PC Meeting June 2021 - Report on Chapters

Prepared by the Office of the VP Chapters & SIGs

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Version 1 (June 29th, 2021)

Abstract

Seventeen Chapters, out of 21 Chapters, provided their reports for 2020 (80%):

- ASEAN,
- Benelux,
- Brazil,
- China,
- Germany,
- India,
- Indonesia,
- Iran,
- Japan,
- Korea,
- Latin America,
- Nigeria,
- Oceania,
- Russia,
- South Africa,
- Student, and
- UK

Figure 1 shows the evolution of the number of Chapters handing in their annual reports from 2015 to 2020.
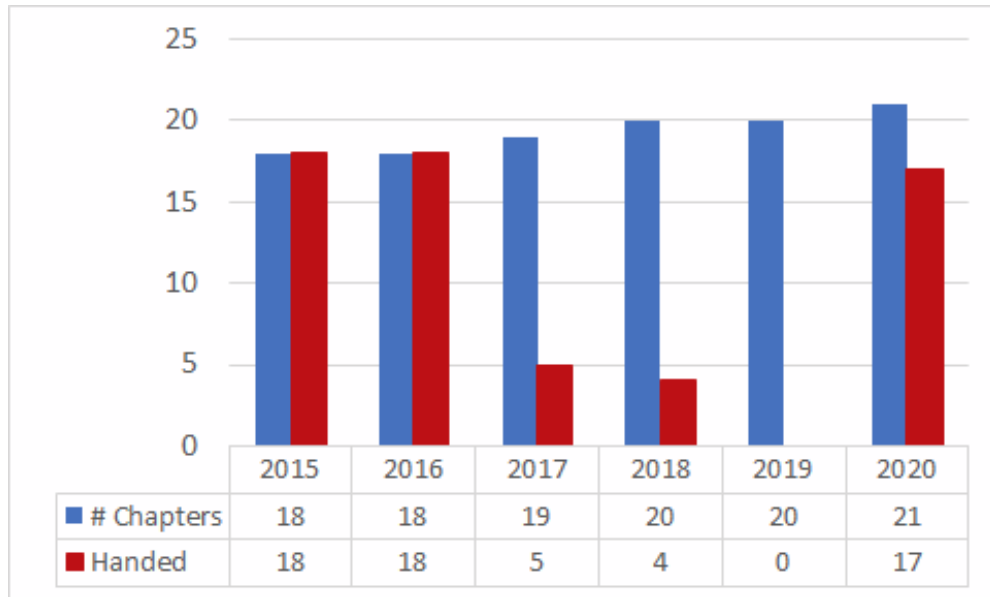
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Figure 1: Evolution of Chapters Annual Reports

The Italian Chapter *belatedly* handed in the report, but it is not computed on the graphs above, even though the contents of its report is reflected in this document.

We are still missing the reports from the African Chapter, the Pakistani Chapter and the Swiss Chapter, which have neither responded to our requests nor established contact by any means.

The ASEAN Chapter handed in the report, but has not recorded any activities during 2020 as they are undergoing a leadership transition. Dr Bellam Sreenivasulu has recently taken up the role of the ASEAN Chapter representative.

Finally, the newly formed Nigerian Chapter has been active from the very beginning, with high engagement of its members and many planned activities for the coming months.

With the new structure of the VP Office of Chapters, we were able to set up a more structured communication strategy regarding the annual reports. A first request was sent several months in advance, followed by reminders of the deadline. Then, once the deadline had passed, we followed up more closely with all the chapters that had not handed in their reports, and allowed them one extra week to submit. However, the entire process is still very manual and time consuming, both for the Chapters and the Office. Still, the availability of a web-based tool would probably speed up the process (still relying a lot on personal relationships and personal emails) as well as support the chapters and the VP chapters in data retrieval and aggregation into the form of a report.

1   Information concerning relevant aspects

1.1   *Chapters and membership*

We can only assume that all other chapters have been still active during 2020, as we did not receive any specific info or communication contrasting with such assumption. Table 1 summarizes the Chapters that submitted with their annual report for 2020.

Chapter	Years				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020
African Regional	1	1			
Oceania	1	1		1	1
Benelux	1	1			1
Brazil	1	1	1		1
China	1	1		1	1
German	1	1	1	1	1
India		1			1
Indonesia					1
Iran	1	1			1
Italian	1	1	1	1	
ASEAN					1
South Africa					1

Chapter	Years				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020
Japan	1	1			1
Korea	1	1			1
Latin America	1	1	1		1
Nigeria (NEW)					1
Pakistan	1	1			
Russian	1	1			1
Student	1	1			1
Swiss	1	1			
UK	1	1	1		1

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

We cannot really tell what the current situation about memberships is. What we can add again 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. 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
3. possibly support the constitution of a US Chapter (very important, too)
4. harmonize membership, in partnership with VP Membership and the SDS Office, based on the benchmarks carried out with other societies and associations

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.

1.3 Web presence

Web presence also transmits an image of stability in most of the cases. Table 2 shows the current state of web presence and qualifies it in the "level" column into high, medium 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	2020					Level	Tendency
	LinkedIn/ Facebook	Website	Updated	Content	SDS logo		
African	LinkedIn (Profile)	No	No	LinkedIn Profile	Yes	Low	Decreasing updates
ASEAN	No	No	No	-	-	Low	Stable
Oceania	LinkedIn	-	-	-	Yes	Low	Stable
Benelux	LinkedIn	Yes	Yes	Events and description	Yes	Medium	Stable
Brazil	LinkedIn and Facebook	Yes	Yes	Events, description, Newsletter	Yes	High	Stable
China	No	Yes	Yes	Description, events, profiles	Yes	High	Stable
Germany	No	Yes	Yes	Description, events, technical content	Yes	High	Stable
India	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
Indonesia	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
Iran	No	Yes	Yes	Description, events, technical content	Yes	High	Stable
Italy	LinkedIn and Facebook	Yes	Yes	Description, events, technical content	Yes	High	Stable
Japan	No	Yes	Yes	Description, events, technical content	Yes	High	Increasing updates
Korea	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
Latin America	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
Nigeria	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
Pakistan	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
Russia	No	No	No	-	-	-	-
South Africa	Facebook	Yes	No	Description and events	No	Medium	Decreasing updates
Student	Facebook	Yes	Yes	Only description and contacts	No	Low	Stable
Switzerland	No	Yes	No	Description and events	No	Low	Decreasing updates
UK	No	Yes	Yes	Description, events, technical content, jobs	No	High	Increasing updates

Table 2: Web presence

Figure 2 displays the aggregate social media presence and Figure 3 displays the overview of Chapters that keep an active website. Figures 4a and 4b present an overview of the numbers of chapters that keep social media presence while not keeping a website, and vice-versa.
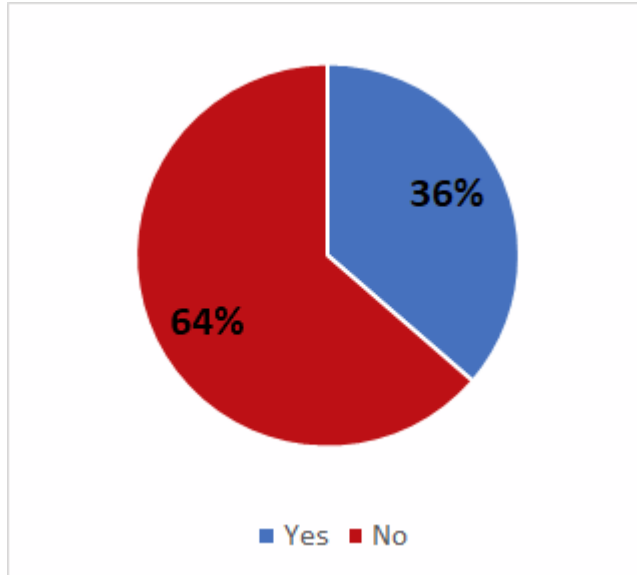
Figure 2: Social media presence (Yes: Chapter has some form of social media engagement / No: Chapter does not keep any social media channels)
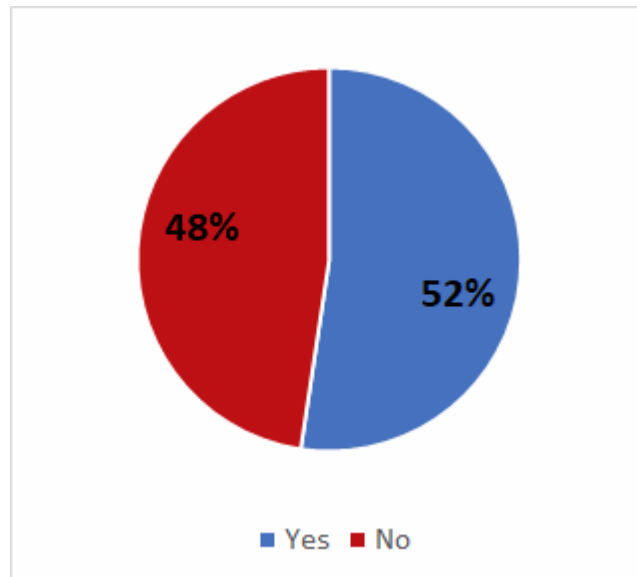

Figure 3: Website (Yes: Chapter has an active website / No: Chapter does have a active website)

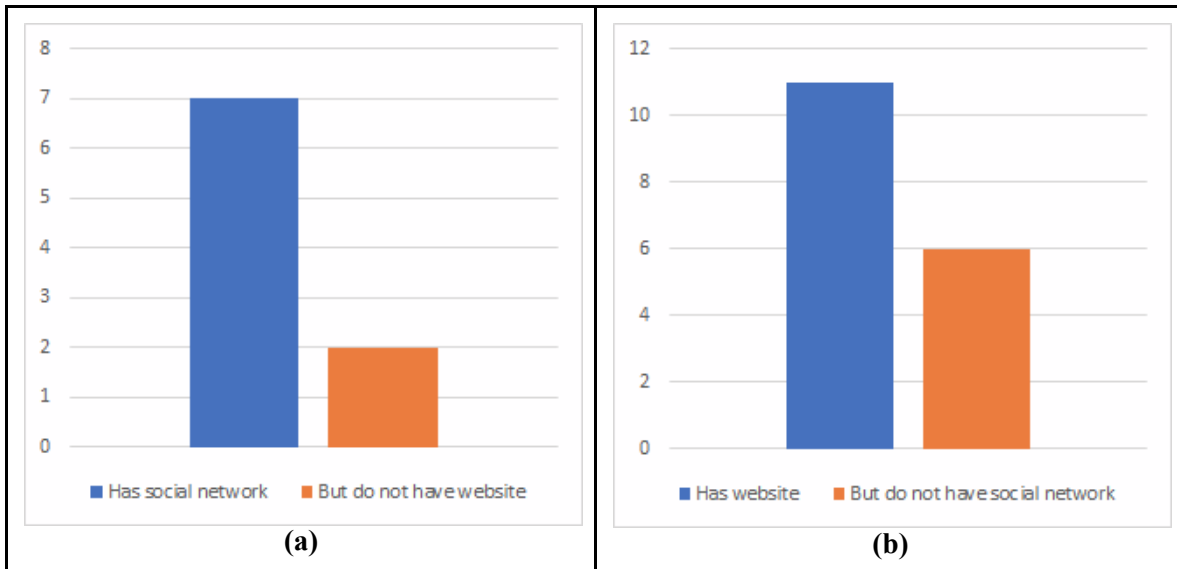|	
(a)	**(b)**

Figure 4: Number of chapters that keep at least one social media channel, but no website, and vice-versa.

The quality of web presence tends to mirror the state of the chapters: UK, Germany, Japan, Brazil, Iran, China and Italy have been very organized and active, and they use their websites to support their activities and to reach out to interested individuals. Other chapters use the web site or web page as coordination tools for their activities, without offering "resources". Still other chapters are stable and do not feel the need or opportunity to reach out over the web site, while other chapters struggle to keep a professional management of their web presence - both related to accuracy of information, information architecture, and frequency of update. A last group seems to be struggling to survive, and in their agenda, the web presence seems to have quite a low priority.In general, we have noticed oscillations in the web presence of less-structured chapters. It is our understanding that this depends on the fact that there is the need for stability in the chapters themselves, which can only be achieved thanks to the availability of resources (people who can work after chapters' things, manage websites, administrative things, etc…)

2   Discussion

Our assessment of Chapters' standing in their development is quite coherent to the ones reported in previous years (2019 and before):

1) some chapters are doing just fine, they are in very close contact to the SDS and do not ask for extensive support (Germany, UK, SYDIC);
2) some are working hard to develop, they are close to the SDS and (sometimes) ask for support (Latin America, South Africa, African Regional); in particular, it has to be mentioned the great working done inside the APCC which is supporting Asian Chapters to improve
3) some are working hard to develop, they are close to the SDS but do not ask for support (Brazil)
4) some appear to be doing just fine, but there is little interaction with the SDS (Russia);
5) some seem to be at the edge of going down and there is little interaction with the SDS (ASEAN, Pakistan);

6) some are small and stationary (Switzerland, Russia).

3   For 2021

In general, we still do believe that Chapters of the Society need to evolve into a "professional" direction. This implies a systemic change in the society itself, as Chapters need to raise their own funds and memberships to sustain at least partially their resources all the year round (as done for example by other Chapters - i.e.: the German, Italian and UK ones).

This will have an impact also on memberships: we do have to take into account the tight relationship between SD membership and local chapters memberships, as we do have to offer services to local chapters. The membership harmonization investigation, currently involving the VP Chapters & SIGs Office and the VP Memberships, will be a key towards this process.