

PC Winter Meeting 2017 - Report VP Chapters

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Abstract

Membership in Chapters seems to be increasing.

The degree of activity and Chapters' web presence was similar to previous years.

The Asia-Pacific conference originally planned for later in 2016 has been moved to February 2017 and seems to have been a great success.

It continues to be important that active new Chapters apply for support from the Field Development fund.

1 Information concerning relevant aspects

1.1 Chapters and membership

The set of Chapters continued to be stable in 2016.

Chapter	Years			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
African Regional		1	1	1
Australasia	1	1	1	1
Benelux	1	1	1	1
Brazil	1	1	1	1
China	1	1	1	1
Economics	1	1	1	1
German	1	1	1	1
India	1	1	1	1
Iran			1	1
Italian	1	1	1	1

Chapter	Years			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Japan	1	1	1	1
Korea	1	1	1	1
Latin America	1	1	1	1
Pakistan		1	1	1
Russian	1	1	1	1
South Africa		1	1	1
Student	1	1	1	1
Swiss	1	1	1	1
UK	1	1	1	1

Table 1: Chapters over the years (1 = active)

Since when I took over as VP Chapters for my term 2017-2019, we have two requests of constitution from two new Chapters, the ASEAN Chapter and the Thailand Chapter (both still currently undergoing revisions), which show the great momentum that SD is having in Asia.

There have not been huge changes in membership count of chapter members who are also paying members of the SDS. According to the previous reports and the website membership database (for 2015), the situation is the following:

Continent	Chapter	SDS members in each year				TREND
		2013	2014	2015	2016	
Global	Economics	117	110	102	124 (213)	
	Student	69	60	55	69 (144)	
Africa	African Regional		39	29	29 (56)	
	South Africa		18	10	11 (30)	
Asia	Australasia	34	37	31	52 (81)	
	China	22	13	20	26 (52)	
	Japan	14	22	14	24 (41)	
	India	9	7	10	21 (51)	
	Iran			n.a.	28 (79)	
	Russian	7	6	9	12 (27)	
	Korea	6	6	5	14 (32)	
	Pakistan		4	9	5 (21)	
Americas	Latin America	41	44	38	49 (88)	
	Brazil	28	34	26	31 (57)	
Europe	UK	66	33	52	51 (91)	
	German	33	36	41	42 (58)	
	Swiss	21	22	27	19 (30)	
	Benelux	29	16	16	27 (39)	
	Italian	13	15	14	23 (36)	
All continents		509	522	508	657	

Table 2: Chapters and “full” membership per continent

There are two chapters that are not bound to specific geographic or linguistic attributes: *Economics* and *Students*. They are larger than the other chapters – which is not surprising given their global scope. The two *African* chapters are probably entering a stable regime. *Asia* has a larger number of chapters, and is showing a great momentum, as also we can see from the numbers, growing quite well in almost all chapters, but the Pakistan one, which has gone below the critical number of 10 “full” members; but as they are one of the relatively new chapters, I don’t think the number of “full” members is indicating a problem now. However, this might be one of the chapters to monitor. *Russia* has not had a stronger membership headcount in the past years, but they use to be independent and have a stable pattern of activity. *Korea* in line with the expectations of last year, has increased their headcount. The two chapters of the *Americas* are showing a slight increase. In *Europe*, the *Swiss* chapter shows an decrease in membership, while *Benelux* has increased. Also the *Italian* chapter is showing a higher membership compared to previous years. My impression is that in order to have a full picture we should try to infer an headcount also in the US (a US Chapter?)

Four years of data may still be too short to look for tendencies. However, I dare to say we have a core of strong and stable chapters in Europe and in the Americas. *What strikes is that over the last year, the headcount has shown an increase of around 30%, especially driven by the excellent momentum in Asia.*

It is also interesting to look at the proportions between “full” members of the SDS and “local” or “associate” members. The following table shows percentages which have been computed as

$$(1) \%Local\ Members = (Total\ Members - Full\ Members) / Total\ Members^1$$

and therefore represents the part of each chapter which consists of “local” members:

Continent	Chapter	% local members in each year			
		2013	2014	2015	2016
Global	Economics	43%	48%	38%	41%
	Student	101%	77%	76%	52%
Africa	African Regional		26%	59%	48%
	South Africa		28%	90%	63%
Asia	Australasia	59%	35%	29%	35%
	China	73%	69%	55%	50%
	Japan	171%	36%	71%	41%
	India	278%	129%	140%	59%
	Iran				64%
	Russian	0%	17%	44%	55%
	Korea	133%	33%	120%	56%
	Pakistan		100%	44%	76%
Americas	Latin America	46%	39%	55%	44%
	Brazil	54%	32%	42%	45%
Europe	UK	58%	52%	40%	44%
	German	61%	36%	44%	27%
	Swiss	52%	18%	30%	36%
	Benelux	24%	44%	19%	30%
	Italian	62%	40%	43%	36%
All continents		65%	45%	50%	50%

Table 3: Percentage of “local” members in each Chapter

Just like for the “full” members, the table shows mainly an image of stability. Some chapters, which have decreased their number in “full” members (like in Africa) see the percentage increase due to a more stable group of chapter members who are not SDS members (not so in the Benelux chapter). In the Student chapter, one might have expected the low membership fee to draw in more individuals, but there may be other reasons why students do not immediately sign up in the SDS. India and Korea have a comparatively big group of “local” members.

Overall, I am using here Martin’s Schaffernicht words from last year’s report: “it appears that even the global chapters have a relevant non-SDS membership. This is of course unavoidable, because these chapters represent the “Sputnik” of system dynamics: either they are in places where system dynamics is new (Africa, India) or where other methodologies have a much wider and dominant installed base of users (Europe, Americas and large parts of Asia). We should not expect a huge percentage of individuals who participate in workshops or other chapter activities to “see the light” and become “full” SDS members. Some do and some do not.

¹ The computation formula has been changed, for 2016, to the one indicated, so that we have an idea of the memberships composition percentage in terms of Full vs Associate members. The data is inconsistent with previous years as the used formula was different [Percentage = (Total – Full) / Full], and in my perspective not completely correct...

Commentato [SAI]: Hi Martin, could you pls update the figures for 2013-2015?
 You should use this formula:
 (old%Local * Full)+Full = Total
 Then use New%Local = (Total-Full)/Total
 Then could you rewrite this paragraph talking into account the new figures?
 Thx, Stefano

We can certainly remind Chapters that the Society would very much like to see “local” individuals become “full” members, but we ought not to interpret the current situation as a failure of the chapters.”

What I can add, from my perspective, and I lay it down for discussion with other PC members, is that in order to have a clearer picture related to the geographical impact of the SDS, through local chapter activities, we might want to consider the following:

1. ask members to declare their belonging to JUST ONE chapter
2. support the transition of the Economics Chapter to a SIG
3. maintain the Student Chapter as the only Chapter where members can declare a double association (but just for statistics on students...), asking them to refer about their affiliation to one geographical chapter
4. possibly support the constitution of a US Chapter (very important, too)
5. better integrate the information on chapter affiliation and SDS memberships with data provided by chapters themselves. In other words, the society should track just the membership and then crosscheck this information with the information provided by chapters in order to produce a coherent picture with the situation... currently (and I can provide a demonstration of it) it is not...

1.2 Chapter development and state

As in previous years, it is notoriously hard to collect information concerning chapter activities. Despite the fact that Chapter representatives know that an annual report is their responsibility, many find it hard to collect information from their members.

On Monday, March 13, the reported state is the following:

Chapter development	Reporting period: year 2016							
	Active	Development level	Category	Activities reported	Institutions	Taught in	Schools	Sponsored by Field Development Fund
African Regional	Unknown	Stable	Medium	No report				
Australasia	Yes	Developing	Low	Several	1	5		
Benelux	Unknown	Oscillating (but avg stable)	Unknown	No report				
Brazil	Unknown	Oscillating (but avg stable)	Unknown	No report				
China	Unknown	Slightly Developing	High	No report				
Economics	Yes	Developing	Medium	No report				
Germany	Yes	Stable	High	Several	2	12		
India	Unknown	Developing	Low	No report				
Iran	Yes	Unknown		No report				
Italy	Yes	Developing	Medium	Several	4	2	9	

Commentato [SA2]: @Martin: do u know what does it stand for?

Japan	Unknown	Oscillating (but avg stable)		No report				
Korea	Unknown	Developing	Medium	No report				
Latin America	Unknown	Stable	High	No report				
Pakistan	Unknown	Descending		No report				
Russia	Unknown	Oscillating (but avg stable)	Unviable	No report				
South Africa	Yes	Stable	Medium	Several	5	5	1	Yes
Student	Yes	Developing	High	Several				
Switzerland	Unknown	Descending	High	No report				
UK	Yes	Stable	High	Several	many	6		

Table 4: Activity of the reporting Chapters

Reports were received (on time) from the following chapters:

- UK
- German
- SYDIC (Italian)
- South African
- Australasian
- Student

I turn in this report in the expectation of receiving more reports during the coming days.

The UK, German and Italian chapters seem to be quite active, each displaying a wide set of interesting initiatives. Worth mentioning is the initiative from SYDIC, the Italian Chapter, which after having constituted itself into a Cultural Association for Social Promotion, legally recognized by the Italian Law, among its various activities is currently undergoing the translation of the seminal book “Thinking in Systems” from Dana meadows.

1.3 Web presence

Web presence also transmits an image of stability in most of the cases. The following table shows the current state of web presence and qualifies it in the “level” column into high, reasonable or low according to if the chapter has a website with relevant information for chapter activities which is up to date and if beyond that, system dynamics resources like publications are offered. The last column (“tendency”) refers to if each chapter is moving beyond their web presence of previous years, remaining stable or falling behind.

Web presence	2016					Level	Tendency
	LinkedIn	Website	Updated	Content	SDS logo		
African Regional	Yes	SDS site		Main event link		Low	Stable
Australasia						Low	Stable
Benelux	Yes					Low	Stable
Brazil	Yes	Yes	Mid 2015	Rich	Yes	Reasonable	Losing up-to-date-ness
China						Low	Stable
Economics	Yes	SDS site	unspecified	Chapter objectives	No	Low	Stable
Germany		Yes	Mar 2017	Rich	No	High	Stable
India		Yes	No: nov-14	No	modified	Low	Losing up-to-date-ness
Iran		SDS site	(Arabic)	(Arabic)			
Italy	Yes	Yes	Mar 2017	Rich	Yes	High	Stable
Japan		Yes	No: sep-14	Functional	Yes	Reasonable	Losing up-to-date-ness
Korea							
Latin America							
Pakistan							
Russia		Yes	(Cyrillic)	Seemingly Rich	No	Reasonable	Stable
South Africa		Yes	Nov 2016	Growing (“includes resources”)	Yes	Reasonable	Improving
Student	Yes	SDS site	Feb 2017	Functional	modified	Reasonable	Stable
Switzerland		Yes	July 2015	Functional	No	Reasonable	Losing up-to-date-ness
UK		Yes	March 2017	Rich	No	High	Stable

Table 5: Web presence

It has to be said that the quality of web presence tends to mirror the state of the chapters: UK Germany and Italy have been very organized and active, and they use their websites to support their activities and to reach out to interested individuals. The African Chapters are pushing forward and this includes their web presence. Other chapters use the web site or web page as coordination tools for their activities, without offering “resources” (many chapters in Asia, but also the two “global” chapters). Still other chapters are stable in themselves and do not feel the deed or opportunity to

reach out over the web site (seems to be the case in the Americas). A last group seems to be struggling to survive, and in their agenda, the web presence seems to have quite a low priority.

Overall, I'd mention the UK, the German and the Italy site as exemplary – with apologies to the Chapters using other alphabets which I cannot read.

2 Discussion

Using Martin's Schaffernicht approach to a sort of Chapters classification, my assessment of Chapters' standing in their development is quite similar to the one reported last year:

- 1) some are doing just fine, they are close to the SDS and do not ask for support (Germany, UK, now also SYDIC);
- 2) some are working hard to develop, they are close to the SDS and (sometimes) ask for support (Italy, Latin America, South Africa, African Regional);
- 3) some are working hard to develop, they are close to the SDS but do not ask for support (Korea, Brazil)
- 4) some appear to be doing just fine, but there is little interaction with the SDS (China, and Russia);
- 5) some seem to be at the edge of going down and there is little interaction with the SDS (Australasia, Pakistan, India);
- 6) and some are small and stationary (Switzerland, Russia, Japan).

3 For 2017

The same two directions of work indicated last year still need to be continued.

Attending to the developing Chapters: the Chapters who ask for support must be supported as best possible by the Field Development Fund. Also, the facilities for communication across SIGs and Chapters might be a topic for advances – even though one might as well argue that for those who are active, cross-communication is already possible.

Catalyzing support in underdeveloped areas with high potential. The Asian-Pacific conference has been reported to be an important event that is driving a great momentum in the area, potentially also seeing the birth of two new Chapters (the ASEAN Chapter and the Thailand Chapter).