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The Education Revolution confounds the NDP

Introduction

It is an accepted fact that the Education Revolution, the flagship programme of the ULP administration, has touched the lives of every single Vincentian, every single house hold, and every single family, from Fancy to Union Island. Since 2005, when the ULP delivered universal access to secondary education, this national policy has been like a clarion call for all young Vincentians, calling them to get an education, calling them to gather intelligence, calling them to begin to participate more fully in the socio-economic development process of the country.

The ULP government has, without doubt, transformed the delivery of education in terms of access, spread and quality, through an education revolution for living and production. It has altered immeasurably, the lives of children, young persons, adults, whole families and the whole nation, for the better. Never in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has any government emphasized the education of its people, as the ULP has done since 2001.

In the face of the spectacular success of the education revolution, it is no wonder the NDP is confounded. This can be seen by the responses of two of their senior persons, the political leader Godwin Friday, and the former leader and now elder statesman, Arnhim Eustace.

Fridays Confusion

Last month Godwin Friday made a confusing statement at a media conference called by his party which most people wonder if he lives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Friday said "Contrary to the government's boast about the performance of our education system, the picture of failure looms large.... But the stark reality is that in some schools, very little education is taking place."

Where does Godwin Friday live? Where are his research skills, and where is his research officer who is being paid by the tax payers of the country? Friday clearly must be talking about the education system of some other country, not St. Vincent and the Grenadines. For example, in Friday's own constituency of the Northern Grenadines, the Bequia Community High School, gained a 51.26 percent pass rate in 2017, at CSEC. This clearly was not good enough.

But in 2018, the Bequia Community High School turned its fortunes around and recorded a pass rate of 76.47 percent, an increase of 25.21 percent. So, there must have been some learning in that institution, which resulted in the pass rate climbing to seventy six percent. Presumably Friday does not know about this performance from a secondary school in his neck of the woods. But he and the NDP are so consumed with hatred for the Education Revolution, that facts and truth do not matter. They will say and do everything to put down our students, our teachers and the support that our hard-working parents are providing, to make sure that our students improve at CSEC and CAPE.

Godwin Friday needs to tender an apology to the students and teachers who are working so hard to ensure that learning takes place in our schools. We would also recommend that he visits the Bequia Community High School, in his constituency, and congratulate the teachers on some outstanding work.

Arnhim Eustace

Not to be outdone, Arnhim Eustace has also joined the fray, by insulting the education revolution and the hard work of the students, the teachers and the parents. On a recent programme on Nice (Lies) Radio, Arnhim Eustace said “so they have not lived up to anything meaningful, in terms of that, but they talking about the education government. Education my eye”.

Education my eye. That’s how Arnhim Eustace refers to the education revolution and the work the ULP has been doing for our young people. But this is no surprise. A few years ago, in a fit of jealousy and bad mindedness, Arnhim Eustace told the country’s students that their associate degrees were not worth the paper they were printed on. It is no wonder that the young people of this country have indicated their preference for the ULP, returning the party to office for four successive terms.

The NDP is bent on bad talking most, if not all, good things that the ULP administration has championed in this country. And now the successes of the education revolution have confounded the opposition. Never in their wildest dreams did they expect the ULP to fashion such a programme. Never in their wildest dreams did they imagine that the young people would gobble the opportunities provided under the education revolution, to further their careers, and build an exciting future for themselves, their families and the country.

Conclusion

The ULP has ensured that there is quality teaching and quality leadership in the schools, so that our students will prosper. All this is further backed up by a “one- lap-top-per-child” initiative which has enhanced the information technology skills of our students. Then there is the economically disadvantaged student loan programme, which provides support for children with talent, but who cannot get one of the many scholarships and bursaries on offer by the government.

Expect Godwin Friday, Arnhim Eustace and the rest of the NDP to continue bad talk the education revolution. They have never presented any suggestions to drive the education sector forward, and so they will be left behind.