

## A PROPOSAL FOR AN ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROJECT

### 1) THE CAMPAIGN FOR ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE

The End Conscription Campaign is currently conducting a campaign calling for alternatives to military service in the South African Defence Force. The ECC believes that young white men should not be forced to fight in the SADF in a war against fellow South Africans or against the people of other Southern African states. We believe that these men should be given the right to choose to serve their country in more constructive ways which meet the needs of all South Africans.

At present all white men between the ages of 16 and 55 are forced to do military service in the SADF. They are not given any alternatives other than leaving the country to go into exile or to face prison sentences of up to six years.

Many young <sup>men</sup> who do not support the role of the SADF are leaving the country every year, taking with them important skills which could be used to benefit all of South Africa's people. It is for these reasons that ECC calls for real alternatives to military service for these conscripts, and the establishment of an alternative national service system.

### 2) ALTERNATIVE SERVICE PROJECTS

A key part of our campaign will involve the setting up of projects in each of our regions, which will demonstrate what we mean by an alternative national service. These would be projects which would:

- \* be practical and fairly substantial;
- \* be based on the real needs of a community;
- \* involve thorough consultation;
- \* involve large numbers of the public in concrete work;
- \* be based on community involvement and control;

Our aims with these projects are:

- \* To highlight the need for alternatives to military service;
- \* To address the real needs of oppressed communities;
- \* To challenge the role of the SADF in the townships;
- \* To actively build non-racialism through co-operation with community based organisations;
- \* To demonstrate our commitment to a future South Africa;
- \* To show practically what real national service benefitting all South Africans could be.

### 3J PROJECT IDEAS

During previous ECC campaigns we have done community based projects - our Working for a Just Peace projects - which involved painting murals, building children's parks and others. With our Alternative Service Projects we wish to extend these by taking on much larger projects. Examples would include extensions to clinics, creches or community centres.

We regard it as important that the project should challenge the role of the SADF in a particular community. We are aware for example that the SADF has in various ways tried to "win the hearts and minds" of the youth in these communities (eg: "Kom Speel Saam") We however want to challenge this by demonstrating community support for our project as well as community control of the project.

A fundamental principle of the project therefore, is the need for thorough consultation with community organisations. We are particularly keen to work in consultation with already existing service organisations operating in these communities.

### 4J TIMING

Because the project itself is aimed at challenging the SADF and building support for the call for alternatives to military service, we want the project to happen at the same time as the August Call-up (approximately August 6) this year. For this reason we wish to finalise our plans as soon as possible.

### 5J PUBLICITY

We also intend to create a wide public awareness of the project. We therefore wish to publicise it extensively and create a high profile for our work during the project. This is of course a matter which we would want to strategise together with the community involved.

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