Chapter 2:
Organizational Structure

The SGI—An Organization of Boundless Benefit—Encouragement From SGI President Ikeda

To emerge victorious, it is important never to cut ourselves off from the SGI, the organization dedicated to the achievement of kosen-rufu.

The mind of faith is invisible. So, too, are radio waves. TV broadcasts are electromagnetic waves that travel through space to reach their destinations. The communications between NASA and space shuttles are highly sophisticated and impressive. If the receiver is broken or turned off, however, radio waves from even the most powerful transmitter will not be picked up.

The SGI is the sole organization directly connected to Nichiren Daishonin. It is a wondrous gathering that has “emerged from the earth,” carrying out activities in accord with the Buddha’s decree. Those who link up and advance together with this organization dedicated to kosen-rufu and pervaded by benefit will evolve the correct mind of faith that matches the time. With this mind of faith, they can fill the canvas of their lives with portraits of happiness in which all their wishes are fulfilled. (My Dear Friends in America, third edition, p. 236)

SGI-USA Organizational Structure

SGI President Ikeda states: “All people are equal. There are absolutely no distinctions of superior and inferior among human beings. Differences of position in an organization are temporary and provisional. They are no more than an expedient means for enabling all members to practice joyfully and become truly happy.

Therefore, a leader in an organization is not someone who stands above others but one whose role is to serve and support everyone else” (My Dear Friends in America, third edition, p. 55).

The SGI-USA has eight organizational levels—unit, group, district, chapter, region, zone, territory and national—to facilitate communication and the care of individuals, based on the following guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>1–3 Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(please note that meetings are not held at the unit level)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>10–20 Members*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>2–3 Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(can split on 4th Group, if necessary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>4–7 Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(can split on 8th District, if necessary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>5–9 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(can split on 10th Chapter, if necessary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Zone</td>
<td>6–11 Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(can split on 12th Region, if necessary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>6 or more Zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number of members refers to average discussion meeting attendance.
Creating or Dissolving Organizational Units

Organizational units may be created or dissolved based on the organizational structural guidelines listed below. Also, please keep the following guidelines and procedures in mind:

Guidelines for Creating New Organizational Units
The primary reason to create new organizational units is to provide more effective support for the members. Change in organizational structure is ideally initiated by growth in membership at the district level. For example, when the number of districts increases, new chapters may be formed, which in turn affects the number of regions and so forth. If organizational splits occur without a commensurate increase in membership at the district level, the organization tends to become top-heavy.

New organizational units can be created when a specific unit has:

- The number of members based on the average discussion meeting attendance as outlined in the Organizational Structure chart on p. 23;
- The number of organizational units necessary to create a new organizational level (for example, the number of groups necessary to make a district); and
- The leadership necessary to support the membership.

Guidelines for Dissolving Organizational Units
Dissolving an organizational unit is a last resort and should only be initiated after great efforts have been made to support the members in that unit for a period of time. The primary reason to dissolve an organizational unit is to provide more effective support for the members.

Organizational units may be dissolved when they do not have:

- The leadership necessary to support the membership; or
- The number of members based on the average discussion meeting attendance or appropriate number of organizational units as outlined in the Organizational Structure chart on p. 23.

Naming of Organizational Units
All recommendations for organizational names should represent geographical locations in their city, community or neighborhood relevant to where meetings take place or members reside. The maximum number of characters in naming an organizational unit in the statistics system is twenty-five, including spaces.

Procedures for Creating/Dissolving New Organizational Units
The creation or dissolving of an organizational unit is recommended by the Personnel Committee one level above and approved by the Personnel Committee two levels above the level of the organizational unit proposed for creation. For example, the creation of a new district is recommended by the chapter Personnel Committee and approved by the region Personnel Committee.

The creation or dissolving of an organizational unit should follow the steps below and must be approved by the appropriate Personnel Committee before any leaders can be recommended.

Step 1: Discussion
The recommending Personnel Committee should meet together to discuss the creation of a new organizational unit.

Step 2: Recommendation
The recommending Personnel Committee submits their proposal to the approving Personnel Committee along with a completed Organization Chart (see form, p. 28) showing the proposed change.

Step 3: Approval
The decision of the approving Personnel Committee should be reported to the recommending Personnel Committee. If the proposal is not approved, further discussion between the recommending and approving Personnel Committees is required.
It is important to fulfill the functions outlined by these positions. While ideal, it is not always possible that every position of the leadership team be filled.

The four-divisional team leader (hereafter referred to as the 4D leader), divisional leader and divisional vice leader positions are commonly referred to as "line" leadership positions. In general, the “line” leaders are the primary participants in the planning meetings at each level. However, they may invite other leaders to participate as needed.

**Four-Divisional Team Leader**

Typically, each district through national organizational unit is supported by divisional leaders from all four divisions. Where there is a need, a 4D leader may be appointed to coordinate activities and communication among the four divisions and to support the entire membership—not just one division. When a 4D leader is appointed, he or she should be someone other than one of the divisional leaders. A 4D leader may be from any division as long as he or she meets the leadership qualifications for men's and women's division appointments at that level (see p. 50).

**Divisional Leader**

The divisional leader works with other leaders to support the development of the organization and the membership as a whole. He or she supports, visits, encourages, communicates and plans activities for the members of his or her division (men's, women's, young men's, young women's).

*Please Note: The elementary school division, junior high and high school division and student division fall under the umbrella of the youth division and are represented in the line organization by their divisional youth leaders.*

**Vice Leader**

The vice leader assists the leader, as needed, in fulfilling his or her responsibilities. In addition, he or she may represent the leader at various activities. Vice leaders should be given clear roles and responsibilities and should report to and communicate regularly with the leader they are assisting. The vice leader position begins at the district level.
**Member Care Advisor**

“The presence of these seniors, in a way, provides a “lifeline” of faith for each member, and for the Soka Gakkai they serve as an important foundation of support for kosen-rufu. This is why Shin’ichi Yamamoto once referred to the guidance division members as the ‘Red Cross for kosen-rufu.’ For all Soka Gakkai members to practice their faith cheerfully and achieve happiness there needs to be a network of individuals who are able to offer encouragement to every member, without a single exception. Seniors in faith play a key role in forming this network.” *(The New Human Revolution, Eternal Joy 45 — Tentative Translation)*

**Primary Purpose of The Member Care Advisor Responsibility:**

Becoming a Member Care Advisor means to join a peer group of the most respected, capable and committed SGI-USA members, possessing many years of rich experience in practice and responsibility as line leaders in the SGI organization. The primary purpose of the role of Member Care Advisor is to support the members by:

1. Conducting home visits, to both new and longer-term members;
2. Giving personal guidance for the purpose of helping each member develop deep roots of faith and a solid practice; and
3. Provide other forms of member care and support for and communication to current line leaders as detailed below.

**Appointments as Member Care Advisor**

1. Member Care Advisors should be appointed at the District and Chapter levels.
2. Member Care Advisors are recommended and appointed based on procedures described in the SGI-USA Leadership Manual.

**Primary Responsibilities of Member Care Advisors**

In addition to the primary activities such as home visitation and personal guidance, Member Care Advisors should be warmly encouraged by line leaders to engage in activities such as:

a. Propagation;

b. Encourage members to subscribe to SGI-USA publications and participate in contributions; and

c. Support new members by taking part in Gohonzon enshrinements and visit for the purpose of teaching gongyo.

**Other Responsibilities of Member Care Advisors**

Member Care Advisors can support the line leadership by taking other roles, with the approval in advance of line leaders at the same level or higher. Such activities can include:

1. Staffing contribution collection tables at SGI centers, and

2. Support with statistics administration, including appointment as Chapter Statistics Administrator.

**Participating in and Leading Discussion, Study, Planning and Leaders Meetings**

1. It’s the role of line central figures and vice leaders to lead discussion, study and planning meetings. In the course of preparing to lead such meetings, central figures and vice leaders can freely call upon Member Care Advisors for opinions and advice.

2. If it’s the consensus of line leaders that a Member Care Advisor is needed as central figure for an organizational unit or a lecturer for line organization study meetings, then that person should be appointed as a line level leader or vice leader, following the usual recommendation and approval procedure.

3. Line leaders can solicit opinions from Member Care Advisors related to any personnel matter. Member Care Advisors do not vote on such personnel matters. Once a consensus regarding personnel appointments has been reached and implemented, all leaders including Members Care Advisors should support the decision unconditionally when speaking to members.

**Unity and Two-way Communications**

In keeping with the core Soka Gakkai principles of reporting, communication and discussion,

1. Member Care Advisors should report regularly to their divisional line leaders about their home visitations, guidance and other activities.

2. In turn, it is the responsibility of line central figures and vice leaders to ensure that Member Care Advisors are apprised of and invited to all appropriate leaders and planning meetings.

**Senior Advisor**

**Purpose of Senior Advisor:**

At the General Director’s sole discretion, senior advisors to the national men’s, women’s, youth, young men’s or young women’s division may be appointed (one per division). The senior advisor is a support position, whose
function is to advise the respective divisional leader with regard to divisional growth and leadership concerns. The senior advisor shall maintain close communication with the respective divisional leader. The senior advisor may consult with the General Director on divisional matters that he or she deems necessary.

Appointment Process for Senior Advisor:
The General Director may appoint senior advisors to the national divisional leaders (one per division) from among those members who formerly held such positions. The term of the senior advisor may expire concurrently with the current term of the respective divisional leader.

Leadership Responsibilities at Each Level

Leaders at the same organizational level should work together as a team to fulfill their joint responsibilities. The team should initiate, schedule and lead appropriate meetings on a regular basis to facilitate communication, the coordination of activities, encouragement and unity. The following guidelines describe specific leadership responsibilities at each level.

Unit Level

The primary responsibilities of the unit leader are communication with the members and assisting the group (or district) leader with member care. Ideally, each unit leader will be responsible for communicating with one to three members. The unit position is not a divisional position as districts do not need to create four-divisional units. There are no vice unit leaders and meetings are not held at the unit level. For more information on unit leaders, please visit:

http://www.sgi-usa.org/memberresources/leaders/Leadership_resources/Memos/2017/Pdf/2017-ORG-031_Unit_Leader_Booklet.pdf

Group Level

The primary responsibilities of the group leader are to teach and encourage members to carry out the basics of practice and support the unit leaders. In addition, the group leader is responsible for supporting district activities and, when deemed appropriate by the district leadership team, coordinating group activities. A group may have one or more leaders, which may consist of a combination of men's and women's leaders or two leaders from the same division.

District Level

The primary responsibilities of the district leader are to care for the members and coordinate discussion meetings. The district leaders are also responsible for:

◆ Creating an effective internal structure through (a) recommending group and unit leadership appointments to the chapter and (b) supporting appointed group and unit leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities;
◆ Providing effective well-planned activities by holding monthly planning meetings to schedule, plan and implement district discussion and study meetings, as well as chanting sessions, gongyo practice and so forth;
◆ Knowing the condition of their members by (a) communicating and visiting with them, (b) maintaining Membership Information Cards, (c) conducting member care meetings every other month and (d) completing bimonthly Membership Statistics Reports;
◆ Communicating and working in coordination with the chapter leadership to conduct activities;
◆ Ensuring that members receive guidance in faith from the organizational line leaders;
◆ Supporting the expansion of kosen-rufu by (a) doing shakubuku (introducing new people), (b) cherishing and raising youth, (c) assisting new members in receiving the Gohonzon and (d) providing aftercare support on an individual basis;
◆ Supporting and promoting organizational activities outside of their immediate district.

Chapter Level

The primary responsibilities of the chapter leader are to find and raise new leaders within the districts, to ensure that all members are cared for and to assist district leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities. The chapter leaders are also responsible for:

◆ Encouraging new members in their practice;
◆ Coordinating the planning of chapter activities;
◆ Maintaining direct involvement with the members by participating regularly in district activities;
◆ Fostering organizational growth through raising and developing leaders, especially youth;
◆ Meeting on a regular basis with district leaders, focusing on membership and leadership;
◆ Communicating and working in coordination with the region leadership to plan chapter activities;
Supporting the districts in conducting member care meetings every other month and ensuring that statistics are accurate;
Support study programs including district study meetings and annual study examinations;
Supporting and promoting organizational activities.

Region, Zone, Territory and National Leadership
These levels all have similar responsibilities but for an increasingly larger membership.

**Forms**

Organization Chart (see below)—

Unit Leader Booklet (see p. 27)—