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LIFE SKILLS: DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR 105 LIONS DISTRICTS

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Produced with the approval of the Council of Governors of MD 105, and in consultation with the Vice District Governors of 2005-2006, by a team of the MD 105 Lions-Tacade Partnership's Steering Group.

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LIFE SKILLS: DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR 105 LIONS DISTRICTS

Produced with the approval of the Council of Governors of MD105, and in consultation with the Vice District Governors of 2005-2006, by a team of the MD105 Lions-Tacade Partnership's Steering Group

1 Introduction: The Scope and Purposes of these Guidelines

These guidelines are designed for the information of and practical reference/use by District Governors and all District Officers.

Together with 'Life Skills: Brief Guidelines for Lions', and the much more detailed 'Lions Clubs and Life Skills Education' and the specific: 'Guidelines for 105 Lions District Life Skills Officers' www.lions.org.uk/LionsTacadePtrnshp.htm they form a complete set.

The early **Sections 2 to 7** are designed for the whole District team but we single out the following people:-

- Each District Governor, for his or her understanding, leadership and support
- Each Vice District Governor, in preparation for this or her year as DG
- The Region and especially the Zone Chairmen, who can provide vital occasions for their District Life Skills Officer to explain the Life Skills Education needs in their Lions Clubs' areas, and the means and opportunities for Lions to contribute to their communities in this work.

In **Section 7** we indicate how life skills work can link with and promote other elements of the Opportunities for Youth Programme, and how it can reinforce many membership extension projects.

In **Section 8** we summarise the key skills and knowledge needed by the newly appointed and the more experienced, District Life Skills Officer. Together with an interest in young people, their schools and parents these enable each DSLO to enjoy and succeed in the role. It provides a guide both for the candidates and the appointing DG.

On this basis Lions Life Skills education can extend in many of our communities, and build up further. Hence our title, 'developmental guidelines'.

2 Life Skills Education's Roots in the Purposes of Lions Clubs International

Successful life skills education enables the fullest development of every child and young person, in partnership with their parents so that they can:- have a safe, healthy and stimulating childhood and youth; build their self-confidence and make good relationships; discover and fully use their talents; and progress towards good citizenship and a fulfilled adult life. It is thus rooted in two of the primary purposes of Lions Clubs International: 'Taking an active interest in the civic, cultural, social and moral welfare of the community', and 'Promoting good citizenship'.

As many of you will clearly recall, Lions' engagement began in the mid 1980's with a focus on the drug awareness and education of young people. In the British Isles it soon led to joint work with Tacade (The Advisory Council for Alcohol and Drug Education), which is a not-for-profit charity which provides publishing, training and consultancy services in the health education field.

We initially relied on teaching materials from the Lions-Quest programme for adolescents which extends worldwide, adapted with Tacade's help for use in the British Isles. However, this was overtaken by the introduction from 1990 of the English national curriculum for schools, with parallel developments in the other nations within MD105. Drug and alcohol was now an important part (but only a part) of the comprehensive field of personal, social and health education (PSHE). It was to be delivered by schools of every sort with the support and oversight of local education authorities and the schools inspectorate. Beginning with the basic pack '*Skills for the Primary School Child*' (1991), which was to reach 23,000

schools, a Lions-Tacade range of life skills education resources was developed and promoted over the following years, to match a continually widening range of needs.

3 The Present Scope of Life Skills Education, and the Lions-Tacade Product Range

The skills which are developed in our earliest years help us throughout our whole life, and their absence holds us back.

Life skills education is therefore defined for children from the age of 3 years in nursery groups and reception classes, for their personal, social and emotional development:- developing their self confidence and self esteem, self care, making relationships, disposition and attitudes, behaviour and self-control, developing a sense of community.

From 5 years onwards, at primary school and then through secondary school, it progressively widens to become personal, social and health education (PSHE): developing confidence and responsibility; a healthy safer lifestyle (including drug and alcohol, and sexual health and relationships education); and making good relationships while respecting differences between people. To that is added citizenship education at the appropriate level.

The current Lions-Tacade product range is extensive. From it we list five key resources:-

- *'Little Steps'*: personal, social and emotional development, 3-5 years (2004)
- *'I am I know I can'*: personal, social health education with citizenship education, 5-11 years (2001)
- *'Citizenship 11-16'*: matching the detailed curriculum, 11-16 years (2003)
- *'Respect It!'*: alcohol education, 11-16 years (2002)
- *'Sex, Drugs and Alcohol'*:- 2 parts: 14-19 years, and 16-19 years (2003)

4 The Lions-Tacade Partnership:- Promoting and Developing the Life Skills Education Product Range, and Supporting Clubs, Zones and Districts

The partnership between the Lions of Multiple District 105 and Tacade formed in the 1980s. It currently operates under a renewed agreement for the period 2003-2008. Lions Clubs benefit from this association of their life skills work with an expert high-profile publisher and its relationships with educationalists and Governments in our several nations. Tacade benefits from the practical and financial support of a leading service organisation, the purchase directly or individually by Clubs of life skills material on behalf of schools, and their links within their own communities.

This practical partnership is explained and set out in the **full guidelines** for Lions Clubs (**Section 5**), and the present-membership of the MD105 Lions-Tacade Steering Group is given (**Section 20.4**). Among their tasks are the production and updating of life skills guidelines, and support for the MD105 and District Life Skills Officers in their work. They plan and support the development, funding, publicity for, and promotion of new and continuing Lions-Tacade Life Skills resources.

The focus throughout is to attract and enable Lions Clubs to carry out effective Life Skills work to the benefit of their pupils, schools and communities.

5 Why is Lions Support for Schools Necessary, and Can Its Value be Proved?

In the majority of local education authorities/education boards, PSHE, citizenship and related areas of life skills suffer from a lack of dedicated funding for the provision of teaching materials and teachers' training. At the same time they are usually given limited teaching time and attention, especially at secondary level, because of the demand of literacy, numeracy, and later, tests and examinations. This is set out in **Section 9** of the **full guidelines**, both the positives and the negatives.

However, we know from experience that the value of Lions' support of life skills in their schools can fully be proved. This is because it is essential that every donation is not "blind" but involves necessary briefing/training of staff and feedback to Clubs on the use and effectiveness of Lions-Tacade resources. This is summarised in **Section 8** of the **brief guidelines for Clubs**.

Both for one-off gifts and projects and for any on-going programme you can see that effective support of life skills education needs to be based on partnerships with the schools, the LEA/EB and often with other contributing donors. This need for partnerships gives added emphasis to establishing **continuity** in life skills work at National, District and Club level, especially in each District.

For responses from LEAs and schools see **Appendix A**

6 Partnerships and Continuity:- Life Skills Teamwork, Records and Updates

It is worth emphasising and developing the last point (partnerships and continuity). Life skills work is not alone among the many LCI causes and activities in its potential range and complexity. As will be illustrated more fully below, a District Life Skills Officer typically deals with 65 or so Lions Clubs through 10 Zone groupings. A minority of Clubs are active, but any of them may quickly become so, and require detailed advice and support. In addition to the central sources of MD105 and Tacade, each DLSO is faced with (averagely) 12 local educational authorities/boards and 25 officer potential contacts. Potential local donors also require discovery and nurturing. Each Club's area can have 20-50 schools and preschool groups.

When effective life skills work is achieved it is through a range of partnerships:-

- The DLSO and certain Club, Zone and District colleagues
- The DLSO and LEA/EB advisers and donors
- The Club LSO's and their schools, and often other donors etc

Partnerships wax and wane, officers and headteachers come and go. Behind any consistent and successful District life skills programme are many relationships and clear records, all requiring regular updating.

Because of this complexity and continuing change there are usually strong reasons to build a team around the DLSO so that he or she can have support, a wider geographical reach, more contact and experience and above all **continuity**. The team may be formalised or not, but there is a great advantage in having pre-experienced people in line, with potential to take over the DLSO role or to fill absences. This will carry with it the necessary sharing and updating of records and database.

For all these reasons the Council of Governors include life skills work at District level among the Lions causes and activities which **merit a team of more than one person**, headed by the DLSO, wherever this can be developed.

7 Joint Work:- Life Skills and Other Youth Projects; Life Skills and Membership Extension

There are two areas of Lions work and development where life skills naturally links up, to mutual benefit:- youth work, and membership extension. Within the Lions Opportunities for Youth programme the following stand out:-

- Young Ambassadors of the 21st Century scheme, and ▪ Young Leaders in Service scheme: both these highlight the service of young people to their community, and provide opportunities to recognise their citizenship skills and personal and social development.
- The Peace Poster Contest (10-13 years) provides the opportunity for Lions Clubs to work closely with primary and secondary schools: this develops contacts for them to introduce, (or extend), their contributions to schools' life skills education.
- Leos Clubs (and New Century Clubs): the young members of these Clubs, whether or not pupils themselves, can contribute to peer education and mentoring schemes in life skills education.

Each District Youth Team Leader, and the fellow District Officers concerned, need to be aware of these connections and to use them creatively whenever feasible. This of course will include the DLSO.

On the membership front there are also actual and potential opportunities for the DLSO to work with the MERL team leader and members in situations which either link with or open up Lions Life skills work (eg):-

- New member Lions who include parents, teachers and school governors
- New Clubs or branches which bring in their own schools and colleges within their area
- The New Century Clubs for 18-35 year olds: role models, mentors, young parents and teachers

Whereas the DLSO is a full member of the District Youth Team, he or she may need special guidance and help from the District Governor and the MERL in focussing on membership extension projects and contributing to them in a timely way.

8 The Key Skills and Knowledge Needed by District Life Skills Officers

Note: Before appointment as DSLO each candidate is urged to familiarise himself/herself with the purposes, opportunities and realities of the job in their District – from the present DLSO and other experienced Lions. The following bullet points are to enable self-selection by the candidate(s), as much as selection by the District Governor.

DG's and VDG's when using these notes for themselves should focus on candidates' interest in the field, their readiness to learn and obtain support, and their ability to prioritise. Each of the following will take time to develop fully. Preparation, and ideally earlier relevant experience, is important, as is a period of several years in the role, if this is possible.

- An understanding of life skills education in all types of school
- A clear picture of the Lions-Tacade partnership and the roles of each
- A good knowledge of the Lions-Tacade range of teaching resources
- Readiness to work with, and ability to communicate with and persuade
 - The District Governor and a wide range of District Officers
 - Lions Clubs, member Lions, Zone Chairmen
 - Tacade staff; the MD105 Life Skills Officer, and fellow DLSO's
 - Local education authorities and officers, headteachers and teachers, and pupils
- An empathy with life skills education work as a channel for Lions to support their youth and their communities
- The ability to assess needs and opportunities, agree and publicise priorities
- The ability to learn from, persuade, and work with experts and colleagues
- A readiness to form, or develop further, a life skills support team
- An outgoing and positive personality
- Resilience, persistence, common sense.

THE OPERATING FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISTRICT LIFE SKILLS OFFICER

Multiple job holders or organisations are given as a typical number, with the range shown in brackets

c20 Other District Cabinet Members 5 Region Chairmen 12 Zone Chairmen (10-15) District Membership Extension	District Governor Vice District Governor DG's Newsletter DPRO	District Treasurer District Secretary District Youth Team Leader Life Skills Programme
65: Lions Clubs (50-85) President Club Life Skills Officer (20-40 Schools in a Club's Area)	DISTRICT LIFE SKILLS OFFICER LS Team Members LS Experienced Lions	Young Ambassador of C21 Young Leaders in Service Peace Poster Competition Leo Clubs Youth Exchange Youth Camps Youth Football Street Children
15 Local Education Authority/ Education Boards (10-20) 1-3 Officer Contacts each	Tacade, Manchester : Communications Mgr : Administrator : Chief Executive	Multiple District Life Skills Officer 12 District Life Skills Officers Adjacent Districts Others
Funders/Potential Funders (especially local ones) • Charitable Trusts • Business • Government/Local Govt	Sources of Information • District-wide or community-specific • LEAs/Schools • Funding	• Information exchanges • Advice/ideas • Links/contacts • Orders handling • Materials: resources : promotion

Notes:

- A For some purposes ((eg) general information and awareness, financial appeals) there should be no distinction between Clubs/Zones. For other purposes (eg support, representation, recognition) the DLSO and team will prioritise, guided by Club and Zone activity, initiatives, opportunities, District plans.
- B In the case of LEA/EBs, funders and potential funders, Lions experienced in Life Skills work and key sources of information, contacts need to be reconfirmed/renewed periodically.