

**EDITORIAL**  
**THE PURPOSE OF THE SGI**  
**BY JAMIE LIPTAN**  
**STAFF WRITER**

**‘Our districts are the barometer of our movement. Only when the district leaders are able to care for each person, responding to their needs in faith and helping them create victories in their lives, can the SGI be said to be reaching its goals.’**

The United Nations has 189 member nations across the globe. It was recently announced that there are SGI members in 177 countries and territories. That is a big number. People are now striving toward the goal of kosen-rufu in 90 percent of the world.

While these numbers are awe inspiring, they can be a bit overwhelming, perhaps causing us to feel like a very small part of a very big organization. But what is the SGI, fundamentally? What makes it the powerful movement for societal change that it has become?

Your district. That’s right. SGI President Ikeda once compared the organization to an orchard, where the fruit trees are districts and the fruit is the membership. The orchard itself has no power to care for the fruit, and can only be called a success if its constituent trees consistently produce healthy fruit.

Likewise, our districts are the barometer of our movement. Only when the district leaders are able to care for each person, responding to their needs in faith and helping them create victories in their lives, can the SGI be said to be reaching its goals. President Ikeda has continuously stressed that the sole purpose of the SGI is the happiness of one person, and it is the district leaders that make this a reality.

But often, despite tremendous effort and unshakable conviction to help every member, it can be easy to feel inundated, unable to accomplish everything we want to. Some of our districts are simply too big. How can we expect a team of four sincere district leaders to personally care for everyone on a list of 40 or 50? Even if we did not have jobs or school or a family to care for, would we have the time to deepen our relationships with so many members, visiting them often and getting to know their struggles?

This is why the national leaders of SGI-USA are asking local organizations to consider the size of each district. If we can reduce the size of each district, the district leaders can create a truly warm, family environment, where every person can feel embraced and empowered to fulfill their mission as a Bodhisattva of the Earth—and not exhaust themselves in the process.

Of course, sometimes it is invigorating to attend a meeting with a lot of people, where the gongyo is loud and the leaders are inspirational. But more often than not, people attending a discussion meeting at which each person has a chance to contribute feel they gain something more powerful to apply to their daily lives and win.

And when we create more districts, we need more district leaders. This is our opportunity to inspire a whole new generation of leaders for kosen-rufu, giving them the opportunity to gain fully from the two ways of practice—for oneself and others. Those of us that are or have been leaders know the joy of sharing a member’s victory and the tremendous growth we undergo in our efforts to help another in faith.

It should be made clear that this idea of district expansion is not a mandate from the

national organization, with a cookie-cutter district model and a deadline to meet. That would be like the orchard deciding that it knows best how to care for the individual fruit. Rather, in this case, the orchard is trying to get more nutrients to each tree, so they can care for the fruit in the best way possible.

Our SGI movement has been built around the idea that one person can help another achieve a revolution in their life. Our districts are the place where these relationships develop, where faith is deepened and courage is forged. Let's create districts that fit that idea, where each member gets the support in faith they deserve. In this way, the world will come to know the SGI as a group of caring, empowered people that really can change the world.