Internship program is vital for capacity development

By Francis Gabriel, Communications Specialist, and Dr. Kilala Devette-Chee, Program Leader, Universal Basic Education and Senior Research Fellow, PNG NRI

Early workplace training and development is essential to build a competent and dynamic workforce for the future. This can be achieved through the type of internship program offered by the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI).

This was raised by University of Papua New Guinea’s (UPNG) final year Bachelor of Sustainable Development student Joe Harry during his parting remarks at the PNG NRI’s internship program farewell gathering last Friday.

“I have gained skills and knowledge in research, data analysis and report writing that will benefit me in my studies as well as later on in my professional life,” he said, adding “the exposure to systems on how PNG NRI informs the nation on its research findings through its publications is invaluable.”

Mr. Harry and his colleague Julian Melpa were engaged as interns with the PNG NRI for 13 weeks. He was attached with the Universal Basic Education Program (UBE) while Ms. Melpa was attached with the Economic Policy Program.

Speaking on their behalf, Mr. Harry thanked PNG NRI for accepting them for work experience; the researchers for their hospitality and support; and, their supervisors who had worked closely with them throughout their internship.

The program began on 16 March 2020 but was extended due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the internship was to provide the interns with a wide range of hands-on skills and knowledge in research – Research Skills and Techniques.

Mr. Harry’s supervisor and UBE Program Leader and Senior Research Fellow Dr. Kilala Devette-Chee while commending the interns for successfully completing their practical work experience, thanked them for their contribution to the respective programs they were attached to.

She specifically pointed out that the internship program is beneficial to both PNG NRI, UPNG and the interns, that is, PNG NRI provides the interns with the necessary training skills, and in return, the interns assist research programs with their on-going research activities.
“We also hope that the program will enable the interns to do awareness on the quality of outputs PNG NRI has in terms of its publications on research work that is carried out,” Dr. Devette-Chee said.

Economic Policy Program Leader and Senior Research Fellow Dr. Francis Odhuno, Ms. Melpa’s supervisor, spoke about the importance of engaging in an internship program compared to a cadetship program, which PNG NRI hosts interns but coordinates a cadetship program.

He encouraged and advised the interns “to put in to fruition the skills and knowledge they have gained as they return to UPNG and in their future endeavours as part of capacity and nation building”.

Mr. Harry recommended that PNG NRI should continue the internship program with UPNG on an annual basis through a binding arrangement with the endorsement from Department of Higher Education, Research, Science & Technology (DHERST).

LINK: https://pngnri.org/index.php/blog/190-internship-program-is-vital-for-capacity-development