

Professional Biography of Dr. Uke Kombra, Secretary for Education



Dr Uke Kombra is the incumbent Secretary for Education since June 2015. He hails from Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea.

He has more than 40 years in relevant academic qualifications, corporate knowledge of the education sector and the functions and responsibilities of the National Education System in Papua New Guinea. He was a secondary school teacher, principal; education planner has climbed the top management ranks of the Department of Education. He has been the permanent secretary from 2015.

Dr Kombra has provided exemplary advice, leadership, and guidance in the reform, of major policies and system that caters for everyone, a system that will produce students who can compete with the rest of the world.

The Department's policies and changes, he started with were underpinned by four directive service principles, namely:

- Building capacity and empowering provinces and districts;
- Modernizing and improving productivity with technology and out of the box interventions; there is limitation in resources but there is no shortage in ideas.
- Making changes in practices to achieve more with little. Governance and accountability – Good governance and accountability framework, and compliance will surely improve our service delivery endeavours.
- Most important -- Keeping our teachers and staff happy. Behind every file number there is a person.

Dr Kombra is passionate about an education system that provides opportunities for every child in PNG to receive quality education that is equal to anywhere in the world. He believes this is achievable if every stakeholder embraces this vision, collaborate and consolidate their focus and resources.

Under his leadership, two National Education Plans and Corporate Plans were developed and implemented with the third being the NEP 2020-2029 and the

Corporate Plan 2022-2024 respectively. He has been the forefront of the development and implementation of a number of key signature government policies, programs and initiatives for quality education such as the Government Tuition fee policy, Early Childhood Education, STEM Education, and 1-6-6 school restructure and introduction of standard based curriculum, replacing Outcome based Curriculum.

The development of the Standard Based Curriculum (SBC) for all sectors has been completed in 2021 and training of teachers is happening this year. The restructuring of the school system is being implemented by provinces.

The introduction of a number of ICT interventions and web-based applications has resulted in a modernized organisation with the aim to deliver education services efficiently and in a timely manner.

Under his leadership, the department has also won the confidence of our developed partners, and stakeholders who continue to offer funding and resource support to implementing key policies and programs in education.

Dr Kombra obtained his Master's in Education Administration at the UNE, New South Wales, Australia, in 2001, and Masters in Education with Honours also from UNE in 2002.

He did his doctoral studies at the QUT from 2008 to 2011. His Doctoral thesis titled 'Front Page Schools-Back Page Schools was based on a case study of factors perceived to affect academic performance of five PNG secondary schools, can be accessed online.