This is a very challenging era for you, graduates told

By Francis Gabriel, Communications Specialist, PNG National Research Institute

There were 30,711 students from 186 secondary schools including private and permitted schools and national high schools throughout Papua New Guinea that successfully completed Grade 12 this year.

From this number, it is projected that only about 10,000 will be selected to tertiary institutions according to the availability of tertiary institutions’ spaces.

However, about 22,000 students in the national admission pool will not be selected but will be catered for elsewhere such as in privately-run institutions, self-employment etc.

These were the figures highlighted by PNG National Research Institute’s Education Research Program Leader Dr. Kilala Devette-Chee during the Grade 12 graduation of Badihagwa Technical Secondary School on Thursday 10 December 2020 at Sir John Guise Stadium in Port Moresby.

“You students are part of the 30,711,” Dr. Devette-Chee told the graduating 497 Grade 12 students while giving the keynote address.

“And as everyone here can attest, there is now an increasing awareness of the need for relevant skills training that will enable young graduates to be self-reliant and sustain a productive life at home or pursue employment opportunities”.

Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) is now the way forward. It provides relevant practical skills, attitudes and knowledge and understanding relating to the skills needed in various sectors in the formal and informal economic and social life of Papua New Guinea.

“Likewise, the Tertiary and Further Education, or TAFE system as it’s better known, also plays a vital role in the development of Papua New Guinea. TAFE colleges are also the perfect educational option for those students that want to receive a practical, hands-on education that prepares them for future roles in the nation’s workforce.”

These were two examples that Dr. Devette-Chee provided to students who will find themselves among the 22,000 in the national admission pool just because of the fact that the government cannot provide enough spaces for the ever-increasing Grade 12 graduates each year.

She told the graduands that graduation was not an end goal in itself; instead a part of the larger journey of life. Wherever their future takes them.
“Your graduation today should serve as a launching point, projecting you to wherever your future is meant to take you, whether land yourselves a career, take up a trade, or continue your education at college or vocational/technical school or a university.”

Dr. Devette-Chee reminded the outgoing students to not forget the Christian values that have been imparted upon their lives.

“We now live in a very complex society where unemployment, break-down in family units, break-down in social order and lawlessness are rife compared to the past. It is indeed a very challenging era for young Papua New Guineans who are now graduating from institutions like yourselves,” she said.

“The sad fact is that Christian teachings and values will only be effective if the surrounding environment supports it. So once again graduating class, remember that the choices we make in life determines the life we live, so try to hold onto the Christian values you have learnt despite the challenges, in order to help you achieve your future goals.”

One thing so many people today are learning is that education no longer stops on graduation day, Dr. Devette-Chee said, while encouraging the graduates to continue their own education and to encourage their friends, families, and future co-workers to continue their education as well.

“Should there be no spaces in Government funded institutions, there are always opportunities elsewhere. Whether it be through TAFE or TVET, continuing studies, or just practicing what you’ve already learned – we should help spread the good word of education so that more Papua New Guineans can get the training and the skills they need to qualify for better-paying jobs and good high-skill jobs for a good future.”

LINK: https://pngnri.org/index.php/blog/211-this-is-a-very-challenging-era-for-you-graduates-told