The introduction of Outcome-based Education (OBE) system in PNG was a colossal blunder and a grand scam. It isn’t a maybe, but an absolute. That education model was scrapped because of large scale failures in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Netherlands, South Africa (wants it out) and many more. Why should PNG blindly accept this failed monster? The staggering scale of gullibility and ignorance demonstrated by the peddlers of this scam, backed by the education department and coupled with other prominent Papua New Guineans who bought into this evil must be put on trial (I know they’re still around).

This scam is no match to Jimmy Maladina’s Millions of Kina case involving NPF – not even anywhere near the Singapore Forestry Levy Bank Account. OBE is poisonous and damaging for PNG. It’s able to bankrupt Papua New Guinea’s intellectual capacity and accelerate poverty. It is inflicting irreversible and severe damage and reverberating across all spheres of life within Papua New Guinea.

This perilous path – obviously chosen out of plain ignorance rather than intelligence or any faint semblance of clear long-sighted view is already taking its toll. The manifestation of this short-sightedness is both inexplicable and distressing. Indecisiveness and inaction will only perpetuate the effects of this poison pill further down generational eras. It really is a bad policy and the stuff that requires serious re-thinking.

Thinking Papua New Guineans are rightly outraged by this unforgivable flop – that unfortunately has not been halted yet despite the mountain of demonstrable and proven evidences by teachers, university and/or college academics, and parents nationwide. The opposition to this flop is deafeningly clear from all quarters of PNG and international friends.

What was needed, was an adoption of a carefully planned and phased-incremental reform whereby, addition of at least a few national high schools, colleges, universities, primary, high schools, and preparatory schools one at a time, whilst concurrently upgrading capacities (both in staffing levels and in infrastructure). Then inserting relevant modules into the old curriculum to keep abreast with developmental trends. Subjects such as information technology, social issues, and environment amongst others. Prior to that, teacher education for secondary schools as well as infrastructure upgrades and/or improvements at colleges and universities should have received substantial attention. Such an approach would have kept the quality of education intact, built on the momentum, and provided sufficient spacing for students in all facets of learning.

However, shallowness in thinking allowed for the unthinkable to happen – mushrooming of half-backed secondary schools everywhere (more than 200 now) forcing the first four (4) iconic national high schools in the country into the shameful eyesore we see today (and read about) and catapulted the quality of education into negative territory. The few experienced teachers were spread thinly all over PNG (mostly concentrated in city based secondary schools) while most schools in less affluent provinces heaped more responsibilities onto less qualified high school teachers to take on Gr 11 and 12’s. One wonders what such a system produces! The state of high schools and colleges descended into grasslands of absolute shambles. The universities fared no better in accommodating plane loads of half-backed products from so-called secondary and national high schools. This is outrageous and beyond belief. Not only that, it flies in the face of PNG’s first national goal:-

“We declare our First Goal to be for every person to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination or oppression so that each man or woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relationship with others”

It is considered the world over that education is the vital tool for “creating opportunity” and “drive masses to freedom” from all sorts of oppression and dominions.
Thus, “fair opportunity” in freeing oneself from any form of dominion in PNG should come from a “fair education system” that is taught in the country’s official language of government and commerce – that is English and unfortunately not Tok Ples.

Basic things like reading and understanding medicine labels, filling credit forms, understanding court forms, one’s individual human rights, understanding national policy documents and going into the complex areas of international trade negotiations, researches and reporting, complex problem-solving, articulating important development concepts – all require a working and comprehensive handle on the English language – the language that Westminster democracy is crafted from.

Globalization also offers no comfort zone for the semi-educated menial camp either. PNG’s dynamic involvement on global affairs requires intelligent, lateral thinkers, and well schooled citizens, or else we become a ridiculed nation state in the global scheme of things.

In this cut-throat (aggressive, ruthless) world of business and politics, PNG must be serious in producing its own crop of thinkers, technologists, analysts, strategists, architects, and other key professionals. Failing to do this consigns PNG to “a fish out of the water” where BIG deals are cut and sealed.

Please get this clear: PNG detests the objectionable notion that we’re a “sponge-pad” for the so-called “technical experts” to ply their trade. To the learned and intelligent Papua New Guineans, theirs is more of an insult than an aid related assistance.

Therefore, it is critical that English be the language of instruction starting from the Preparatory School taught by sufficiently qualified teachers. Teaching of English and a good command of the same is implicit here according to the spirit of the first national goal.

As a product of the old education system who has a deft touch on assessing technical systems, I am overwhelmed with distraught as to how this madness could ever be allowed to wreck havoc by the education department planners and the subsequent education ministers in this country.

We do not need any research on the merits and demerits of OBE but a referendum to put an end to this nonsense. The picture is already grim and distressing. We simply had enough. This clear National Scam needs to be HALTED. And the time to stop this madness is NOW. Ignorance need not be tolerated anymore. This victimizing system must be abolished …… and quickly.

Then without delay, resurrect the teaching of the 3 R’s (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) as they were known years ago, in the Foundation Phase. The Government’s Universal Basic Education – a massification policy (to begin in 2010) at basic level must begin with this resurrection.

In tandem with this, it would be advisable to consider reverting back to the 1-6-4-2-4 model (1 year Prep, 6 years Primary, 4 years high school, 2 years higher school and 4 years University/Colleges). Currently it’s something like a 1-3-5-3-4 model.

Doing the 3 R’s will undoubtedly put the basics of education right in its tried and proven path where English and Math get quality timing in its formative years of schooling. We’re dead sure to see huge improvements in our education standards.

After all, how dare can one expect a child to function in the immediate and senior phases if they cannot read and write confidently, accurately and with reasonable insight?

Follow the debate on my blog here http://www.rausimobe.wordpress.com