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Discussions and Actions from the LAD Council  
Meeting Held July 15-17, 2015  
*Cindy Garrison,  
*Interim Director of the Leader Accreditation Department*

The LAD Council tries to meet annually in person. Although email is certainly an improvement over postal mail in getting information out and discussions going, nothing can top the benefit of meeting face-to-face. This year the Council met at St. John’s College in New York City, USA, in conjunction with the LLL Alliance Leader Development Seminar (LDS). Several of the LAD Council also served as speakers for the LDS.

We were fortunate to have two suites to house all of us, which gave us a common area for our meetings and discussions. As you read this overview of what went on, perhaps you will be inspired to consider joining the LAD Council yourself!

The LAD Council is currently made up of ten Administrators of Leader Accreditation (ALAs) and the Director of the Leader Accreditation Department (DLAD). Occasionally there can be Members-at-Large because of special LAD needs. The ALAs represent US Areas connecting to LLL Alliance, the Areas within Latin America (LA), LLL Great Britain (GB), US Areas getting their LAD support from LAD West, LLL New Zealand (NZ), the Areas within Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (AAME), the Areas within the European Area Network (EAN), LLL Canada (LLLC, English-speaking Canada), and Ligue La Leche (French-speaking Canada). Our discussions began with an update of each entity represented. Highlights included:

* LAD West has a representative on the US West Area Network Council and they have a great team of LAD representatives at the regional level.
* LLLC has found that quarterly Skype calls and memos have been very successful ways to offer support and strengthen the LAD in LLLC.
* EAN has co-ALAs to help handle the variety of languages they work with. It is exciting to hear about the growth of LLL in Eastern Europe.
* Alliance is seeing a renewed interest in Leaders wanting to join the LAD.
* Latin America is growing into new countries! They have benefited from a Leader in Peru giving a workshop in another Latin American Area and a US Leader working with a Latin American Applicant while visiting on a trip.
* Great Britain has two LAD meetings per year and they also use Skype often with Applicants. The financial health of GB has improved greatly since their restructuring.
* AAME CLAs and ALA have established a good working relationship. The recommending/supporting Leaders and the LAD cooperate with each other during the pre-application dialogue.
Challenges were also shared and they were very similar:

* Working with applications where the mother has had early and extended separation.
* Communication issues with Facebook posts that present a negative view of LAD and misrepresentation of why a mother’s application was not accepted which the LAD cannot refute due to confidentiality.
* Finding enough LAD representatives.
* Nonresponsive LAD representatives at the more local levels.
* The big gap between English and non-English-speaking Leaders and Applicants and the need for more translated materials for the many languages we serve.
* Need to revise and update materials we have.
* Request for an international conference to help all see the global picture of LLLI.

The LAD Council agreed to hold their 2016 meeting in conjunction with the European Management Symposium (EMS) in Frankfurt, Germany. The LAD will meet at the conclusion of the EMS and, as with the 2015 Alliance LDS, many LAD Council members will serve as speakers for the EMS and hope to meet some of you.

A highlight of the meeting was to announce the following appointments:

* Sue Sutton to be the contact person to the LAD Council for LLL New Zealand (effective October 1, 2015)
* Marie-Claire Bakker as ALA for AAME (effective September 1, 2015)
* Mariana Petersen as ALA for Latin America (effective July 16, 2015)

Many thanks and much appreciation was extended to Linda Dockrill (NZ) and Toshi Jolliffe, (AAME) who provided tremendous support to the LAD representatives and to the LAD Council during their terms. Toshi will continue working with AAME as the Associate Administrator of Leader Accreditation (AALA) to help with the transition and the work load. Mariana was present to receive our appreciation in person for her work as the interim ALA for Latin America and our pleasure at her decision to accept a full appointment.

The group held a full discussion on the separation issue. Several LAD Council members are part of the current work groups set up by the LLLI Board to look at the LAD concerns as well as function. The comments that resulted were compiled and sent to the appropriate work groups. The work group facilitator has asked the LAD to provide specific examples of the types of applications with separation being received. Please send short summaries of applications where there has been extended separation beginning at a young age, with all identifying parts (names, locations, etc.) removed, to me at cpgearr@pulsenet.com or cpgearrlll@comcast.net I will forward them to the appropriate work group. Many thanks!!

Members attending the meeting facilitated discussion on several topics. Benaifer Bhandari (GB) and I led the discussion on how to help the mother come to her own understanding that her experience does not reflect the philosophy and prerequisites. This will be discussed more fully in the next issue of LADders. Mariana Petersen (LA) shared a mother’s personal history done by PowerPoint. Other LAD Council members facilitated revisions of several LAD documents. Doing revisions and editing as a group with the changes entered right into the computer was tremendously positive and much easier than debating word changes through many, many emails.

A highlight of the meeting was the chance to organize a conference call by GoToMeeting, a program used by the LLLI Board of Directors, to allow us to include those who were not able to attend. The LAD Council gives special thanks to the Board for offering this opportunity. It gave us a way to share and update much of what had
gone on to that time with those who could not come and they could feel a part of the meeting, too. Some had never “met” in person. Coordinating the different time zones was a challenge because the LAD Council consists of members from all over the globe. The ability to get together electronically was a positive experience and one we hope to repeat on a regular basis.

The conference call is one example of how technology is becoming more and more a part of how the LAD offers support to Leaders and mothers as well as to other LAD staff. The Council went on to discuss other means of using technology as well.

* Facebook—LLLI has a Leader Applicant Facebook page. The group discussed ways to make it even more useful and attractive. All recognized a need to publicize and promote its use. There was caution that it needs to be carefully monitored to see how it is being used. There was also discussion about the value of the LAD Facebook page for all LAD representatives as a place to store documents and share ideas.

* Video—This could include taping a meeting or workshop, as LLLC has done.

* Skype—This is very popular and can be done with an Applicant for a more personal touch and also to help an isolated mother be part of a meeting.

* Websites—Each entity’s website can be a place to house LAD materials.

* Phone—This provides a valuable, personal touch by voice or a quick contact by text.

A good suggestion was to ask the mother/Applicant/Leader when she does her computer work to give the LAD representative working with her the best chance to catch her at the computer for faster replies.

Discussion was held on the value of local and regional workshops. Examples shared were Communication Skills workshops, Leader Applicant workshops, Chapter activities, and multi-Group picnics. All emphasized the value these activities have for face-to-face interactions. As we found at the meeting, being together to talk can get the work covered and discussed much more thoroughly.

A good idea that came out of the meeting was to create a “fact file” of topics that are Area-specific. A “fact file” is a collection of information about a particular subject or product or, in this suggestion, particular ways of doing things within the community/culture the LAD representative supports. This could include local practices that can impact breastfeeding and the kind of help a mother might request, such as a high caesarian rate, the role of a nanny, or the customary use of early solids or water. It could include specific financial laws that need to be followed as a nonprofit in the country. It could also discuss the restrictions some mothers may have on when and where they meet. For example, the mother may not be allowed to drive herself or attend without her husband or mother. She may not be able to attend if the meeting is held in a house of worship different than her own. This could be explored with an Applicant during dialogue. The LAD representative could include this example in the “fact file.” At some point in the application, or on its completion, the “fact file” for that Area could be shared with the Applicant so that she is aware of these specific cultural practices and better able to help mothers who call with questions. It could be shared with the recommendation that she make her own file for this purpose, it could be provided as a complete file at some point, or it could be shared as a link to the file on the entities’ website.

Additional topics covered at the meeting were:

* LLLI is renewing the Strategic Plan. Comments were compiled and sent to the LLLI Board of Directors.

* How to cooperate and support the World Breastfeeding Week theme which focused on breastfeeding and working. This led to discussion on the difference between the concepts—which are broad enough to allow for some variation of their application, such as being alert and aware during a cesarian birth—and the prerequisites, which are choices mothers make in agreement with philosophy and the concepts.
It is important to add that our time wasn’t only work. The LAD Council put together a song and dance routine based on “New York, New York” with lyrics by Linda Wieser and dance routine by Benaifer Bhandari, which we presented during the Saturday night festivities. We invited other LAD representatives attending the LDS to come join us and after a very quick rehearsal, we did the routine for the entire group. We had lots of fun and appreciated the improvised percussion provided by a former LAD Council member, Lesley Robinson. The video is available on YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceDTSb7hwU

Many of the LAD Council members came not knowing everyone who would be there. After living together, eating together, exploring together—and singing and dancing together—we left as friends with a better understanding of how we can work together to help Leaders mentor mothers interested in leadership in LLLI and to help those mothers become the next generation of LLLI Leaders.

In this issue of *LADders* Linda Wieser explores further how technology can be helpful in LAD work and Benaifer Bhandari will explain the LAD Council discussion on helping mothers come to their own understanding of whether their experience reflects the philosophy and prerequisites in the next issue.

*Cindy Garrison is currently the Interim Director for the Leader Accreditation Department. Cindy was previously Co-Chairman of the Board of Directors for LLLI for three years and also served as Director of the former Eastern United States (EUS) Division. Cindy has held various positions in the LAD, most recently as Associate Director for Regional Administrators of Leader Accreditation in the former EUS Division. She and her husband have three grown sons, six grandsons and one granddaughter, and Cindy still leads in the first La Leche League Group she attended.*

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**Using New Technologies in the LAD**

*Linda Wieser, Mahone Bay, Canada*

Many LAD representatives are finding it helpful to communicate using new technologies, such as text messaging, online calls, social media and online meetings. How wonderful to have so many more tools at our disposal within the last few decades! Many of us have transitioned from written communication via postal mail to written communication via email. This has made it easier to communicate with Leader Applicants, Leaders and other LAD representatives in any part of the world. Since the LAD is an international department, and Leaders are accredited under the same LLLI policies no matter where they live, electronic communications provide an exciting opportunity for LAD representatives to work with Applicants and Leaders outside their own Areas. Electronic communication has also made it easier to give “immediate feedback.” It may still take us a few days to write our responses, but there is no longer the delay because of slow mail service. And we are now able to share resources, such as the *Leader’s Handbook*, electronically instead of mailing a hard copy.

There are many other ways to communicate besides email. If you’re not already taking advantage of some of the newer technologies, consider jumping in . . .

**Text Messaging**

This technology uses short messaging service (SMS) or another system to communicate from mobile phone to mobile phone. Depending on where you live it is known as texting, SMS or MMS. Other similar services include J-Phone’s SkyMail and NTT Docomo’s Short Mail (used in Japan), Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and Viber.
Online Audio/Video Calls

This technology receives and transmits audio-video signals by users at different locations, thus allowing people to communicate in real time. Common forms of online calls include Skype, FaceTime and Google Hangout. This is one of the most useful tools we have as it allows the LAD representative and Applicant to interact face-to-face. It can be used any time you want to touch base with an Applicant or have an in-depth discussion in person. Some LAD representatives try to have at least one online video call early in the application period. They find this helps establish rapport with the person they will be supporting.

Online calls are particularly useful for:

- a pre-application discussion with an isolated interested mother
- an oral personal history with a nonnative English speaker
- discussions about the topics on the Checklist
- work on the Preview
- orientation of new LAD representatives

What’s so helpful is that it doesn’t matter if you live miles apart, you can still see each other and talk face-to-face. The other day an isolated interested mother and I tried to have a Skype call. We couldn’t get the sound to work. No problem—we left the video on and talked via phone.

Some Leaders are using online video calls for their Leader Applicant meetings. Even if all the Leaders and Applicants attend the same Group meetings, they may live far from each other and/or find it difficult blocking out an extended period of time to meet. Online video calls eliminate commuting time. Setting up weekly or biweekly meetings allows the Applicant to be home and available to her family while also progressing with her application work. This is a wonderful way to include isolated Applicants.

Social Media

Facebook groups and other types of social media are another way LAD representatives can support Applicants. It is also a way Leader Applicants can support each other. There is a closed group on Facebook called LLL Leader Applicants that is open to any Applicant or Leader. Some Areas also have local Applicant Facebook groups. In Spain, for example, there are two Facebook groups with about eight Applicants each. Sometimes Leader Applicants might be invited to join an Area Facebook group for Leaders. This can help the Applicant to feel a part of the organization she is preparing to represent. On the other hand, if the Leader Facebook group discusses issues related to Applicants or sensitive Group issues, then this may not be appropriate.

Online Meetings

When face-to-face meetings aren’t possible, consider having an online meeting. The most commonly used formats within La Leche League are Skype, Google Hangout, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect. There is no cost to use Skype when connecting computer to computer. There is a fee to connect from a computer to a phone. To initiate a Skype call, the call planner needs to have everyone’s “Skype name.” This means that each person needs to download Skype and set up an account. When the call planner receives each participant’s Skype name, she will send out “invitations” to connect. All participants need to be connected to the call planner via Skype and online to join the call. Google Hangout is also free; however, all participants need to have a Google account to participate in the call. Adobe Connect and GoToMeeting have service fees and are more commonly used by an organization. For example, the LLLI Board of Directors uses GoToMeeting for their monthly phone calls and for Board meetings when it is not practical or cost-effective for all to travel to one spot.
Depending on which technology you are using and how many people are attending, you may find that it’s easier to turn off webcams and just use the audio. If someone doesn’t have a webcam on their computer, they can still participate; they just won’t be visible to attendees. LAD administrators may find this a helpful way to have a discussion with those they are supporting. In Canada, the CLAs meet quarterly via Skype for 1-2 hours. (An easy way to determine the best time for everyone is to do an online poll, e.g. doodle.com.) This can be an excellent way to learn from and support each other. It can also be an invaluable way to orient more than one new LAD representative at the same time. For example, LLL Canada has a subscription to Adobe Connect. For an orientation meeting with two new ACLAs, I was able to upload to Adobe Connect all the relevant LAD documents used during the application period. As we talked, we viewed and discussed each document in detail.

**Using Technology with Isolated Mothers**

It can be a challenge explaining La Leche League and LLL meetings to someone who has never had contact with our organization. The person may know that we are an international breastfeeding organization that provides mother-to-mother support but little else. To help an isolated mother understand what LLL meetings are all about, you could suggest she view the *Mothering Through Breastfeeding* video on the LLL Canada website [http://www.lllc.ca/about](http://www.lllc.ca/about); or she could attend an LLL meeting via Skype; or perhaps you might organize an online “practice” meeting with other Leader Applicants. In addition, consider using any of the technologies discussed above.

**In the Future**

Are there other ways we can be using new technologies for pre-application discussions and/or during the application period? For example, would it help promote consistency in how Leaders are accredited if we had web-based seminars on LAD topics? Would videos discussing common LLL topics, such as mixing causes, be helpful? Send your ideas to your LAD support person.

Linda Wieser lives in Nova Scotia, Canada, where she and her husband, Jim, have a large garden and love to sail. They are looking forward to cruising the coasts of Portugal and Spain in October. They have two daughters, Heidi and Erica, and one grandson Omar (12 months). Linda worked for many years in the Professional Liaison Department before joining the LAD in 2008. She is the Administrator of Leader Accreditation for LLL Canada.

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**Modeling Respectful Communication**

*Karin Gausman, Colorado, USA*

![Respect](image)

The LAD has been super supportive of my preparation. I loved the always up-beat emails, even in my slump periods. I really appreciated the updates with where I was and what remained in my application. I can’t imagine anything more helpful than my LAD representative’s wonderful example of LLL attitude and communication. I couldn’t have done it without her positive encouragement.

From a Preview evaluation

Wouldn’t it feel great to get that kind of feedback from an Applicant? If you’ve been in LAD for a while, you have probably received a note such as this in a Preview evaluation at some time. Have you wondered what led to that? How did you learn to communicate effectively with Applicants? Chances are, you picked it up without even thinking about it because your LAD orientation partner was modeling respectful communication as she helped you through your preparation to be a LAD representative.
Now it is your turn to be a mentor to a new LAD person. More important than which checklist, if any, you use or which orientation parts you start with, etc., is your attitude and how you impart information to the new person. Here are two resources to think about, as you embark on this new relationship:

- A Positive Approach to Editing LAD Orientation Writings
- Writing with Respect

The former was a LAD session handout at the International Mastery Symposium at the 2005 LLLI Conference in Washington D.C. The latter is an article which has been reprinted in LLL and LAD publications including *LAD Lifeline* and *LADders*.

### A Positive Approach to Editing LAD Orientation Writings

**Sample Phrases for Your Orientation Letters**

Orientation is conversation between the two of you

*Give your thoughts to the ACLA at the start and end of your letter, with comments such as:*

- “Thank you for the letter.”
- “It's wonderful to hear from you so often!”
- “It's always a delight to hear from you.”
- “It makes me smile to see a message from you in my inbox.”
- “I look forward to your next letter.”

*Recognize and praise the ACLA’s work*

- “Great letter! You are already writing excellent LAD letters.”
- “Wonderful letter! You've validated her experience with LLL philosophy, and have referred her to resources in a helpful way.”
- “Another well-written letter! You've given Anne some good ideas to help Sue prepare.”
- “That is a helpful letter for Sue, explaining the Preview and elaborating on suggestions for using it.”

*Make suggestions in a gentle and respectful way. For example:*

- “I agree with what you’ve said, and have some suggestions for a little change in focus.”
- “What you’ve said is certainly true. I wonder if it is information that Sue already knows?”
- “The information you gave is correct. What do you think about giving it a little different emphasis by making this wording change?”
- “You’ve encouraged her to think about helping mothers with conflicting opinions. You might also want to include something like . . .”
- “I like the way you constructed your letter. I am curious about your [choice of wording, sentence structure, omission of something, etc.]”
- “It may be clearer for the reader if you say . . .”
- “What do you think about rephrasing . . . as . . . ?”

*Invite the ACLA’s comments/ideas/questions*

- “What do you think?”
- “Does that make sense?”
- “Does that answer your question?”
- “Am I being clear?”
- “Are you with me so far? Please don’t hesitate to ask.”
- “Some things I just ‘take for granted.’ It helps me to be more effective when I hear about your perspective.”
- “Please tell me if I’m being clear and if you have more questions.”

*Use the ACLA’s name (not too often) in your letter to make it sound more personal*

- “Wonderful letter, Marian!”
- “Marian, it’s a great letter!”
- “Does that make sense, Marian?”
- “Marian, please tell me if I’m being clear, and if you have more questions.”
- “Marian, I have one small question.”
- “What you’ve said is certainly true, Marian. I wonder . . .”

LAD International Mastery Symposium, 2005 LLLI Conference
Writing with Respect

Juanita Watt, Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA
Adapted from LADders 2012-1 No. 8

Respect. This word is used a lot in La Leche League. As Leaders we respect the mothers we help, as well as the Leader Applicants and co-Leaders we work with, as individuals and as adults responsible for making their own decisions. The language we choose—both written and spoken—is one way to show our respect. Here are some examples:

**Who, whom, which, and that**
- “who” and “whom” refer to people
  - For example: A mother who attends Group meetings . . .
- “who” also indicates the individuality of the people in a group
  - For example: Group members who participated in our World Breastfeeding Week event . . .
- “which” and “that” refer to objects, animals, and places
  - “which” and “that” can refer to a group of people when the meaning is the group as an entity
  - For example: The LAD, which is an international department, . . .
  - LLL Groups that held World Breastfeeding Week events . . .

**Possessive verbs, phrases, and pronouns**
Language that implies other people are our possessions can come across as condescending. For example: “I have a Leader Applicant,” “We have five members,” “My/our Leader Applicant,” “Our/your mothers.”

Here are some alternatives:
- Our Group has a Leader Applicant.
- There are five members in our Group.
- My Group’s Leader Applicant has two children.
- Our Group’s Leader Applicant is also the Group librarian.
- We reminded the mothers in our Group to renew their memberships.

Just to make things more interesting, using these same possessive pronouns and phrases to refer to co-Leaders, co-administrators, and support people only seems to indicate the organizational relationship and doesn’t come across as condescending.

- My co-Leader will bring the checkbook to the meeting.
- My co-ACLAs and I just got a memo from our CLA.
- Last week, our ACL sent some information about the LLL European Management Symposium.

**Words and phrases usually associated with children, animals, and objects**
These tend to keep their “flavor” when used to refer to adults and may come across as condescending or manipulative. For example, “grow,” “nurture,” “groom,” “train,” “generate,” “locate,” and “prepare” are commonly used with children, animals, or objects. Children and plants “grow” or need “nurturing.” We “groom” or “train” our pets, “generate” electricity, “locate” our car keys, “prepare” dinner.
When referring to Leader Applicants or mothers, how about using these words?

- inspire
- interest
- invite
- work with
- encourage
- attract
- assist
- help
- mentor

Another example: “Next week I plan to meet at the park with Stephanie, a Leader Applicant with our Group. We’ll be discussing the Leader Applicant reading list and other pertinent items to help her prepare for leadership.” This wording indicates she is the one doing the preparing.

Avoiding the word “process” with “application” and “accreditation” reflects our goal to design each application to meet the needs of the individual. Often just “application” or “accreditation” is enough, or try “accreditation journey,” “application period,” “application time,” “accreditation procedures.”

Sensitivity to a word’s “flavor” helps when using analogies and metaphors as well. These can add excitement and imagery to our writing. We just need to be aware of whether we are personifying objects or “objectifying” people.

For example, “What she learns at LLL meetings can help an Applicant grow as a mother” sounds condescending because it compares her to a growing plant (or child). However, “What she learns at LLL meetings can help an Applicant’s confidence in her mothering grow” avoids this because “grow” is used to describe the the Applicant’s confidence, not the Applicant herself.

Language that sounds controlling
Words like “advise,” “counsel,” “teach,” “educate,” “guide,” “warn,” “should,” and “must” can come across as controlling because they imply that a Leader is responsible for a mother or her decisions.

Here are some alternatives that reflect a peer relationship between adults:

- suggest
- encourage
- help
- support
- inform
- offer
- can
- might

Some sentence structures can sound controlling or imply that a suggestion will work for everyone. For example, “Nurse every two hours” and “Nursing more often will build your supply” can come across as advice or a “guarantee” of results. “Many mothers have found that nursing every two hours . . .” and “Nursing more often might help to build up your supply” are more open-ended and leave the decision up to the mother.

When we do need to state an expectation or requirement directly, using simple present tense or adding a reason and “please” to a request for action sounds more respectful and polite, less like an “order.” For example, “Leaders offer information and suggestions, not advice” or “To help avoid delays, please sign and send in the Statement of Commitment promptly.”
The language in our letters and other written materials is a powerful tool for modeling appropriate ways to share information and help mothers. I hope these ideas inspire you to continue to express your thoughts vividly and creatively and in ways that respect each individual.

Juanita Watt is a Leader in Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA, and is the Area treasurer for LLL of New Mexico. She’s a member of the Leader Today Editorial Review Board and enjoys helping the LAD Council with LADders. She and her husband Bob have two daughters, two sons-in-law, and a one-year-old granddaughter, Audrey. Juanita originally wrote this article for United States Western Division Connections No.39, January/February 1992, and adapted it for LAD Lifeline 2002 No. 3 and this issue of LADders. It was also adapted and translated into Japanese for LLL Japan’s Area Leaders’ Letter, 2004 Issue No. 5.

Semi-Annual Report: Compilation
LAD Council

- The information from the previous SAR is indicated in parentheses.
- Italics include/indicate estimated figures based on recent reports.

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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, Southern California/Nevada AN, Texas AN, US West AN

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Greetings from LAD Council Member

Leader Accreditation Department in Great Britain

Benaifer Bhandari, England, Great Britain

The LAD in Great Britain (GB) covers England, Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man and is privileged to be a department which is highly respected. Sometimes we are even referred to in hushed, reverential voice with phrases like, “When I grow up I want to be part of the LAD!”

It does amuse us, the members of LAD GB, no end. From our perspective it can be a challenging job that we do, mostly because there are so few of us. There are nine team members and together we work with 110-150 applications. We were lucky to have LAD member, Alison Parkes, write a handbook for us which brings together all of the LAD resources commonly used worldwide, all the reading material and all the exercises we all use because they work. Using the Leader Applicant Handbook has meant that although some team members work with quite a number of Applicants, keeping track and helping the Applicant plan what comes next doesn’t take up much of our valuable time.

The number of applications has gone down a little since we started a new fee structure. We think this is because it is still only a year since our new price structure. For years the application fee didn’t cover the costs of running the department and printing/posting resources. When, two years ago, the whole of LLL GB hit hard financial times, this shortfall in our departmental accounting became very noticeable. Our response was typical of the LAD worldwide. We thought, reflected, shared, discussed, reflected some more, shared some more and in good time came up with a plan which the whole team agreed with and then presented to LLL GB Council of Directors. The first, important, thing was to work out exactly what the department’s expenses are and to appreciate how important they are. For example, travelling expenses to our spring and autumn meetings and expenses for the LAD Administrator of Leader Accreditation (ALA, known as LAD Director in GB, to remain legal as an official organisation) to attend the annual International LAD Council meeting.

We understood it was important to meet regularly to share our joys and challenges and continually streamline what we do, so we can cope with whatever comes our way. Very surprisingly all the other departmental directors also agreed that the LAD should continue doing what it does to maintain the virtues that it sees as intrinsically part of the LAD. Everyone also agreed it is very important for the ALA, me, to attend the international meeting and keep plugged in firmly into the LAD workings throughout the world.

So we raised our fee—and structured it so that it covered all expenses, plus the accreditation fee (Leader fee) for the first year. This has gone a long way in streamlining finances no longer collecting money after accreditation. It has also sharpened the focus of supporting Leaders during pre-application dialogue. With the understanding of the necessity of an outlay of £100, both the interested mother and supporting Leader appear to be working towards ensuring that both LLL and the interested mother are a good match.

In the year since the increase in fee, we have been sharing ways Groups can assist mothers who cannot afford the fee. We are steering away from payment in instalments, and focusing more on Groups “lending” some or all of the fee to the mother. We find this also helps both parties work hard towards a positive end.

Currently we are trying to figure out a way of creating a fund to help Applicants who cannot afford the fee and do not have access to Group funds, but we need to work out an equitable way to know who would be eligible for these funds. As throughout the LLL world, we don’t like making judgements, so you can see the problem!
Another thing we have done to help really keep down departmental expenses and most importantly, time, is to make nearly all processing paperless. The application and recommendation forms are available from our website, in Word and PDF, both to be filled in electronically. They get sent to the Area CLA. When all prerequisites are met, our books department is informed and resources are sent out. Our accounts team is also informed and invoices the Applicant. The office administrator is also informed and our database is amended so that the new Applicant receives everything a Leader does. The whole application is conducted by email so that the only bit of paper that we handle is the Statement of Commitment at the end, for which LLLI still requires a handwritten signature. As soon as it is signed, we do try to have even that bit of paper scanned and thereafter be electronic all the way to LLLI.

Like the LAD the world over, many Applicants apply with separation between mother and baby. Two years ago we started a “campaign” to ensure that at all District and National workshops, a session is presented about the concepts and prerequisites and why both are so important. This conversation is very important and leading sessions on this has been helpful. The one-to-one conversations we have are also very important and have led to more enquiries coming in before the application/recommendation forms get sent. When we receive these questions during the pre-application stage, we make a point of letting supporting Leaders know how thankful we are for getting in touch with us before the application form is filled in, before the conversation gets more complicated and sometimes emotionally turbulent.

When there are doubts about an application, we first discuss the points among the Area CLAs. This is helpful, as very often the different CLAs will see varying aspects of the application so that the responsible CLA can get a fuller picture. It also helps that three of our CLAs have extensive international experience and have “seen” a lot because of that. Being a small team has the major disadvantage of us often taking a long time over the applications which are not straightforward. This does occasionally lead to frustration from the interested mother and supporting Leader/s, but is something we can do little about, especially if the discussion comes at a time when some of us are busy with family events or travelling. Working with volunteers can be frustrating!

One way of being very thorough with pre-application dialogue has been to use the medium of Facebook. A Facebook group was developed by a retired LAD team member for mothers interested in leadership and it has led to mothers becoming Applicants who are already thoroughly grounded in the concepts and what they mean to a Leader and the organisation.

If I suddenly had a big windfall of money, I would wish to use it to pay for all of our team members to attend an international event. I would love for each of them actually to see other LAD members from around the world and see how connected we all are, with exactly the same intentions and mission. We all have the same challenges and exactly the same privilege of walking beside individual women as they make the transition from being mothers, to mothers who are LLL Leaders.

Benaifer Bhandari is a Leader in Hertfordshire, Great Britain, and a mother of two sons 17 and 15. She has been a part of the LAD for 12 years and has supported the LAD team there for over 4 years. Benaifer loves speaking internationally on listening skills and is also a Trustee for LLL Great Britain.
How Would You Respond?

Here is an extract from an Applicant, written to the ACLA, about a concept. Thank you to the LAD representatives who submitted their responses. There is no single right answer. Sharing possible approaches can help us consider how we might choose to respond.

Dear Amy,

Please don't be hard on yourself—you really have your hands full with your six children and providing care for others as well. You may have noticed that the ten concepts are written in such a way where there is no one “right” way to practice them. That means there is no one perfect diet that LLL advocates. What works for one family may not work for another. As you say, you recognize that we know that eating foods in their natural state is a healthier choice. This concept is a continuation of the “human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs” concept. The “good nutrition” concept continues this great foundation we have given them. We want to continue to help them grow and be as healthy as they can, and so we encourage mothers to provide well-balanced meals with variety and foods in as close to a natural state as possible. We also want to keep in mind that we are all mothers doing the best we can.

The wonderful resources we have in our library such as Whole Foods for the Whole Family and Feed Yourself and Feed Your Family can be a big help in finding balanced meals that are kid-friendly and mommy-time friendly. You are right, we never want to be “preachy” in our meetings or in our responses to mother’s calls. Mothers who come to LLL for support could be anywhere on the spectrum of eating habits, food choices, nutritional knowledge and concern for their diet. When Leaders are able to offer a variety of suggestions as well as helpful resources, mothers are empowered to make the choices that they believe will work for their own

Dear Alice ACLA,

I must admit I am struggling with the LLL concept on nutrition. I do believe in eating foods in their natural state, but I don't really understand why it's part of LLL philosophy. I don't think it's related to breastfeeding or child rearing and I find it a bit "hippyish" and "preachy." With six children, I have to admit I find the nutrition concept hard to live up to, especially as I am a childminder for other children and I'm exhausted by the end of the day, so can't spend much time cooking healthy meals. My family has far more fruit and vegetables in our diet than we used to, but we also have a lot of unhealthy things that I'd intended to try and avoid. I'm not sure what else to say about this concept, because I'm not really sure what would be expected from a Leader, or where this philosophy might come into play.

Amy Applicant

Dear Amy,

Please don't be hard on yourself—you really have your hands full with your six children and providing care for others as well. You may have noticed that the ten concepts are written in such a way where there is no one “right” way to practice them. That means there is no one perfect diet that LLL advocates. What works for one family may not work for another. As you say, you recognize that we know that eating foods in their natural state is a healthier choice. This concept is a continuation of the “human milk is the natural food for babies, uniquely meeting their changing needs” concept. The “good nutrition” concept continues this great foundation we have given them. We want to continue to help them grow and be as healthy as they can, and so we encourage mothers to provide well-balanced meals with variety and foods in as close to a natural state as possible. We also want to keep in mind that we are all mothers doing the best we can.

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families, whatever their current eating habits. Series Meeting 4 can be a great forum where everyone can share practical ideas and even recipes.

Let me know if you have further questions or concerns. It sounds like you are already doing a conscientious job of meeting the needs of your family as well as others in your care.

Sally Newel, USA

Dear Amy,

Thanks for writing so frankly—I am glad you’ve expressed your difficulties with this particular concept. The application period is a time for exploring the concepts and how we feel about them and it is natural to have questions about some of them if we are really engaging with the preparation for leadership.

It sounds as though you have a sense of what good nutrition means to you and you’re seeing some differences between what you are currently doing as a family and where you would like to be. Have I understood correctly? At the same time you’re also saying that it doesn’t seem to “fit” with the other concepts and you question how realistic it is. I think it can help to see the concept as an extension of offering the best nutrition through breastfeeding. When our children move on to other foods, we continue to want the best for them. Although taken to an extreme, the concept might be interpreted as advocating a raw food diet, it isn’t the intention of LLL to promote one particular diet. Instead, the concept makes a statement that can guide us all to provide a well-balanced and varied diet for our families.

This might be a good time to make use of your Group library, to check out two particular sorts of resources—those on family nutrition and those on the history of LLL. The LLL concepts were originally written in the 1950s, when convenience and processed foods were becoming more popular, so the “good nutrition” concept was a reminder of the value of foods “in as close to their natural state as possible.” I guess there are some similarities with popular foods available today! When the topic of nutrition comes up in your LLL meetings, do you think the mothers are able to share their experience and honest concerns? You might find it helpful to think about how you would plan a discussion on this topic, perhaps adapting some of the ideas given in the Leader’s Handbook for Series Meeting 4 “Nutrition and Weaning.” Or you may find a different approach would suit you better—let’s keep talking about this!

Please let me know what you find and how you feel about these resources, whether they clarify the position so that you feel more comfortable with the “good nutrition” concept and that your personal experience enables you to represent it, and we’ll talk more.

You may even find yourself suggesting the library needs a little refreshment—some books may be little used or worse, feel outdated, and there may be useful titles that could be added. It is always useful to have fresh eyes on meetings and libraries.

I am really looking forward to hearing your further thoughts on this.

Jennifer Vaudin, Great Britain

Dear Amy,

Thank you for your thoughtful and honest comments about LLL philosophy on nutrition. You raise some interesting points. La Leche League has always believed that a natural approach to birthing, nurturing, and nourishing children enhances every aspect of their lives, and ours as mothers as well. We know that good maternal nutrition during pregnancy affects prenatal growth and health, as well as the mother’s health. We know that breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for babies and enhances their diets as they grow older. A continued healthy approach to eating is something that parents often want to instill in their children, and it can be a gift that lasts a lifetime.
You are an extremely busy mother with many responsibilities and your time is limited. The nutrition concept reflects LLL’s approach to healthy eating and there are various ways of putting this concept into practice. You have stated that you do believe in eating foods in their natural states, and you have already increased your family’s intake of fruits and vegetables which is a very positive step. It does take time to seek out healthy recipes and often to prepare them, but you did and probably still do intend to avoid some of the less healthy choices. That also reflects progress. LLL Leaders are each on their own journeys with regard to nutrition and we don’t all have the same goals. We do our best to support and model this concept, especially when representing LLL. In your unique situation of having a large family, plus responsibilities of caring for other children as well, you could share the small changes you have made and the changes you are trying or hoping to make. It is also good to keep in mind that Leaders are less apt to talk about personal situations than they are to talk about what The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding suggests or what “many mothers have found.”

It is important that you feel comfortable in representing all of LLL philosophy, including the nutrition concept, so considering how you would feel doing this is essential. Please give some thought to what I have shared and let me know if it feels right for you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Darlene Utzinger, USA

New Extract

Dear Cynthia CLA,

As you know, I am working with Lindy, an isolated Leader Applicant. Recently Lindy sent me her ideas for how to support the mother of a one-week-old baby who is refusing the breast. Lindy suggested offering the mother information about “paced bottle feeding.”

Cynthia, I am very unhappy about giving any information about bottle feeding, and I’m not sure under what circumstances “paced bottle feeding” might be recommended, if ever. Am I out of date?

Anneka, ACLA

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: alisonjparkes@gmail.com
Fifteen and a half years ago, expecting my second baby, I attended my first La Leche League meeting in Cork, Ireland. It was the start of a wonderful journey of learning and discovery filled with deep and lasting friendships and a parenting support network that I still draw upon today. My work as a La Leche League Leader, then ACLA and CLA has helped me to develop the communication skills I use both in parenting and in my professional life. In short, I feel that my connection with La Leche League has strongly shaped every facet of the woman I am today, and for that I am grateful.

I now live in Abu Dhabi, one of the seven Emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, together with my Irish husband Fergus and our three children, Ineke (17), Odhran (15) and Gaia (12) and assorted pets. I am an anthropologist and teach Islamic art, art history and material culture at Zayed University. I co-lead Abu Dhabi LLL meetings with Noura Khoori, Casey D'Entremont and Rochelle Williams.

Breastfeeding had been a huge challenge with my first baby, born in England, and I knew I would need more support the second time around so a friend suggested coming along to a La Leche League meeting. Once again I faced a lot of challenges but with the support of incredibly long-suffering Leaders who took almost daily calls from me and visited on a weekly basis for ages, my son successfully breastfed until he self-weaned around 19 months (my sincere thanks to Jane Farren). Third time lucky and again with the support of the Leaders and like-minded mothers I met through La Leche League meetings, my youngest child nursed until she was nearly four.

It was time for me to give back and I started attending Enrichment Meetings and getting more involved. I do suspect that Frances Friery who was my LAD correspondent occasionally despaired as I worked my way through the application at snail’s pace—I think I took about three years, apologies Frances. I now realise how patient she was, as I only ever received a couple of pointed enquiries about whether I actually wanted to continue! The best motivation was always the annual Irish Leaders weekend in Dublin, an opportunity to connect, learn and build the Leader community, that I still miss desperately.

Throughout our family's frequent travels La Leche League has provided an anchor point not just for me, but for the whole family. When we moved to Genoa, Italy, the local La Leche League Leaders welcomed us with open arms and made such a huge effort to help us settle in—thank you in particular Carla Scarsi and Tiziana DeMeo.
and your co-Leaders. It was while in Italy that I took the opportunity to attend the European Management Symposium (EMS) that was held in Assisi—a great chance to catch up with my Irish LLL friends and to learn more about the behind-the-scenes structure and organisation of La Leche League. It was quite an eyeopener, not just the sheer scale and complexity needed to keep an international organisation running but also meeting Leaders from around the world and learning about the challenges they faced in different countries.

Later when we moved to Switzerland and there was a need for an ACLA to work with English language applications, the CLA for Switzerland, Rahel Oberholzer (whom I had met at the Assisi EMS), encouraged me to begin orientation. A big thank you to Karin Gausman, former LAD Director, for working with me through my ACLA orientation and helping me realise that I did indeed fit quite well into LAD! After checking out all the various LLL sections and roles, I have to admit that LAD was the one area that I felt wary of. The responsibility of helping to guide the next generation of La Leche League Leaders in a way that truly passed on that unique and somewhat intangible essence of this incredible organisation weighed heavily. Supported by Karin and Rahel’s belief in me, I took the plunge and discovered that not only was it not as daunting as I had imagined, but that in dialoguing with Applicants about LLL philosophy it deepened my own understanding and appreciation for it. I also felt profoundly privileged each time that these mothers shared with me their deeply moving and personal histories of mothering. Working in LAD, first as an ACLA in Switzerland, then later at-large, mainly with LLL Great Britain and then in Future Areas in Asia and the Middle East (FAiAsiaME), and then moving on to the position of CLA for FAiAsiaME has also been a valued journey of personal development and growth for me.

In taking on the position of the Administrator for Leader Accreditation for Asia, Africa and the Middle East, I very much look forward to working together with Cindy Garrison, Interim LAD Director, and LAD Council and learning the ropes from Toshi Jolliffe, my predecessor who has been the most incredible mentor throughout the last few years. Having deep personal connections with Africa, Asia and the Middle East, it is a privilege to both represent and support the development of La Leche League in this large and diverse region.

Noelia Moreno

* English translation follows.

Hola, soy Noelia madre de Eva (5 años) maestra, monitora de LLL y CLA de mi área (España). Llegué a LLL cuando Eva tenía un año buscando energía y apoyo para huir de la presión social y la falta de comprensión de mi entorno con mi estilo de crianza y mi lactancia. Hoy nuestra lactancia continua y continuará.

Me hice monitora por formar parte de esa red que a tantas mujeres sustenta y recoge en momentos muy vulnerables. Me acreditó en 2013 y en 2014 desarrollé las labores de co-secretaria de área (ADA). Gracias a eso, comprendí muchísimo mejor esta gran e internacional famiLLLia. Entendí el valor de las estadísticas y la necesidad de una estructura en la que las monitores estén protegidas y asesoradas para poder dar ese apoyo a las madres.

Noelia and Eva (5)
Me interesé por el Departamento de Acreditación de Monitoras y me enamoré de esta otra función! Tengo un gran equipo de ACLAs que me apoyan, me acompañan, me responden y a Elvira Germaná siempre a mi lado (mi predecesora). Aunque soy joven en la LLL y muy novata como monitora, he sentido siempre que mi voz era una más. Las monitoras veteranas siempre me han arropado, animado e informado cuando lo he necesitado. Incluso desde Europa, siempre he tenido una respuesta y un apoyo incondicional que me animan a continuar con mi trabajo y mis ganas dentro de LLL.

Uno de mis grandes retos es la digitalización y actualización del Manual de Monitoras en español! Ya os contaré cómo va la cosa! Y si alguna tiene información o ganas de trabajar en ello ¡soy toda oídos!

My name is Noelia. I am a teacher, LLL Leader and CLA for Spain. I have a daughter, Eva, who is five. I discovered La Leche League when Eva was a year old and I needed strength and support to cope with social pressure and the lack of understanding around me for my approach to rearing and breastfeeding Eva. That breastfeeding still continues now.

I became a Leader to be a part of this network which welcomes and supports so many women at difficult times. I was accredited in 2013 and then in 2014 I took over the job of Area Data Administrator (ADA). Thanks to this work I have gained a much better understanding of our wonderfulLLL international family. I have come to understand the importance of statistics and the need for a structure in which Leaders can be assisted in their work of supporting mothers.

I became interested in the Leader Accreditation Department (LAD) and I really fell in love with this work. I have a great team of ACLAs who provide support and assistance and my predecessor, Elvira Germaná, is always there to help. Although I have not been in LLL for long and I am still learning as a Leader, I have always felt that my voice counted. Older Leaders have always offered information and reassurance when I needed it. My questions have always been answered and I have received wholehearted support—from elsewhere in Europe too—which encourages me to continue with my work and my aims in LLL.

One of my greatest challenges is using computer technology to compile and update the Leaders’ Handbook in Spanish. I’ll let you know how it goes! If anyone has any information or wants to work on it, I am all ears!!
I was appointed CLA for Japan in March 2015. Eri Kido who had held this position for six years passed the baton to me. I am deeply grateful to Eri for her warm and kind support and for the learning opportunities she has offered to LAD Japan.

I live in Kanazawa, Japan, with my husband, Yusuke, and two sons, Yuki (11) and Rihito (6). My house is located right beside Kenrokuen, one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan: [http://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kenrokuen/e/index.html](http://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kenrokuen/e/index.html) The trees, flowers and plants through the changing seasons are picturesque in this garden. The Hokuriku Shinkansen bullet train started in spring 2015 and there are now many tourists from various parts of Japan as well as from all over the globe.

My husband is a very breastfeeding-friendly pediatrician. He understands and supports LLL philosophy. I once accepted too much volunteer work in the children’s kindergarten, the primary school’s PTA and in some other volunteer activities. My husband once saw me overwhelmed because I did not know how to prioritise my work. He encouraged me by saying, “Other people may be able to do what you do in the PTA and with other activities. Remember that not so many people can do what you do in LLL. You are doing valuable work as a Leader.” LAD representatives in the world share LLL philosophy and our hearts are connected.

The former CLAs for Japan were so kind, considerate and bright that I was worried whether I could be like them as the CLA. I am confident, though, that I can do my best! LAD Japan is supported by the Associate Administrator of Leader Accreditation, Toshi Jolliffe, and our members are Yukari Kimura, Eri Kido, Hitomi Akao. Yukari and Eri are former CLAs and Hitomi is an ACLA with longtime Leader experience. I was accredited in 2006 and shared the same joy with Asayo Mori, ACL for Japan, who offers me strong support. I feel honoured to have been appointed CLA and I should like to continue to learn as a mother and as a Leader. I hope that my learning will return a favour to breastfeeding mothers, other LLL Leaders and my family.
Semi-Annual Report

Six months have already passed! It is Semi-Annual Report (SAR) time. Your support person will soon contact you with the current SAR form. This is a good time to send a touch-base note to an inactive Applicant so that you can submit accurate statistics with your report. Some LAD representatives send a questionnaire to encourage the Applicant to respond. A sample form is available at: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/embqpvlmzxr7lmf/AABdvSHdzBgNJh1_YbXk1iB0a?dl=0
A Dropbox account is required. It can be downloaded free of charge at: https://www.dropbox.com/install

Inspiring personal history

The LAD encourages the Applicant to design her own application and choose her own learning style. A LAD representative in Latin America was very inspired when an Applicant submitted her personal history as a PowerPoint file. With her permission, this was presented at the LAD Council meeting in Washington DC in July 2015. Another Applicant in Canada sent her personal history in newsletter style with pictures and graphics. Let’s be open to the Applicant’s preferred learning style and creativity in presenting her personal history. Respecting her choice may be reflected when she helps a breastfeeding mother in the future.

Working with ten Applicants

You may wonder how many Applicants other LAD representatives work with. We cannot measure the workload by the number of Applicants because some of them respond right away and others take a long time. If you are new to the LAD, how about starting with two or three applications and gradually increasing the number up to ten? You may be surprised that your workload is quite manageable since some Applicants work more slowly than others.
Congratulations on your appointment!

Marie-Claire Bakker  ALA, Asia, Africa and Middle East (AAME)

Lori Bryan  At-large Member, LAD Council

Pam Laird  ACLA, Michigan, USA

Letticia Mincham  CLA, Area 1, New Zealand

McKenze Ocampo  ACLA, Texas, USA

Vicky Reynell  LAD Secretary for AAME

Adith Stoneman  ACLA, Area 1, New Zealand

Sue Sutton  Interim ACLA, Area 2, New Zealand, LAD Council representative

Christine Thompson  ACLA, Florida/Caribbean Islands, USA
Working with Leader Applicants in Latin America

A Leader Applicant from Guatemala City is learning about Leaders’ activities apart from Group work. LLL Leader Melissa Coffey (right) is sharing her experience of offering mother-to-mother support at a national hospital.

Gladys Baez (left), CLA for LLL Dominican Republic, is working with a Leader Applicant and her daughter on her final paper work. The Applicant’s daughter was good company, and for Gladys it was a way to confirm that yes, this new Leader will represent LLL philosophy very well. Gladys says: “Working with Applicants is the best thing we do because it helps new Leaders prepare for the next generation to receive support and information in the very same way that we received it.”
An isolated Leader Applicant (left) from the Canary Islands, Spain, finally meets her LAD support person, Mariana Petersen, LLL Guatemala. Mariana says: “It was a joy to meet her in person after working with her only via email!”