there are other Leaders who work and care for children, too, and they’ve all had to find their ways of doing that. There’s more to leadership than advocating attachment parenting and breastfeeding. LLL has a strong philosophy of mothering through breastfeeding and mothers and babies needing to be together.

I know that you dialogued with Cathy about the extra responsibilities she would need to carry while being a La Leche League Leader. She clearly wishes to be able to support other breastfeeding mothers and also play her part as a member of the Group. Perhaps this would be an opportunity to talk to Cathy about how she might become more actively involved in the Group, even without pursuing leadership at this time. I see that Cathy hasn’t yet held a Group job. Would she be willing, for instance, to be the Group librarian or treasurer, and become more involved in managing the Group?

I hope that for the present time, Cathy can remain involved with La Leche League, perhaps bringing one or two children with her to meetings and getting the support and strength she needs from the other mothers. I’m sure your friendship and support are very important to her. Please let me know if you feel there is anything I have missed or misunderstood.

Peggy Moran, USA
Dear ACLA,

There is a mother interested in leadership in my Group. It has been a while since I did my application and I am not sure how to dialogue with her. Could you please explain what I should do?

Lily Lovely
Leader

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Alison Parkes, Contributing Editor, at: Rnparkes.family@ntlworld.com

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**When a Leader Applicant Feels Stuck**

*Lisa Thompson, CLA, LLL of Indiana, USA*

I can hear you asking, “What exactly do you mean by ‘stuck’?” When a Leader Applicant stops or delays during leadership preparation, she may be feeling “stuck.”

Some delay is normal. Applicants often need time for ideas to sink in or to fully understand some of the concepts. The goal in leadership preparation is to make regular progress. The Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) encourages Applicants to complete their work within about a year, and sometimes even more quickly. So if months pass without progress and the Applicant seems unable to complete a particular task, she may be feeling stuck.

Applications stall for reasons as unique as the Applicants’ own lives and personalities. In LLL, our diversity makes us special, and we value the multitude of approaches mothers take in their journey to become Leaders. Also, Applicants tend to lose enthusiasm if their leadership preparation takes a long time and leaves them in a semi-prepared limbo. How can we smooth the path so that Applicants do not become stuck?

One of the most powerful influences on the speed of application work is the supporting Leader. The Leader is well-acquainted with the Applicant and able to meet with her one-on-one and speak heart-to-heart. Getting together regularly to socialize and talk about leadership keeps the Applicant energized and inspired. When working with an Applicant who feels stuck, one of the first questions you might ask is, *How often do the Leader and Applicant get together?* Some Applicants need just an occasional email asking *How is your work going?* and a bit of encouragement. Others might need to meet regularly with the supporting Leader to stay on track.

Confusion about what to do next can cause an Applicant to feel overwhelmed. The supporting Leader can help avoid this problem by explaining leadership preparation during pre-application dialogue. The *Leader Applicant's Resource Kit* (LARK – [http://www.llleus.org/Applicants.html](http://www.llleus.org/Applicants.html)) is an excellent resource for understanding the parts of application work. Encourage supporting Leaders and Applicants to review this together, particularly noting “Application Work Summary,” the one-page graphic on page 4 that provides an overview of the work expected of the Applicant. The *LARK Leader’s Guide* ([http://www.llleus.org/spLeaders.html](http://www.llleus.org/spLeaders.html)) has additional tips for each part of the application that can help the Leader in her supporting role.
Some interruptions in progress are easy to understand: a new baby, a health crisis in the family, divorce, or some other major life event distracts focus from application work. An Applicant can put her application on hold for a few months, or even withdraw the application for now with the intention of getting back to leadership preparation at a later date. The LAD representative doesn’t need to know the details; the Applicant can merely let her LAD representative know that she needs to take a break. We understand that family comes first.

* * *

Let’s look at the six parts of the application and typical places where some Applicants may end up feeling stuck:

**Personal History Writing**

The two major reasons that account for delay over personal history writing are difficulty finding time to focus on writing, and difficulty writing about one or more of the LLL concepts. If lack of writing time is the issue, it may help to brainstorm ideas such as enlisting help to entertain children, writing by hand, or sending a few concepts at a time. Difficulty over a philosophy point can occur when an Applicant realizes upon reflection that her own experience doesn’t match the belief expressed in the concept. For example, perhaps she eats a lot of processed food, sometimes yell at her children, or returned to work sooner than she wanted. In most cases, the Applicant agrees with the philosophy, but looking at her life more closely reveals aspects of her experience that she would rather not put into writing. The discomfort caused by such mismatches can lead an Applicant to set aside leadership preparation. It can help to encourage the Applicant to open up about her concern, and to offer the reassurance that no Leader is perfect; we are all works in progress. On the other hand, sometimes this sticking point can reveal significant disagreement with LLL philosophy that cannot be overlooked, and it is best for such issues to be dealt with honestly before further time and effort are invested. The LAD representative may want to consult her support person about addressing such issues.

**Breastfeeding Resource Guide**

The most common concern about the Breastfeeding Resource Guide (BRG) is that Leaders and Applicants don’t know what to do. An Applicant may have the misperception that she needs to look up every topic, read about it in detail, and memorize the information. It can help to reassure the Applicant that Leaders often need to look things up and check resources when helping a mother. The BRG can help an Applicant focus on unfamiliar topics, point out relevant websites and resources to explore, and encourage her to look up information without the pressure of memorizing facts and figures. For Applicants who do not read English, ask your LAD support person if a translation is available. If the Applicant has limited access to resources, there may be need for added help from the supporting Leader to learn about some topics through discussion.

**Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for LLL Leadership**

Often the stumbling block for completing the Checklist is finding time for the Leader and Applicant to get together. Discussion of the Checklist need not be time-consuming. The LAD representative can suggest articles to read on particular topics, and discussion with the Leader can occur by phone, email or online chat if meeting in person is not convenient. Encourage the Leader to save her email explanations so that she can use them again with a future Applicant.
Background Reading; Childbirth Information

Many mothers will have done some reading before applying for leadership, and you can let the mother know that she has already covered most of her required reading. For the Applicant who doesn’t have many opportunities to read, or whose access to resources is limited, it may help to find flexible options such as downloading books to be able to read them on a portable device during spare moments. Reading the LAD booklet, Childbirth and Breastfeeding (http://www.llleus.org/Applicants.html), if available in the Applicant’s language, can be an efficient way to learn about how different childbirth experiences and methods of delivery affect the start of breastfeeding.

Preview of Mothers’ Questions/Problems and Group Dynamics/Management

An Applicant may feel nervous about the Preview if she perceives it as a test. She might have performance anxiety and/or feel judged. Preview work is meant to be practice, and we don’t expect Applicants to answer every question perfectly or completely. It is fine for the Applicant to address questions in an “open-book” manner, having her resources at hand just as a Leader would. Before each of the first few questions, the Leader might offer helpful suggestions about body language and phrasing. Applicants can also be encouraged to consider answering one or more topics by email or on the phone. A relaxed approach to the first question(s) often takes the pressure off. Some Applicants may find it helpful to compile a script or a dialogue sample of “mother and Leader.” For their first Preview practice, the Applicant and Leader read this script which they discussed and wrote together by checking resources. Reading a script is less intimidating, and it can even be fun because they are acting a minidrama. A shy Applicant often enjoys it.

Accreditation

Occasionally an Applicant completes all application work, only to hesitate over signing her Statement of Commitment (SoC). This may be caused by anxiety that she isn’t yet ready to be a Leader. It helps to remind the Applicant of all the work that she has accomplished and how well-prepared she is. Listen to her specific worries so that you can allay any fears. If she doesn’t want to lead a meeting right away, let her know that she can start with a few helping calls or presenting just part of a meeting to build her confidence. Maybe she feels awkward on the phone and would prefer to start with email help. She can sign the SoC first and ease into leadership gradually.

Leader Applicants are all unique and their concerns are also different. Let’s listen to what they want to say and offer our support. If you would like more suggestions for an Applicant who seems to feel stuck, your LAD support person would be happy to help!

Lisa Thompson lives in Valparaiso, Indiana, USA, about an hour outside of Chicago, Illinois, with her husband Rob and their three children, Liam (10), Ryan (6) and Keira (4). Lisa is currently the CLA for the Indiana Area. She has been a Leader since 2006 and joined LAD in 2010.
### LAD Statistics
**Semi-Annual Report Compilation**
16 Apr 2013 - 15 Oct 2013
LAD Council

*The information from the previous SAR is indicated in parentheses.*

**Affiliates**

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**LLLI Total**

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## Comparison of Four Reporting Periods

**LAD Council**

* Affiliates: Canada English, Canada French, Great Britain, New Zealand
* Non-USA ANs: European AN (Area Network), International AN
* USA ANs: Alliance AN, Garden State AN, Mosaic AN, Texas AN, US West AN

### Leaders

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### Applicants

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### New Applications

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### Discontinued Applications

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### Accreditations

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I'm Linda Wieser. I am just starting as the new Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for La Leche League of Canada. It's exciting to be working with the LAD at both the national and international levels. I've been an ACLA since 2008 working with Leader Applicants in Michigan, Canada and Future Areas in Asia and the Middle East. I just love this job. It's so much fun helping young mothers eager to become Leaders.

I'm originally from the United States, as is my husband, Jim. We met in Nova Scotia (NS), Canada, in 1973 and married five years later. That's where our daughters were born and where I went to my first LLL meeting. I was bottle-feeding formula as I had weaned Heidi by seven months because of persistent nipple pain. I loved the meeting and continued attending because the other mothers were parenting the way I was. Three years later Erica was born. Shortly thereafter, we moved to California, USA. I've been a Leader since 1984, have led with Groups in Southern California and Michigan, and have worked over 20 years in the Professional Liaison Department. Professionally, I've worked as a physiotherapist and International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

In 2009, Jim and I retired back to Canada and bought a house on the water near Mahone Bay, NS, a town of 900. Sailing is one of our loves. Back in 1975-76 we spent a year sailing to the Bahamas and back to NS on a 35-foot (10 1/2-meter) wooden ketch. In 2009 we sailed our 27-foot (9-meter) fiberglass boat from Michigan to here via the Saint Lawrence Seaway. Recently we bought a 40-foot (12-meter) steel motor sailor in the Netherlands and have enjoyed sailing the Dutch canals and Norwegian fjords, narrow inlets with steep cliffs, created by glacial erosion. The boat is in Norway for the winter; we're not sure where we'll go next, but eventually we'll bring the boat to NS.

Our two daughters are both married. Heidi and Anthony are in Jerusalem, Israel, for a year. She works with a Jewish nonprofit that arranges opportunities for leaders within the U.S. Jewish community to meet with Palestinians on the West Bank. Erica and Jake live in Los Angeles, California, hoping to make it big, or at least earn a living scriptwriting. Erica spends most of her days writing and revising TV and movie scripts. They are very different young women. Even as babies, they had different nursing patterns. How exciting it is to watch one's children grow into competent, loving, thoughtful adults.
Now my days are filled with juggling my many volunteer commitments: Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA) for LLL Canada, ACLA for Atlantic Canada, Group Leader, chair of a community breastfeeding committee, chair of the ILCA (International Lactation Consultant Association) Professional Resources Committee. For fun, I enjoy gardening, scrapbooking, traveling, reading and watching movies, especially foreign films.

Patty Dulligan-Varelas, Greece

My journey with La Leche League started when I attended my first meeting while pregnant with my third child. Having nursed my first two daughters, I felt quite experienced with the art of breastfeeding. This time around I found myself on unfamiliar ground having recently relocated to Athens, Greece. I’m third generation Irish American and I was still adjusting to the culture. I was pretty desperate for English-speaking company. Thus when I saw an announcement in the local English language paper that read “Calling all women interested in breastfeeding,” I was thrilled. I convinced my husband to drive me there. He was puzzled as to why I was so excited, stating “you already know about breastfeeding, what are you going to do there?” Of course, that meeting opened up a new world to me.

I had known La Leche League as an organization but never had the need to access support. Back in my hometown in New York, USA, my close circle of family and friends helped me find my way with mothering and breastfeeding. In Greece, I felt totally alone and didn’t even know if breastfeeding mothers existed here! Much to my delight, that first meeting proved me wrong. I found an international mix of women wearing their babies, keeping their toddlers close. They were speaking my language, the language of mothering through breastfeeding! I felt empowered with this Group of mothers who validated my mothering experience and gave me the courage to make the choices that were right for me and my family.

That was in 1996. I attended meetings regularly after that, learning to navigate through the streets of Athens armed with a La Leche League meeting notice and a map to the hostess’s home. I held various Group jobs, had another baby and finally took the plunge and became a Leader in 2003. Soon after, I was enticed to join the LAD as co-Coordinator of Leader Accreditation in 2006, a position which I shared with a native Greek Leader and then eventually continued on my own. Although the Greek language is still a bit of a challenge, with the help of “Google translation” and many bilingual Greek Leaders, I am able to overcome this challenge in my work with Applicants. I enjoy exploring La Leche League philosophy, dispelling Greek myths about breastfeeding and helping Greek women develop the confidence they need to help mothers be the experts for their babies.

My husband, Yiannie, and I still live in Athens with our four children. My two oldest daughters, Marina (21) and Christina (19), are both university students. My third daughter Katerina (17) is a senior in high school and my son, Themie (15), is in his last year of junior high. My journey in LAD continues and I hope to inspire some Greek Leaders to join me in the near future.

Moja prva princeza Laura rođena je 2008. godine nakon predvorne trudnoće i poroda. Upravo ta princeza učinila me *majkom* po prvi put. Imala sam majčinstvo kroz dojenje po prvi puta kada sam je primila u naručje. Osjećala sam nešto drugačije i moja jedina te iskrena podrška bio je moj suprug.

Upravo onaj dan kada se prvi put događaj preko web stranice jedne organizacije koja podupire LLL misiju i svrhu. Zainteresirala sam se. Počela sam mnogo čitati sa web stranica lll.org i konačno se osjećala kao da sam *pronašla dom* (koje olakšanje), jer sam po prvi put čitala o nečem što sam već radila. Bilo je tako lijepo znati da je uređu dojiti moju djevojčicu koliko god ona to želi, kao i držati ju u rukama te osjećati ljubav, povezanost i povijerenje. Ovo je ujedno bilo nešto najbolje u mom životu, osjećam da sam dala svojoj princezi najviše što sam mogla dati.

Godine 2011. nakon još jedne predvorne trudnoće i poroda rođena je moja Nika. Odlučila sam pronaći LLL voditeljicu i postati dio *LLL svijeta* i majke u Hrvatskoj upoznati s LLL. U Hrvatskoj je mnogo organizacija koje podupiru dojenje, ali niti jedna od njih nema filozofiju poput LLL.

Uz podršku supruga započela sam prijavu za vodstvo i ljetom 2012. godine postala voditeljica. Ovo je jedna od najljepših stvari koje sam napravila u svom životu. U ovih godinu i pol dana, koliko je prošlo otkako sam postala voditeljica napravila sam mnogo za LLL u mojoj zemlji, kao i za majke i djecu koji su me trebali. Još dok sam bila kandidatkinja za vodstvo jako me zanimao posao u Odjelu za akreditaciju voditeljica i sjećam se da sam pitala Koordinatoricu za akreditaciju voditeljica što je potrebno da jednog dana postanem Suradnica Koordinatorice za akreditaciju voditeljica.

Iako sam iskrena i topla podrška svim majkama i djecu svakako ovo nije dovoljno za mene, jer kao dio *LLL svijeta* želim biti čak i vise uključena u rad LLL. Danas sam Suradnica Koordinatorice za akreditaciju voditeljica. Jako volim ovaj posao i čini me posebno sretnom. Zaista je dragocjeno biti dio nečije priče o majčinstvu kroz dojenje. Mislim da je ovo moj poseban poklon. LLL ne samo da me učinio nježnom majkom, učinio me i boljom osobom, boljom ženom i svakako ženom koja sluša mnogo pažljivije.

Zato od srca hvala LLL za sve što mi je dao i još uvijek daje, također hvala i svim predvrim ženama koje su vjerovale u mene i podupirale me u mojim željama.

*English translation follows*
My name is Gorana Đergović. I have lived in Croatia for all my life. I met Mladen when I was nineteen years old and we fell in love at the first look. We were married on August 20, 2005. He works as judo trainer so he has many children around him which makes him very happy.

In 2008, my first princess, Laura is born after a beautiful pregnancy and labor. That princess made me a mother for the first time. I felt mothering through breastfeeding from the first time she was nursing. It was something new: The only support was—and still is—my husband!

I found LLLI by accident on a web page of some other organization that supported LLL mission and purpose. I was very interested and started to read more from llli.org. I finally felt like I had found “my home” (what a relief)—for the first time I was reading something about what I was doing. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that it was OK to nurse my baby as long as she wished or to hold her in my arms and feel such love, connection, trust. This was the best thing in my life to give my princess the most I could give her.

In 2011 Nika was born after one more beautiful pregnancy and labor. I decided to become a La Leche League Leader to help to bring La Leche League to my country. In Croatia we do have many breastfeeding organizations, but none of them have beautiful philosophy of mothering through breastfeeding.

With support of my husband I started my application and became a Leader in summer 2012. This is the most beautiful thing I have done in my life. In the last year and a half I have done very much for La Leche League in my country and for all mothers and babies who needed me.

When I was a Leader Applicant, I was very interested in LAD work, and I can remember I asked my ACLA how I could become a LAD representative one day. To offer support to all mothers and babies was not enough for me, because as an LLL Leader I wished to give more to other people and to be involved in La Leche League as much as possible.

Today I’m an ACLA. I love LAD work because it makes me very happy. It is so precious to be part of someone’s personal story about mothering through breastfeeding. It is a special gift to me! LLL made me a better person, a sensitive mother, a better woman, and for sure, a woman who is listening much more carefully.

Thank you to La Leche League for everything you gave and are still giving me. Also thanks to all of the beautiful women who believed in me and supported me with my dreams.
**LAD Treasure Chest**

At Area events, consider having available a variety of LAD materials to promote new applications and LAD work itself. Here are some items one might display on a LAD table at the event:

- **Leader's Pre-Application Packet** (including Leader Recommendation and Application forms)
- **Thinking about LLL Leadership?**
- **Leader Applicant's Resource Kit** (LARK)
- **“Application Work Summary,”** (the one-page graphic from LARK, which summarizes application work)
- A list of LAD websites
- **LAD Work: Is It for You?**

The above documents can be found on one or more of these web pages:

- [http://www.llleus.org/Applicants.html](http://www.llleus.org/Applicants.html) (for Leader Applicants)
- [http://www.llleus.org/spLeaders.html](http://www.llleus.org/spLeaders.html) (for supporting Leaders)
- [http://www.llleus.org/LAD.html](http://www.llleus.org/LAD.html) (for LAD representatives)

username: LAD
password: LADis#1

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**Adapting to Applicant Communication Styles**

Does the Applicant like to write long letters, or does she send you a paragraph at a time tapped out on her iPhone? As methods of communication are evolving, it may help facilitate application work if we adjust how we communicate to meet the Applicant's preferred way of working. For example, someone who likes to work in frequent but brief spurts using only a handheld device might find it cumbersome to respond when sent the two-page “Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering,” but she might respond readily if asked to write about one or two concepts at a time.
Encouraging New Applications

Are there Groups in your Area that have been without an Applicant for a year or longer? Consider sending the Group Leaders an online link for the Leader’s Pre-Application Packet and a note, encouraging them to think about new prospects for leadership. Sending the link provides a welcome opportunity to extend a friendly greeting to Leaders and remind them that the LAD is available to answer questions and help with new applications.

Congratulations on your appointment!

Lori Billodeau  ACLA, Wisconsin, USA
Marsha Chartrand  CLA, Michigan, USA
Gorana Đergović  ACLA, Future Areas in Europe
Natalie McMaster  CLA, Atlantic Canada, LLL Canada
Sarah Quigley  CLA, Northern California/Hawaii, USA
Holly Robinson  ACLA, Gateway, USA
Darlene Utzinger  RALA, Northeast Region, USA
Left: Marie Beam, USA:
After making do with a corner of the bedroom for many years, I was finally “upgraded” to the den, where it’s convenient to let the dog in and out, pop into the kitchen, and keep track of my family’s comings and goings while I do my LAD work.

Right: Alison Parkes, Great Britain
As you can see on the wall, my 21-year-old daughter named my study “The Boobies Room,” for obvious reasons! The room has two windows so it is always light, and I love doing my LAD work here.
LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives, designed to offer LAD representatives a place to share information and experiences. © LAD Council 2014

Top: Juliet Matthee, South Africa:
I do most of my CLA work at my desk here in my house in Cape Town. There are four ACLAs in LAD South Africa and we work as a team to help our Area to grow. I love the international “feel” of LAD. In between my daily tasks as a mother and housewife, I can communicate with people from all over the world.

Bottom: Lesley Robinson, Canada:
My “office” is in my kitchen, so here I am sitting at my computer which took the picture!