Lions, be careful about your criticism

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Lions clubs form the largest service club organisation in the world, with over 46,000 individual clubs representing 1.35 million members. Clubs generally serve their local communities in a range of areas such as health, education, culture, sports and broader community welfare. Those that are supported include women, children and seniors in special need. An important purpose the lions clubs is to 'assist financially, culturally, socially and morally the disabled, disadvantaged and infirm of the community both directly and indirectly'.

Giving to others without asking in return is a great human virtue. This spirit binds Lions around the world, no matter where they work.

The Lions Clubs International Foundation supports humanitarian works of Lions by providing financial grants for projects at local and international level. The four key areas for which support is provided are: saving sight; serving youth; providing disaster relief; and meeting humanitarian needs. Lions have achieved notable success and their humanitarian efforts have made a difference to people's lives across the globe. The prevention of serious loss of sight for more than 30 million people around the world is a testament to this success.

The Australian Lions Foundation (ALF) was established by Lions with a view to providing assistance to people in need. In keeping with the mission of its parent international foundation, the ALF offers financial assistance and other support in case of national disaster, emergency and community welfare projects. The Foundation also aims to improve international understanding and cooperation by relief projects in developing countries.

Lions clubs adhere to a Code of Ethics in relation to their operation and service to the community. While the clubs serve communities, they encourage, build and foster a bond of friendship between the clubs and the community at large. An important ethic that guides the Lions stipulates: "To hold friendship as an end and not a means. To hold that true friendship exists not on account of the service performed by one to another, but that true friendship demands nothing but accepts service in the spirit in which it is given".

Lions clubs in Bangladesh also serve the community members in a range of areas. The Bangladesh Lions Foundation (BLF) was established in 1974 as a welfare institution at the national level and aimed to support individual clubs located at various places in the country. The signature project of BLF is the Lions Eye Institute and Hospital in Dhaka. Established as an eye hospital in 1974, it also became an eye institute in 2004 to expand its service relating to eye care by developing ophthalmic capacity for treatment of eye diseases. Other ongoing projects and services run by BLF include: (a) physiotherapy; and (b) mother and childcare

centre for provision of medicine, nutritional care, vaccination and family planning advice and service. An ambitious project underway is the High Rise Multi-complex Project.

I conclude my write-up remembering another simple Lions ethic as "To be careful with your criticism and liberal with your praise; to build up and not destroy".