



**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS**  
FOUNDER ACHARYA: HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

### **The Purpose of ISKCON Resolve**

ISKCON Resolve was established in 2002 through vote of the International GBC body. The purpose of ISKCON Resolve is to serve as a means to address conflict and seek resolution within our ISKCON society.

While varied capabilities, insights, and perspectives are desirable and the building blocks of a vibrant and healthy Krishna conscious society – they are also, too often, due to our conditioned natures, the seeming cause of conflict, misunderstanding, and discouragement.

As devotees we know the importance of serving the devotee, and helping to protect each other's devotional creeper. Since discouragement in association is one of the primary reasons why devotees leave the ranks of our society, addressing and resolving conflict may help to heal and strengthen the core of our devotional society, open doors for innovation, encourage involvement of all types of men and women, and increase dynamic preaching.

ISKCON Resolve therefore provides neutral and confidential leadership, process, and venue for helping devotees to resolve their conflicts, primarily through their own participation and reflection. The result then would be the strengthening of trust and integrity within our devotional communities.

### **The types of services we provide**

In our role as an ombudsperson for ISKCON Resolve we may be asked to perform six main services:

1. Confidential complaint handling
2. Dialoguing: Helping individuals to resolve differences through listening, understanding and communicating.
3. Conflict Analysis
4. Mediation
5. Facilitation
6. Coaching and Training

### **The ISKCON Organizational Ombudsperson—Role and Function**

The primary duties of an organizational ombuds are (1) to work with individuals and groups in ISKCON to explore and assist them in determining options to help resolve conflicts, problematic issues or concerns, and (2) to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the organization for resolution.

An organizational ombuds operates in a manner to preserve the confidentiality of those seeking services, maintains a neutral/impartial position with respect to the concerns raised, works at an informal level of the organizational system, and is independent of formal organizational structures.

In addition to serving as mediators, counsellors, and third-party intervenors, Ombud people have a variety of other functions.

Activities and functions most frequently undertaken by an ombudsman include, but are not limited to:

- Listens and understands issues while remaining neutral with respect to the facts. The ombuds doesn't listen to judge or to decide who is right or wrong. The ombuds listens to understand the issue from the perspective of the individual. This is a critical step in developing options for resolution.
- Assists in reframing issues and developing and helping individuals evaluate options. This helps individuals identify the interests of various parties to the issues and helps focus efforts on potential options to meet those interests.
- Guides or coaches individuals to deal directly with other parties, including the use of formal resolution resources of the organization. An ombudsman often seeks to help individuals improve their skill and their confidence in giving voice to their concerns directly.
- Refers individuals to appropriate resolution resources. An ombudsman may refer individuals to one or more formal organizational resources that can potentially resolve the issue.
- Assists in surfacing issues to formal resolution channels. When an individual is unable or unwilling to surface a concern directly, the ombudsman can assist by helping give voice to the concern and /or creating an awareness of the issue among appropriate decision-makers in the organization.
- Facilitates informal resolution processes. An ombuds may help to resolve issues between parties through various types of informal mediation.
- Identifies new issues and opportunities for systemic change for the organization. The unique positioning of the ombudsman serves to provide unfiltered information that can produce insight to issues and resolutions. The ombuds is a source of detection and early warning of new issues and a source of suggestions of systemic change to improve existing processes.

**What ISKCON Resolve does not do:**

Because of the informal, neutral, confidential and independent positioning of an ombudsperson in an organization, we typically do not undertake the following roles or activities:

- Participate in formal investigations or play any role in a formal issue resolution process
- Serve in any other organizational role that would compromise the neutrality of the ombudsman role
- Receive notice for the organization
- Make binding decisions or mandate policies
- Create or maintain records or reports for the organization

By tradition, an ombudsperson may neither make or change nor set aside, a law or management policy or decision. An ombudsperson may agree or not agree to help a person who contacts him or her. Ombuds practitioners often prefer not to deal with third party complaints, that is complaints from people who are outsiders to a dispute. However, at their own judgment, they may agree to listen to a third party.

### Why should the leader(s) of ISKCON listen to an Ombudsman?

***The Ombudsman is interested in being helpful to the leader, in the same way that the Ombudsman is helpful to others within the organization. An Ombudsman's orientation is toward "fair process" so he or she is likely to be sensitive to the interests and concerns of a wide range of people.***

*An Ombudsman is likely to have a different perspective than most others to whom organizational leaders listen. He or she is likely to be familiar with multiple points of view regarding any given situation and be able to appropriately articulate the concerns of those whose voices often go unheard.*

*The Ombudsman can also:*

*Brief the leader on issues or 'hotspots' of which he or she ought to be aware, and the possible implications of those issues.*

*Share what has been done so far to address the issues, taking care to maintain confidentiality.*

*Identify serious potential problems that may be unforeseen or downplayed by management or employees.*

*Create an opportunity for the executive to talk about things they might not be able to talk to others about.*

confidential • neutral • informal • independent

You may contact ISKCON Resolve by emailing anyone on our team from the list below:

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