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ECC Contact Committee

Self assessment and proposals re future role

1. Why is Contact Committee sometimes seen as a slightly exclusive bunch of heavies?

- a. Our work is often unseen, and our report backs to General Body are often inadequately explained: eg "We met the UDF/PFP/Chamber of Commerce" (with little further explanation)
- b. Compared to other subcomms we are a small and stable group which doesnt draw in new ECC members
- c. By deginition, Contact Comm includes some of the exec "heavies" - eg chair, vice chair and publicity officer are all, by definition of their roles, part of Contact Comm.

2. What are Contact Committees defined roles?

- a. Relations with the front
- b. Relations beyond the front, including organisations such as UDF, SAIRR, JFJ, PAAG, EDASA, PFP Youth, SUCA etc.
- c. Relations with a range of individuals, including embassies and foreign visitors.
- d. Stellenbosch
- e. Mailing lists
- f. Press
- g. Channelling new people
- h. External education, ie when invited by organisations
- i. Forum to discuss new areas of work eg Parents Group
- j. Open forums
- k. Newsletter

3. How much of this work is in reality carried out by Contact Committee as Contact Committee?

Much of the above work is in reality carried out by individuals who happen to be based in Contact Committee, thus...

- a - c are often handled by Nic and Ivan in terms of their exec positions, with assistance from contact comm. Alternatively they are havdled in the course of the campaign work eg WJP and the fair.
- d is handled by Mike R independent of Contact Comm
- e,f,g, are largely handled by Paula through the office
- h is and ad hoc role, dipendent on organisational invites
- j & k are the only 2 clearly defined and on-going areas of work for Contact Comm.

4. Therefore is there a real need for Contact Committee?

Our answer: yes

The above tasks (newsletter, open forum, assisting in contact work and (h) and (i) are sufficiently extensive to necessitate the continued existence of Contact Committee. In addition COntract Comm provides for the 3 exec members a base to discuss both their own work and general issues which sub committees discuss from time to time.

However, Contact Committee recognises that its role is not as extensive as that of the other subcommittees. We therefore plan to meet only every 2nd week, and during peak campaign perioks contact members will be in a position to be released to prioritize general ECC work (as happened during WJP). In other words, we are realistically acknowledging our lesser role.

Democracy in ECC

Where are we at?

After schools sub-comm raised problems and suggestions about the democratic operation of ECC all the sub-comms were asked to discuss the issue. At the last General Body the sub comms reported back and we started discussing the issues. But there wasn't time to discuss things adequately. Tonight, therefore, we have added an extra hour to the meeting to try to get to grips with the problems that do exist.

Small Group Discussion

1. Briefly list areas where there are problems with the democratic operation of ECC. Why are these things harmful to ECC?
2. How do we avoid the problem of decisions being taken on a day to day basis by smaller groups in ECC instead of the general body? This tends to be a problem when ECC is busy and important decisions are taken by a campaign committee or small groups working in a particular area, and ECC as a whole has a sense of being excluded.
3. Is there a division between those doing mental and those doing manual labour in ECC? If so how can we correct this situation?
4. What suggestions can be made to improve the democratic operation of ECC activists? What are the duties of so called more experienced and so called less experienced activists in this regard? How do we avoid elitism? How do we increase participation etc?
5. How do we ensure the passing on of theoretical and practical skills?
6. What role should/does the General Body play in the operation of ECC?

General Discussion

1. What is / should be the role of the executive?
2. What is / should be the role of the contact committee?
3. What is the correct decision making process for ECC to go through when the organisation needs to make a formal and/or controversial decision?

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