

4th Meeting of the ITFL, 10 - 15, Safari Beach Hotel, Mombasa, KenyaWORKING GROUP ON BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL:Preamble

1. Thirty years ago, NGOs were limited in numbers, competence and capability. Today there are thousands even hundreds of thousands of NGOs globally, at the local, provincial, national, regional and international levels. Many of these are extremely capable and hundreds work with people's movements, for social transformation.
2. It was against this background that the 4th ITFL Meeting invited the Deputy Executive Secretary of the World Commission, Dr. Nat Colleta, to provide the meeting with information on the proposed World Bank-UNICEF-UNESCO-UNDP-sponsored conference to be held in Bangkok next March (1990) on Basic Education for All (BEFA) by the year 2000. This dialogue was requested to enable ITFL get basic and background information, provide an opportunity for ITFL's articulation of their views on BEFA to the organisers of the Bangkok conference, as well as provide an opportunity for ITFL members, individually and collectively, to reflect on BEFA and to develop strategies to influence thought and action internally (within ITFL membership) and beyond, before, during and after Bangkok. The ITFL's interest in Bangkok also stemmed from the fact that it seemed clear that the World Bank and its co-opted co-sponsors intended to use the Bangkok conference to determine the world's education agenda and orientation for many years to come.
3. The briefing the 4th ITFL received on the proposed Bangkok conference on BEFA occasioned several concerns on the part of the ITFL NGOs. These included:
 - 3.1 The monopoly of education policy-making by a small, all-male group at the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF.
 - 3.2 The continued lack of sensitivity to realities, for example, the innuendo that to be illiterate is to be ignorant.
 - 3.3 There was no adequate time or strategy for wide consultations before March, 1990.
 - 3.4 NGOs are not delivery systems to be used by Governments, inter-governmental organisations or anybody else; and

nor are they a source of cheap labour.

- 3.5 NGOs are not waiting to be called upon, although they want their voice to be heard.

The Issues

4. The 4th ITFL Meeting welcomed the conference on BEFA because:
 - 4.1 The international situation calls for an all-round review of educational policy.
 - 4.2 It will provide an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation.
5. The 4th ITFL meeting calls upon the sponsors of the conference on BEFA to ensure as follows:
 - 5.1 That the conference is linked to the ILY/Decade and the Plan of Action to eradicate illiteracy.
 - 5.2 That education is seen on the basis of a need-based totality for all, irrespective of race, colour, age, sex or other distinctions; and that in this context BEFA be linked to primary education, literacy and adult education.
6. The sponsors are called upon not to look at education in isolation of historical and social reality, but in the general international economic, political and social setting, as the only basis for the formulation of realistic goals and objectives. The sponsors are urged further to examine education in the context of past, existing and projected World Bank/IMF economic policies.
7. The 4th ITFL Meeting also calls upon the sponsors to imaginatively and flexibly encourage and support consultations and the generation of ideas on BEFA which go beyond the formalism of government and intergovernmental organisations; and that channels be established for them to receive a diversity of views, suggestions etc, without having to go through intermediaries.

Recommendations to ITFL Members

8. The 4th ITFL Meeting recommended to the members of the Task Force as follows:

- 8.1 To use the occasion of the conference on BEFA to bring to the attention of the sponsors, governments and the world at large the existence of NGOs as a force for social action and development.
- 8.2 To use the Bangkok conference and the process leading to it for an occasion to reflect on BEFA in the context of totality of education, and in the context of the political, economic and social reality.
- 8.3 That member organisations commit themselves to initiating a process within their organisations and constituency to articulate a position on BEFA; and that each position so arrived at be sent to the ITFL office which will prepare a common position paper reflecting the strength of unity of the diverse positions and issues. The ITFL position shall be circulated to the sponsors, governments, NGOs and other relevant organisations and individuals before the Bangkok conference.
- 8.4 That the ITFL initiates a process to enable the NGOs to hold a consultation meeting at Bangkok, side-by-side with the conference, to articulate their position on BEFA and to lobby for official support for the ITFL position.
- 8.5 To animate this process the ITFL therefore set up a Working Group consisting of Budd Hall, Lalita Ramdas, Joyce Kebathi, Cesar Picon, Anna Dourtcheva, Hashim Abuzeid El Safi and Paul Wangoola.
- 8.6 A letter be written to the conference sponsors (World Bank, UNESCO, etc) informing them of ITFL's support for the conference on BEFA, our plans for providing inputs; and further to request for their cooperation and support.
- 8.7 That members of ITFL be ready to participate in any consultations on BEFA called by the sponsors and their allies, it being understood that such participation will be in addition to the separate and independent articulation of an ITFL position.
- 8.8 That in this initiative every action undertaken should be to strengthen the literacy and adult education movement; to strengthen the structures and internal operations

of NGOs; as well as create an environment and capacity for cooperation and concerted action - before, during and after the conference on BEFA.

Members of the Working Group

Paul Wangoola	- Chairman
Lalita Ramdas	- Rapporteur
Cesar Picon	
Maria Luise	
Anna Dourtcheva	
Agnetta Lind	
Adama Berthe	
Suzie Devins	
Marc Lalonde	
Roberto Armando	
Nteba Bakumba	
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