

To The Australian Government AID Review Panel.

I taught in high schools in Papua New Guinea 1971-1983 inclusive. I taught at High Schools around the world for 37 years and have excellent references as to my ability as a teacher. I ended up my teaching career for 8 years at Abbotsleigh girls high school in Sydney. In PNG I was involved with the development of many aspects of Education.

Over the past 7 years I have been in contact with many of my former PNG students who are now in top positions throughout the country. I did 5 years of research and produced a book on Keravat National High School and its students 1947-1986.

Over the past year I have been closely associated with two Canadian teachers who have gone back to Keravat to teach for 5 months.

So I know a lot about the state of Education in PNG today. There are many problems.

The outgoing Governor General Sir Paulias Matane is a friend and he launched my book in 2009. At that time we saw that the country was no longer looking after its gifted and talented students. We recommended that the previous National High Schools who used to produce the top professional people for the country should be made into selective Schools of Excellence. The Minister of Education and Secretary of Education agreed. That is supposed to be happening. Sir Michael Somare has put aside money in the Budget for the improvement of these schools.

There used to be only 4 of these top academic schools. Now there are 7 that they propose to turn into Schools of Excellence. But they will need help!

Sadly, the PNG people have watched these schools slowly deteriorate so much that now the buildings have to be pulled down and rebuilt. They need help with this.

During June 2009 at the PNG-Australian Ministerial Forum held in Brisbane, an agreement was made to send 2000 PNG students to Australia annually from 2010 to be trained in various technical fields. I have not heard of this happening. I do not think this is a good idea. There will be "brain drain".

My suggestion to you is that you offer to help the PNG Education Department set up these Schools of Excellence to train the professionals for the years ahead.

Over the past 20 years the standard of education has slowly fallen in PNG. They introduced two years of teaching the kindergarten (Primary) students in their own language. The students are now basically two years behind. Many teachers have been teaching in Pidgin English and so the students throughout the government school have recently done very poorly in their external exams. A lot of the time they could not understand the questions as they were in English.

There are many people throughout the country blaming the poor results on the implementation of an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) programme which has been introduced into PNG - possibly by AusAID.

OBE is only part of the problem. The fact that students now do Years 7 and 8 in Primary school has also created other problems. I could write on and on.

What I'm suggesting is that the Australian Government aim at something concrete that they can do as a form of aid which can be seen by everyone.

I suggest that the Australian Government offer to rebuild these 4 National High school, Sogeri, Keravat, Aiyura and Passam, which are now in a terrible state of decay.

I also suggest that the Australian Government offer to help them with staff to improve the training of the teachers to teach at these schools.

Also, at very little cost, they could organise to have them use a good syllabus from Australia or Canada.

The schools also need to be put online so the students can have access to the Internet. The students need to be supplied with computers and taught how to use them. The libraries have not been kept up-to-date so money needs to be spent there. The science laboratories need to be re-equipped, sets of textbooks have to be bought. The Canadian couple who were back teaching there this year can fill you in on all of this.

I could give you many more suggestions but will restrict myself to this main request.

If something isn't done soon then there will be few PNG students trained to a level that can cope with university courses and the whole country will suffer. I believe the Independent Schools in PNG use the ACT syllabus and that their standards have not fallen so much. But they are private schools and are used by the wealthy elite for their children who often are not the gifted and talented!

Yours faithfully

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