



Canadian International  
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de  
développement international

# **Evaluation of the New Development Officer Program (NDOP)**

## **Evaluation Report**

**September 2003**

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**Canada** 

**Evaluation of the  
New Development Officer Program  
( NDOP )**



Evaluation Division  
Performance Review Branch  
Canadian International Development Agency  
September 2003

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## ***Acknowledgements***

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This report, prepared by the Evaluation Division of the Performance Review Branch, is based on a more detailed background research report of the New Development Officers Program, conducted by the Hay Management Consulting, on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The Evaluation Team, composed of Gary Reid and Susan Liska – Hay Group, prepared the original more detailed report, under the direction of Ignace Rusenga – Evaluation Manager in the Evaluation Division, PRB, from which this executive report has been extracted. We would like to acknowledge, with thanks, the profound effort, diligence, and efficacy with which the team prepared their report.

We would also like to acknowledge the help and assistance of several other individuals who made meaningful contributions to the overall evaluation process: Anita Poirier, Assignment and Program Advisor; Sylvie Hudon-Polk, Manager Assignment Management Center; and Nathalie St. Onge, Manager Human Resources System.

Thanks are also extended to those CIDA executives and managers, NDOP participants (current and former) and their colleagues in the PM Group, who took time to share their opinions, and thus making useful contributions to the evaluation process.

Goberdhan Singh  
Director, Evaluation Division  
Performance Review Branch

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## ***Management Response***

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Human Resources and Corporate Services Branch (HRCSB) is of opinion that the evaluation of the NDO program, completed by the Evaluation Division of Performance and Knowledge Management Branch was professionally and thoroughly conducted.

The NDOP evaluation was discussed at the CIDA's Corporate Resources Committee on February 26, 2004. Performance and Knowledge Management Branch presented the main conclusions and the CRC agreed to the following decisions:

- To pursue the New Development Officer Program.
- To maintain the "graduation level" at the PM-04 but shorten the program duration from four years to three years, accelerate the promotion within the program to eighteen months at each of the PM-02 and PM-03 levels.
- To maintain the recruitment budget allocated for the program centralized via HRCSB. The salary budget for the program will remain decentralized.
- To strengthen the development aspects of the program. Coaching and mentoring should also be strengthened for all development officers.
- To ensure that the bottleneck foreseen at the PM-05 and PM-06 levels be carefully considered by Human Resources Division.
- To add one FTE to the Assignments Management Centre, the unit responsible for administering the NDO Program. However, this request will be examined once the HR function review is complete and once we have a better understanding of how we will manage our wage envelope.

This management response was prepared by the Senior VP and the VP of HRCSB

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## 1.0 Introduction: The NDO Program

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### 1.1 An Overview of the NDO Program

In the mid 1990s, a demographic analysis of CIDA's PM population showed that this key component of CIDA's workforce was aging rapidly. A significant number of Development Officers and other PMs would become eligible to retire in the decade ahead. If not addressed in a timely way, the impending loss through retirement of a large number of seasoned and knowledgeable staff would challenge CIDA's ability to staff and deliver effectively some of its development programs.

CIDA realized that it needed to actively recruit and develop the next generation of Development Officers. The Agency had a window of opportunity over the next decade to transfer the collective knowledge, wisdom and experience of its seasoned Development Officers to these new recruits. In 1995, CIDA launched a program called, the *New Development Officers Program* (NDOP).

**Overarching Objective:** the overarching objective of the NDOP is to renew and replenish the ranks of this key part of the Agency's workforce, as part of its succession planning. The program set up a target to recruit a group of 100 qualified, high potential individuals at an entry level of PM-1 (now PM-2) through annual intakes from the Public Service Commission's (PSC) post-secondary recruitment program, at a rate of approximately 20 per year over a period of 5 years.

In addition, the program was also intended to serve several other **secondary purposes**

- Provide an alternative to the regular staffing process as a way of filling Development Officer positions. The NDOP was not intended to be the sole or exclusive means of staffing Development Officer vacancies.
- Provide a *corporate* means of systematically identifying and then actively managing growth and development of a portion of its corps of future Development Officers.
- Contribute to making CIDA's workforce more representative of the Canadian public that it serves.
- Provide program participants with good and valuable development opportunities (two assignments - one bilateral and one non-bilateral) to help participants diversify their experience, build their skills, and enhance their mobility (thus serving the interests of both the program participants and CIDA).
- Promote program participants in accordance with the merit principle two-classification levels (at present PM-2 to PM-4) over the duration of the program in recognition of their increasing knowledge and ability to handle more complex and challenging work (helping build capacity in CIDA).
- Create (through the diversity of their developmental experience) a pool of Development Officers with broadened perspectives and capabilities, therefore, preparing participants to eventually assume roles even more senior than PM-4.

Minor adjustments to the structure and duration of the program (level of entry, program duration) were undertaken over the years as described below:

- During the first four years of its existence, the duration of the program was 5 years. Successful applicants entered the program at the PM-1 level and were promoted to PM-2 after 12 months. After an additional 18 months, participants were promoted to PM-3 and then, after another 30 months, they were promoted once more to PM-4 (for a total of 60 months in the program).
- For the year 2000 intake, the duration of the program was reduced from 5 years to 4 years. Successful applicants entered the program at the PM-1 level and after 6 months were promoted to PM-2 level. After another 18 months, participants were promoted to PM-3 level and then, after another 24 months, they were promoted to PM-4 level (for a total of 48 months in the program).
- In May 2001, the entry level was raised from PM-1 to PM-2 (essentially an acknowledgement of the high quality of candidates being recruited by the program and the fact that most entered with a Masters degree which is now a requirement). 18 months after program entry, these participants will be promoted to PM-3. After another 30 months these participants will be promoted to PM-4 level (for a total of 48 months in the program).

In June 1999, near the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year, the Executive Committee at CIDA approved an extension of the program. Between 1996 and 2002, CIDA has recruited a total of 131 New Development Officers through the program.

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## **2.0 The Evaluation Mandate and Methodology**

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Evaluation is an important and integral part of any process aimed at achieving excellence. Programs are generally developed, executed, and maintained with utmost tenacity and thoughtfulness. Yet, the real impact of the program cannot be fully measured and realized without an appropriate evaluation process. The evaluation process provides a clear and definitive picture of the efficacy of the program. It also identifies two other important aspects: was the intended objective achieved, and what lessons can be learned from the results to further improve the program.

As such, seven years after the implementation of the NDO Program, the Human Resource Branch sought an evaluation of the program to determine whether the program was meeting its intended objectives. HRB was interested, *inter alia*, in determining:

- Whether NDOP was contributing to the achievement of Priority Number 3 in CIDA's Human Resources Strategy (i.e., Renewal through Recruitment).
- Whether the retention of those recruited through the program was an issue and if so whether an appropriate retention strategy was in place.
- Whether the manner and means by which the program is delivered are appropriate and, if not, what recommendations for change should be made to the Management Committee of the Agency.

### **2.1 The Evaluation Mandate**

In February of 2003, CIDA engaged Hay Management Consulting to conduct a formal evaluation of the New Development Officers Program (NDOP).

The terms of reference required the evaluation team to examine the program under the following categories:

- Effectiveness
- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Impact
- Retention
- Conclusions (Success Factors and Areas of Improvement)



## 2.2 Evaluation Methodology

The Evaluation Team used the following methodologies to address the different lines of enquiry set out in the terms of reference for this evaluation:

- Review of relevant HR documents and database, and participation of program managers.
- Quantitative and Comparative Analysis and Demographic Profiling (of the NDOP population and corresponding populations within CIDA).
- Interviews on various aspects of the program (app. 60 individual and group interviews with various categories of stakeholders, including NDOP participants, other PMs, CIDA managers and CIDA executives).
- Internet-based Opinion Survey of NDOP participants (app. 131) and their colleagues in the PM group in CIDA (app. 370). Out of the 500 participants surveyed, 135 responses were received.
- Benchmarking: the NDOP was benchmarked against three other similar programs in three other departments.

## 2.3 Limitations

There were some methodology limitations also that were encountered during the development of the methodology framework, as follows:

- Although the NDOP was benchmarked against three other similar programs in three other departments, we did not use programs that had manifested proven capability through a credible evaluation process. Despite this limitation, however, we carried out the benchmarking exercise so as to derive whatever useful lessons we could in order to enhance the NDO Program.
- As part of our comparative analysis, we originally intended to create a sample of CIDA PMs (who were not part of the program) matched to the NDOP population on the basis of variables such as age, gender, language. Our intent was to compare performance and promotion rates between the two groups to determine whether program participation had a measurable impact. Specifically, we were interested in knowing whether the assessed performance of program participants differed from that of their non-program peers in the PM group and whether program participation affected the rapidity of promotion. In the end, we decided not to conduct this matched sample analysis. Performance of PMs outside of the program is not assessed and so there was no basis for comparison. Secondly, we found that promotion within the program is tied to a timetable (rather than performance per se) that applies to all equally, so again there was no basis for differentiation.

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## **3.0 Principal Findings and Conclusions**

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### **3.1 Findings**

This section presents a description of the findings vis-à-vis the evaluation mandate and the program objectives:

#### **3.1.1 Effectiveness**

The evaluation looked at several aspects of effectiveness, including:

- Renewal, rejuvenation and replenishment
- Achievement of Program quantitative outputs and qualitative goals
- Employment equity, official language and regional representation of the pool of the NDOP candidates
- Developmental Aspects: orientation, training and learning plan, coaching and mentoring

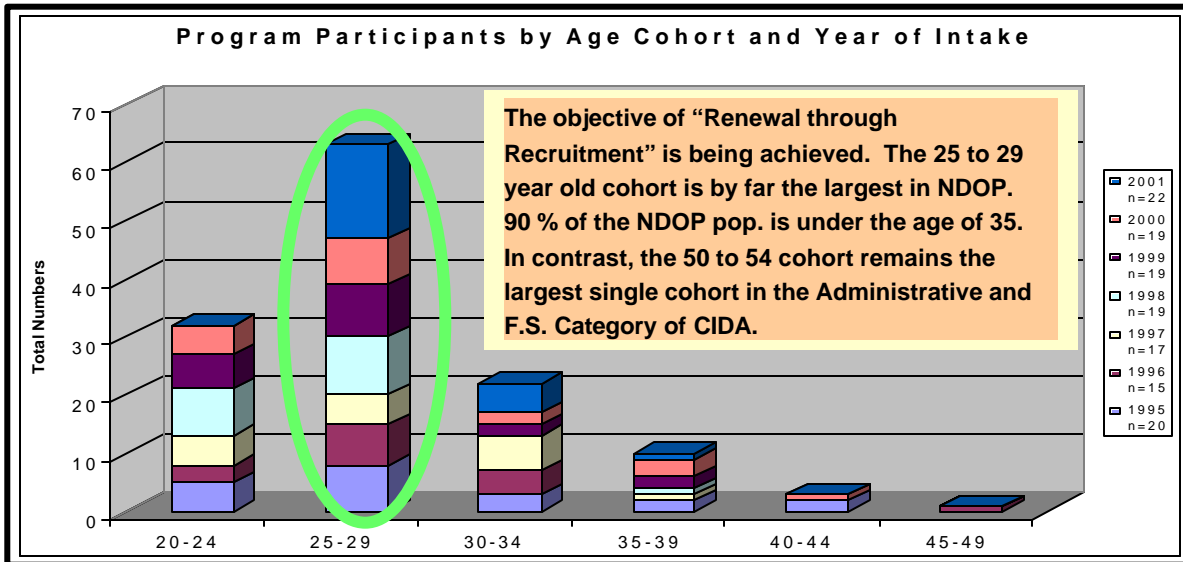
##### **3.1.1.1 Renewal - Rejuvenation - Replenishment**

“Renewal” is essentially a matter of rejuvenation; in other words, “Has the program had a positive impact in making the age profile of the group younger?” “Replenishment” is essentially a matter of quantity, in other words, “Has the program recruited enough participants to replace those leaving?” This evaluation finds that the program has in fact achieved its objectives on both counts. The program has achieved positive results in recruiting and developing a younger workforce. The program has also effectively met its initial target of recruiting 100 high quality participants essentially within the first five years of its existence.

##### **Renewal and Rejuvenation**

The evaluation statistics confirmed that the NDOP does indeed contribute significantly to the objective of “Renewal through Recruitment”. Program participants are much younger both in terms of average age and in terms of the promotion of younger age cohorts than counterparts within CIDA.

Program participation by age of cohort and year of intake indicates that the 25 to 29 year old cohort is by far the largest in NDOP. 90% of the NDOP population is under the age of 35. In contrast, the 50 to 54 cohort remains the largest single cohort in the Administrative and Foreign Service category of CIDA.



## Replenishment

The evaluation confirms that the NDO Program is a major contributor to replenishment.

From 1995 to the end of the calendar year 2002, CIDA recruited through all means a total of 193 staff to Development Officer positions classified at levels PM-1 through PM-4 inclusive. Of this number, 131 have been NDOP recruits and 62 have been recruited outside of the program. Expressed differently, NDOP has a 67.8% "market share" of all appointments to the ranks of Development Officers at levels beneath PM-5. As of March 31, 2002, there were a total of 538 employees in the PM group in CIDA. The 120 NDOP participants (current and former) still with CIDA account for 22.3% of the PM population of CIDA. The program has made a significant contribution to the replenishment of the PM group.

### 3.1.1.2 Achievement of Program Quantitative Outputs and Qualitative goals

The NDOP did in fact produce the intended output within the set deadlines:

At its inception, the NDOP set for itself a goal of recruiting 100 high quality participants within five years. The evaluation team finds that the program has in fact met its numeric targets (a total of 90 participants had been recruited by the end of the fifth year).

As evidenced below, the NDOP also achieved it's qualitative targets that, in our estimation, is a very significant achievement::

- 70 % of their peers in the PM group surveyed believe that NDOP recruits candidates that have the potential to be superior performers.
- 67 % of their peers in the PM group surveyed believe that NDOP accesses and attracts candidates able to learn and adapt to new and different ways of delivering development.
- 67% of their peers in the PM group surveyed believe that NDOP accesses and attracts candidates with appropriate education, work background and experience.
- Our interviews with managers and supervisors of NDOP participants confirm that senior levels within CIDA share these opinions.

- The NDOP and level of education: participants generally have a higher level of education than that of their counterparts in the PM population in CIDA. Based on our internet survey of the NDOP participants and their colleagues in the PM group in CIDA, 56% of the non-participant PM population (who responded to this survey) have a Masters degree or higher versus 75% for the NDOP population, who have a Masters or a Doctorate.
- The NDOP and work experience: participants have less work experience than their PM counterparts in CIDA. The survey results indicated that 61% of NDOP participants had three years or less work experience while 58% of other PMs in CIDA had 7 or more years of experience prior to joining CIDA. The survey also showed that 64% of NDOP participants have 6 or fewer years of Public Service work experience, while 52% of their PM counterparts in CIDA had 10 years or more. One can infer that most of the NDO's Public Service experience has been acquired in CIDA.

### **3.1.1.3 Developmental Aspects: Orientation, Training and Learning Plan, and Coaching and Mentoring**

At the time of recruitment, most participants had some expectations of the developmental component of the program that, ultimately, were not fulfilled.

Program participants, past and present, place high value on the opportunity given by assignments to diversify, to build knowledge and skills, and to enhance mobility (thus serving the interests of both the individuals and CIDA), as reported below:

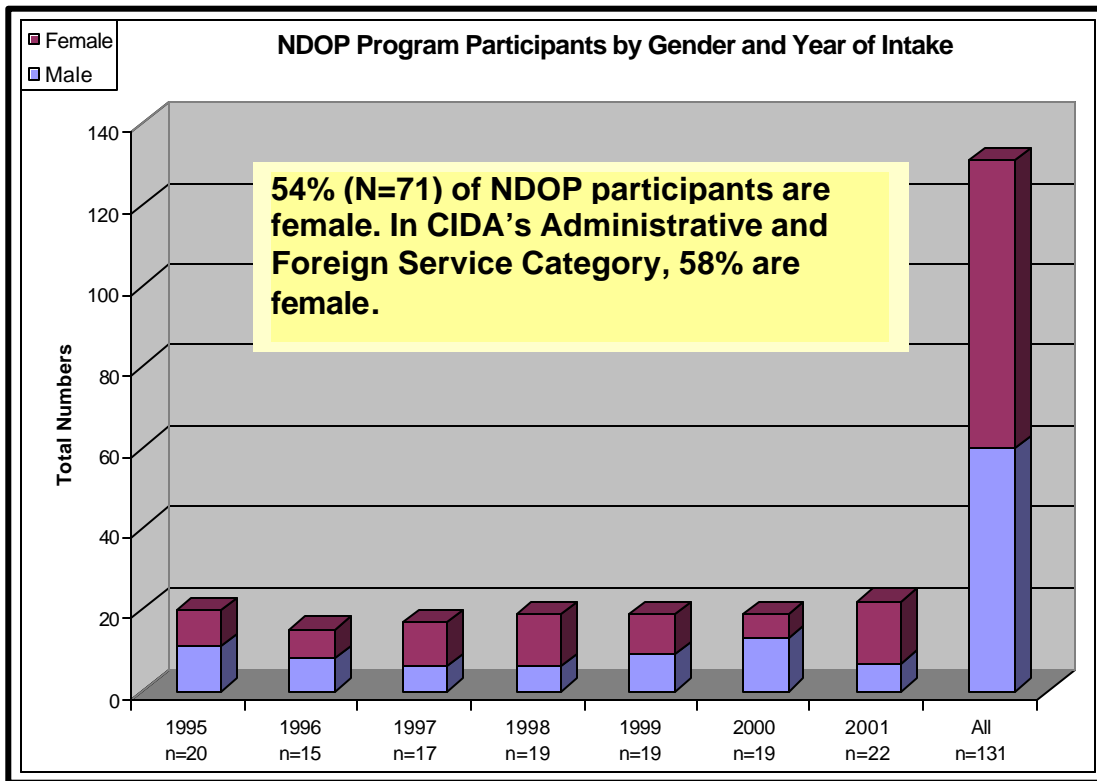
- 67% report that the Development assignment was either highly effective or effective.
- 62% report that the program provides personnel with opportunities for growth and development to a fair or large extent.
- 77% report that the assignment(s) they were provided with, were challenging.

Aside from assignments, the developmental components of the program are seen by program participants to be seriously deficient in both substance and structure. A majority of program participants report dissatisfaction with the following developmental components:

- 46% report that the orientation was highly ineffective;
- 60% believe that the approach to personalized learning plans after orientation was ineffective;
- 56% feel that the program has not given them any better opportunities for learning and development that they could not have obtained elsewhere;
- 55% do not believe that the program has prepared them to function more effectively than their colleagues, who have been recruited and developed through other means;
- 68% believe that the pace of promotion within the program was too slow;
- 71% feel that the program has not helped them to progress through the PM ranks faster than would otherwise be the case;
- 77% feel that the program has not afforded them an opportunity to make an impact and a contribution to CIDA;
- 63% were not satisfied with the level of coaching and mentoring available to them;
- 67% believe that they have not received an appropriate level of support from the Assignment Management Centre.

### 3.1.1.4 Employment Equity, Official Languages and Regional Representation

- The NDOP and Women Representation: Women are well represented in the program. They represent 54% of the NDOP population since the program's inception. In CIDA's Administrative and Foreign Service Category (of which PM's are a part), women represent 58% of the population.



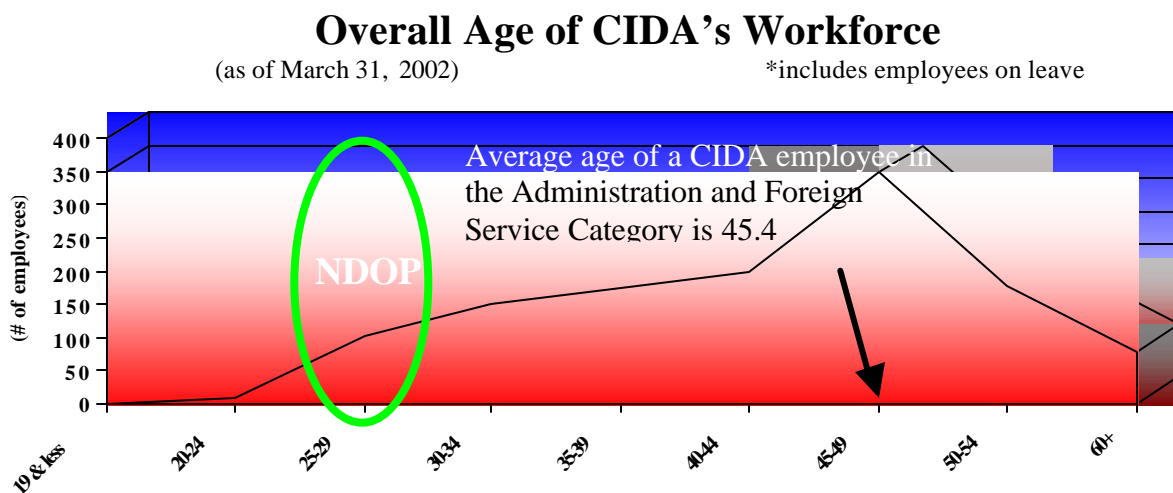
- The NDOP and other EE-groups: the NDOP has had a positive impact on changing the representation of some employment equity (EE) groups, but not others – e.g., improvements have been noticed on the representation of visible minorities, but not with regard to persons with disabilities or Aboriginal people. 18% of NDOP participants are members of visible minorities compared to about 13% of CIDA's total workforce. NDOP has not recruited persons with disabilities or Aboriginal people.
- The NDOP and Official Language Representation: As of the end of the 2002 fiscal year, a larger proportion of NDOP claim English as their first Official Language while a significant proportion of CIDA'S workforce claim French as their Official Language as evidenced by the statistics below:
  - CIDA Workforce: 54%
  - Administrative and Foreign Service Category (in which PMs are included): 53%
  - NDOP participants: 28%
- The NDOP and Regional Representation: the NDOP population is somewhat more diverse than the rest of the PM group within CIDA. NDOP does extend the recruitment reach of CIDA beyond the National Capital Area. The evaluation found that there is some truth that NDOP contributes to a more regionally diverse population. 73% of NDOP

participants (compared to a much higher 87% of other PMs) lived in Ontario and Quebec just prior to joining CIDA. NDOP appears to be effective in improving regional representation, particularly from British Columbia and Alberta, but appears not to be effective in terms of increasing representation from other regions of Canada.

### 3.1.2 Relevancy

As indicated earlier, the NDO Program was launched in 1995 to address a looming wave of retirements in the ranks of CIDA's Development Officers.

The evaluation clearly indicates that the NDOP is still relevant today. The conditions and assumptions on which the program was based are still valid today. Renewal through recruitment is being achieved, yet the efforts still need to be continued.



The statistics in the preceding section demonstrate that:

- CIDA's workforce is still relatively old.
- CIDA's workforce continued to grow older through the end of 2001.
- While the NDOP is contributing to rejuvenate the PM workforce, the work of rejuvenation is not finished.
- 2002 marked the first year that CIDA's workforce has grown younger.
- CIDA's efforts to rejuvenate its workforce are just now beginning to bear fruit, as the chart below illustrates. "Renewal through Recruitment" should remain a priority.

**CIDA's WORKFORCE: CHANGES IN AVERAGE AGE OVER TIME**

1999	2000	2001	2002
44.8	45.3	46.1	45.4

Delivery of the Agency Programs in future will require other types of expertise and skills such as: analytical capabilities, interpersonal communications, ability to function into multidimensional

teams and to adapt to different ways, methodologies and approaches of delivering and assessing development programs (sector wide approaches, direct budget support, joint-donor evaluations).

While the evaluation has not looked at the need for other expertise in any detail, we would invite the Agency to look at the implications of this aspect of the program and the potential for leveraging the NDOP recruitment vehicle so as to recruit other kinds of competences.

### 3.1.3 Efficiency

Since CIDA does not use Activity Based Costing System to capture the costs in time and dollars of expenditures for different kinds of staffing transactions, it becomes difficult to measure efficiency directly in quantitative terms. Consequently, inferences about efficiency are drawn from various other related aspects of CIDA's operability framework.

The first such indicator comes from the growth patterns. From 1998 to 2001, there has been significant percentage growth, on year over year basis, in the number of individuals applying to the program. One can infer from this that the effort in screening applications has grown considerably. However, since that cost is borne by PSC and not by CIDA, it testifies that CIDA's screening costs have not incrementally increased. Each year, CIDA draws a pool of about 200 applicants for consideration. The number hired in a given year ranges from 14 to 22 (averaging 19 per year). CIDA will interview approximately 9 program applicants for each applicant that it hires. 22,090 people have applied for NDOP since the inception of the program, of which 131 were ultimately hired (a ratio of 1:169). Based on our experience with staffing processes across the government and the private sector, these ratios are quite reasonable and are a favorable indicator of a progressively stable level of efficiency.

A second indicator comes from the aspects of the saving of time and effort that the NDO Program enjoys. The NDO Program can (after initial recruitment) make appointments, without competition and without right of appeal – an action that results in a very significant saving of time and effort when compared to “one on one” staffing transactions for single positions. This provides another dimension of a high level of efficiency.

However, by recruiting another 62 Development Officers outside of the program, CIDA not only incurred extra costs associated to the recruitment process that is done on individual basis as opposed to a “mass recruitment” but also the recruitment of this pool of Development Officers did not benefit from the saving of time and effort that the NDO Program enjoyed by promoting participants without competition and right of appeal.

In terms of costs of training candidates with Bachelors versus those with graduate degrees, however, no statistical conclusions on the relative costs can be drawn. This is because of the fact that there is no appreciable difference in costs in terms of recruitment or development, as both are subjected to the same processes and requirements.

With respect to the timing aspect (i.e. duration/promotion) of the NDOP, which is currently a 4 year period from PM-2 to PM-4: while it is not out of line with other similar programs that we have examined, it is on the longer end of the spectrum. The views expressed by NDOP participants in the survey indicate that the promotion cycle is too slow.

### 3.1.4 Impact

As we reported earlier in this evaluation, NDOP has a 67.8% “market share” of all appointments to the ranks of Development Officers at levels PM-1 through PM-4. As of March 31, 2002, there were a total of 538 employees in the PM group in CIDA. The 120 NDOP participants (current and former) still with QDA account for 22.3% of the PM population of CIDA. It can be said with

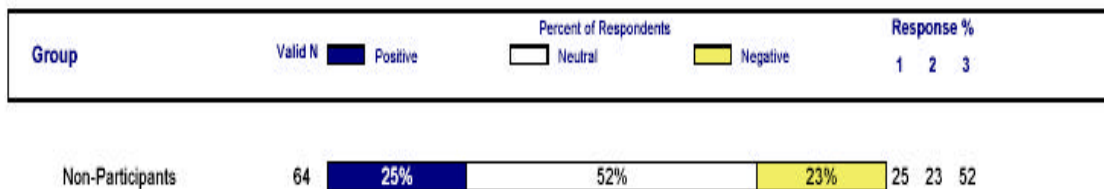
certainty that the program has contributed significantly to the replacement of Development Officers.

Our survey shows that 77% of PM colleagues perceive that the NDOP has had a neutral or positive impact on the working climate of employees in the PM group in CIDA. However, a significant minority of the colleagues of NDOP participants (23%) perceives the program to have a negative impact on the working climate of the PM group in CIDA.

**Non-Participants**

**Q. 32** In your view, what kind of impact has the Program had on the working climate of employees in the PM group within CIDA?

- 1. Positive
- 2. Negative
- 3. Neutral

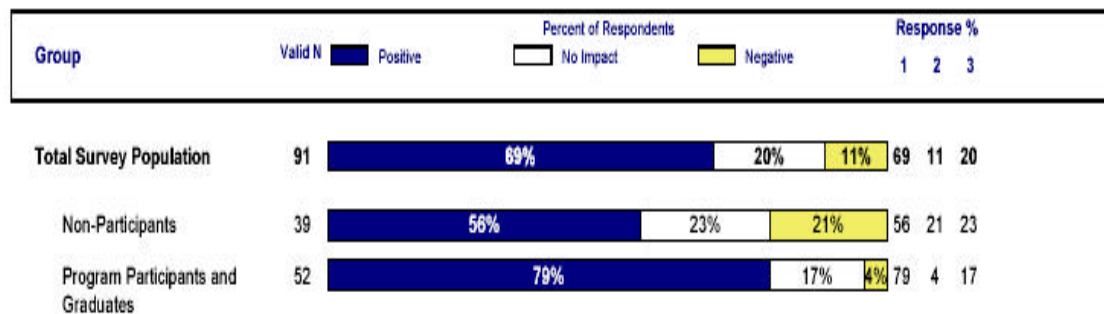


A significant majority of the PM population appears to be confident in the capabilities and capacities of the NDOP participants. Our survey showed that 79 % of PM colleagues perceive a neutral or positive impact on the community of Development Officers within CIDA

**Total Survey Population**

**Q. 26** In your opinion, has the NDOP had a positive, negative or no impact on the community of Development Officers within CIDA?

- 1. Positive
- 2. Negative
- 3. No Impact



A significant majority of these same colleagues believe that it is in CIDA’s interest to continue this program as a vehicle of recruitment as well as development. We take this as a vote of confidence in the program from those who are most likely to consider themselves to be competitors for development and promotion.



*Non-Participants*

Q. 34 Do you think it is in the interest of CIDA to continue NDOP as a development program?

1. Yes

2. No

Group	Valid N	Percent of Respondents		Response %	
		Yes	No	1	2



*Non-Participants*

Q. 33 Do you think it is in the interests of CIDA to continue NDOP as a recruitment program?

1. Yes

2. No

Group	Valid N	Percent of Respondents		Response %	
		Yes	No	1	2

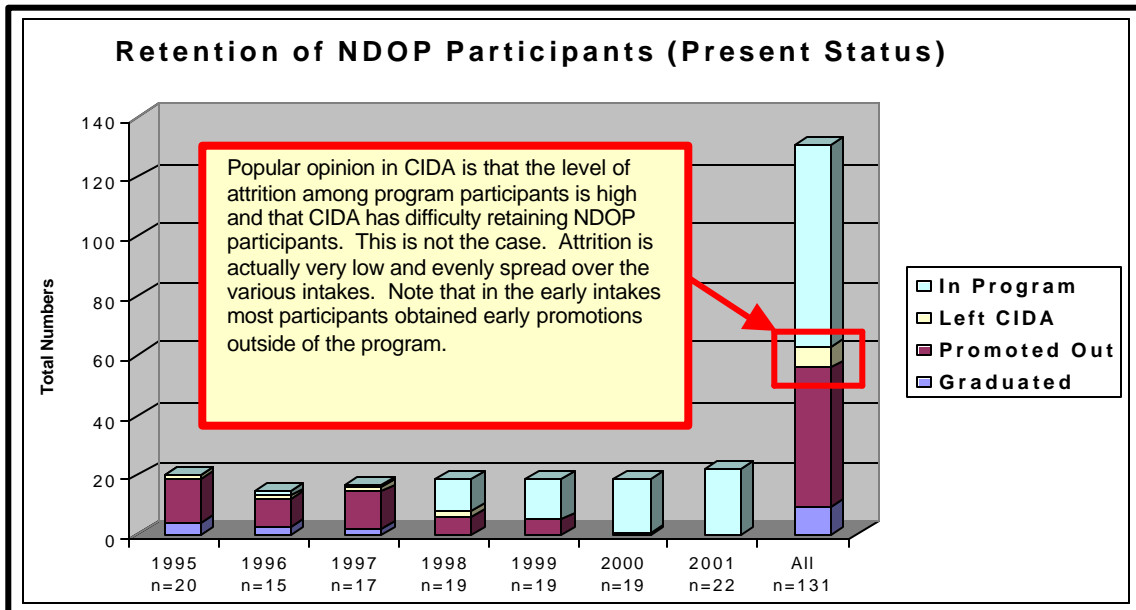


The executives and the managers that we interviewed also strongly believe that this program has had a positive impact in terms of recruiting youth with fresh perspectives and opinions and that it is in CIDA’s interest to continue with this program.

### 3.1.5 Retention and Promotion

Since its inception in 1995, the NDOP has recruited 131 participants, of which 120 are still in the employ of CIDA. Of the 11 that have left the Agency, 6 won a PM4 competition outside. Of the 120 that are still in the Agency, 69 are currently active in the program, while of the remaining 51, only 10 have graduated normally in the scope of the program. **41 (33%) have obtained early promotion to a PM4 position at CIDA outside the scope of the program.**

The program participation data clearly demonstrates that retaining NDOP participants has not been an issue to date.



Our internet survey of NDOP participants suggest that a majority of NDOP participants intend to stay and make their careers at CIDA. The survey extract indicates that only 18% are not likely to make their career at CIDA, but that 52% intend to stay even though they have expressed dissatisfaction with career development and promotional opportunities within CIDA.

That most NDOP participants intend to stay can be explained by the reasons these participants applied to this program in the first place. As our survey results indicate, there are basically three principal reasons for applying to this program and staying in the program:

- The opportunity to get into CIDA (76% respondents);
- The opportunity to do development work (73% respondents); and
- The opportunity for professional learning and development (33% respondents).

It appears that NDOP participants are loyal to both CIDA and the kind of work that Development Officers perform.

Although, retention has not been a problem to date and may not become one, it is unfortunate that the Agency does not have a retention strategy or plan for this group. The age profile of more senior levels of PM's suggest that there will be a significant number of promotional opportunities in the years ahead. The challenge is to keep this group of promising and talented individuals motivated until older staff vacate the more senior levels. CIDA should consider all possible measures, such as mentoring, credit courses toward graduation, dedicated assignments, regular follow-up and communication with participants on assignment, and many more suitable measures, as a way to increasing the satisfaction and motivation of NDOP participants and maintaining the morale of their PM peers.

### 3.1.6 Benchmarking

The evaluation team examined the recruitment and development program in other departments to determine what could be learned for CIDA. The team approached three departments: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Foreign Service Development Program); The Public Service Commission (Accelerated Economist Training); and Agriculture Canada (Agricultural Economist Recruitment and Development Program).

In benchmarking, the team examined: Program management and administration, Selection and recruitment, Program structure, and Program challenges and best practices.

#### Lessons Learned from Benchmarking

1. That it is more economical, requires less effort, and is less disruptive to operations to recruit once, “en masse” than to recruit piecemeal for individual positions.
2. That a recruitment program should have a monopoly on the staffing of all positions in the relevant population. This allows for the creation of a corporate “pool” (with corresponding salary and training budget). Such a pool is necessary to produce major savings in the staffing exercise, to ensure that the best candidates are hired quickly and not lost to competitor organizations, and to ensure the effective management, development, deployment, and promotion of the population of recruits.
3. That formal offers of employment should be mailed no later than the end of June. This seems to be a benchmark for the programs that were examined. Some departments give informal notice of intention to hire as early as March. Speed seems to be important in order to recruit the best and not to lose the best candidates to other organizations.
4. That initial appointments to a Program can be made at different levels to recognize different levels of education and experience.
5. That all recruits in a given intake should be brought “on board” at the same time in order to ensure that all receive orientation and introduction in an efficient manner and so that participants in a given intake can develop a sense of community. Bringing participants on board at different times during the year incurs extra processing costs, and extra orientation sessions (or missed orientation).
6. That these programs appear to function more effectively if they are “owned and operated” by line management with support from HR rather than the other way around. This seems to affect program support, credibility, quality, and reputation. Typically, this is achieved through the use of a Steering Committee comprised of line management.
7. That using program graduates as program advisors can enhance the design and effectiveness of the program. There may be some merit in pairing new program recruits with program graduates in a guidance capacity.
8. That collective but modularized “Mid point” training sessions seem to address more advanced developmental needs while continuing to foster the sense of community among program participants.

## 3.2 General Conclusions

The New Development Officer Program is successful on several fronts:

- The Program achieves its primary objective of helping to renew, replenish and rejuvenate the ranks of Development Officers within CIDA. The recruitment dimension of NDOP has been very successful in attracting a much younger workforce.
- The Program does produce the intended program outputs (quantity) within the set deadlines, and achieves qualitative goals in terms of accessing and recruiting good candidates with appropriate background, education and experience.
- The Program does help to improve the representation of women and visible minorities, contributes to extend the staffing reach of CIDA throughout Canada, and improve language representation.
- The Program continues to be a relevant program: the demographic conditions that led to its creation still prevail and there will be a continuing, demographically driven demand for new Development Officers for several years to come. Executives, managers and colleagues in CIDA continue to value the program as a good source of Development Officer talent and have expressed a need and a desire to continue the program.
- Although it was difficult to measure efficiency in quantitative terms, since neither CIDA nor other programs examined used activity based costing to capture costs of staffing transactions, proxy ratio on Growth of recruitment pattern and considerable savings resulting from mass recruitment revealed a high level of efficiency.
- The Program recruits candidates, viewed by managers and colleagues alike as high potential, capable individuals who bring commitment, fresh ideas and fresh perspectives to the work of Development Officers. It recruits candidates with a passion for the work of development and for the mission of CIDA - candidates who have a positive impact on the working climate and environment of CIDA.
- The Program does have a positive impact on the community of Development Officers within CIDA. In terms of community development, participants and graduates have informally developed their own NDOP community that provides a valuable support network for participants and we suspect this to be a contributing factor to the high level of retention among program participants.
- The program has managed to retain the vast majority of the 131 staff it has recruited and there is indication that majority of participants intend to stay and make their careers in CIDA.

## 3.3 Areas for potential improvement

While the program is achieving its objectives and can be considered quite successful, we believe there is room for further improvement:

- Developmental aspects -Coaching-Mentoring and Orientation and Learning Program: A significant number of program participants were not satisfied with the Coaching and Mentoring available to them. Orientation received mixed views, while participants were decidedly negative in their opinion of the subsequent personalized learning.
- Pace for Promotion: the NDOP's pace for promotion, that is currently over a 4 year period from PM2 to PM4, is longer compared to other similar programs that were examined. The Promotion formula used for the first promotion in the program is reasonable, but the second promotion should occur earlier.

- Recruiting outside the scope of the program: The high level of efficiency gained by recruiting NDO through a “mass recruitment program” and promoting them without competition and right of appeal, is reduced by recruiting a significant number of Development Officers by a piecemeal staffing process outside of the program.
- Although retention has not been an issue to date, it **may become a risk**. It is unfortunate that CIDA does not have retention strategies that would ensure opportunities to keep this group of promising and talented individuals motivated until the older staff vacate the more senior levels and vice-versa. Productivity and morale could be jeopardized by a lack of career advancement and development opportunities for both NDO participants and the older generation of PMs that have been dedicated and loyal to CIDA and that still retain a corporative knowledge of this function. There is a need to oversee a smooth transition.

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## **4.0 Recommendations and Suggestions for improvement**

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The evaluation offers the following recommendations and suggestions for improvement::

- 1. That the NDOP should retain the current “graduation level” of PM-4 but shorten the duration of the program from 4 years to 3 years and accelerate promotion within the program to 18 months from 30 months, at each of the PM2-PM3 and PM3-PM4 levels.**

Under authority delegated by the PSC to CIDA, CIDA is empowered to promote program participants up to and including the level of PM-4 without competition and without extending a right of appeal. This evaluation was asked to examine the merits of raising the program's graduating level from PM-4 to PM-5. We understand the rationale behind this proposal. A large majority of program participants and other PMs believe that there are too few career advancement opportunities for PMs. Program participants also believe that the pace of promotion in the program is too slow. Many program participants have been successful in competing for promotions to higher levels outside of the program earlier than they could have achieved promotion inside the program. Instead of leaving the duration of the program at 4 years and adjusting the graduating level from PM-4 to PM-5, we would recommend instead shortening the program's duration to 3 years and leaving the graduating level at PM-4. This we believe would address concerns about too slow a pace of promotion while maintaining a “level playing field” for all for promotion to PM-5.

We found little support for the proposal of elevating the NDOP graduating level to PM-5. Other PMs outside of the program would see this as unfairly diminishing and limiting their opportunities for career advancement in both the short and longer terms. Changing the graduating level to PM-5 would jeopardize the reservoir of goodwill that currently exists among other PMs for this program. A more compelling argument against raising the graduating level was advanced by the large majority of managers and executives that we interviewed for this evaluation. These managers and executives do not subscribe to the view that PM-5 work is indistinguishable from that of PM-3s or PM-4s. Managers and executives generally are of the view that the PM-5 level represents work that is more substantive, far-reaching, and complex than work at lower PM levels, and that PM-5 represents a level of authority and impact that requires significantly more knowledge, experience and seasoning. These managers and executives believe that without substantial lengthening of the program, its participants will not have acquired the necessary experience and seasoning to function credibly and effectively at the PM-5 level. These managers and executives noted that there are exceptions to every rule and that exceptional NDOP participants may be ready earlier than others but that in any event NDOP participants should compete with others to obtain the level of PM-5. The evaluation team finds the argument made by these managers and executives to be plausible and credible.

- 2. That CIDA consider strengthening the corporate nature of the program in the following ways:**
  - Make the NDOP the pre-eminent vehicle for staffing vacant Development Officer positions up to and including the level of PM-4.**
  - Create a centrally administered, corporately managed training and salary budget for NDOP.**

Adoption of this recommendation would:

- Enable CIDA to better manage supply and demand for Development Officers. Increase the number of positions available to NDOP and so enable CIDA to expand the number of high quality candidates recruited through this program.
  - Make it attractive to Branches to employ more New Development Officers by subsidizing the salary, language training and other costs of hiring a New Development Officer.
  - Allow CIDA to more effectively manage the pace, timing and perceived fairness of promotions by eliminating the possibility of promotions outside the scope of the program. This would create a “level playing field” and would eliminate the concerns expressed by participants and non-participants alike concerning the timing and manner of promotions.
  - Make CIDA’s recruitment process much faster, more competitive and more efficient. Presently, CIDA invests a significant amount of time, money and effort in the selection and interviewing of NDOP candidates. Many of the best candidates are lost to other organizations because CIDA is not able to make offers of employment on a timely basis. Good candidates are left on CIDA’s eligible lists until vacancies arise by which time many have accepted offers of employment from other organizations. If NDOP were the only vehicle for staffing NDO vacancies, and if staffing of these vacancies were centrally managed CIDA could extend offers of employment more quickly than it presently is able to do.
  - Increase the efficiency of Orientation and other training. At present, not all NDOP participants in a given year start their employment at the same time. Their start date depends on when a vacancy occurs and when an offer of employment is extended. Consequently, many miss Orientation. A common start date for all members of a given intake would ensure that all receive Orientation and that they receive it on a timely basis.
  - Increase the sense of community that NDOP participants have by ensuring that all members of a given intake have the opportunity to “bond” as a group through experiences shared at the same time.
  - Increase HRCS leverage in freeing up the time of participants for language and other training.
3. **That HRCS consider increasing the resources available to the Assignment Management Centre (the unit responsible for administering this program in addition to other responsibilities).** The unit is not presently adequately resourced to address the concerns raised by program participants. The Centre allocates approximately 1.8 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) to the management and administration of this program. These resources are fully consumed in the present recruitment, assignment, and promotion components of this program and do not have the capacity to handle the additional workload that a more developed program would entail. We believe that at least one additional FTE would be required to develop and implement the recommendation put forward in this evaluation.
4. **That the development aspects of the program be strengthened: while there are many positive aspects to the NDOP, the evaluation also found much that could be improved in the developmental components of the program if CIDA wishes to do so.** Apart from the assignments, the development components of the program are seen by program participants to be seriously deficient in both content and structure and the level of support from the Assignment Management Center could be improved. This should in no way be viewed as a criticism of the work or efforts of the program’s staff.

The evaluation found program staff to be professional, committed, productive and enthusiastic and they are doing all that can be done with the resources and tools at their disposal.

If resources were made available to do so, the program could consider implementing the following improvements:

- a) That formal offers of employment could go out no later than the end June. This seems to be a key benchmark for other programs we examined. Some departments even go so far as giving informal notice of intention to hire as early as March (in order to “reserve” the best candidates). Speed seems to be important in order not to lose the best candidates to other organizations.
  - b) That initial appointments to the Program could be made at different levels to recognize different levels of education and experience.
  - c) That all recruits in a given intake could be brought “on board” at the same time in order to ensure that all receive orientation and indoctrination in an efficient manner and so that participants in a given intake can develop a sense of community. Bringing participants on board at different times during the year incurs extra processing costs, extra orientation sessions (or missed orientation).
  - d) That collective but modularized “Mid point” training sessions could be used to address some of the more advanced developmental needs of program participants while at the same time fostering a sense of community among program participants.
  - e) That the program could address participant concerns about training subsequent to Orientation by adopting DFAIT’s approach to developing a curriculum specifically tailored to the needs of Development Officers. This would involve the adoption of a “credit” system that could become part of the promotion and graduation process. This would provide some the substance and structure that program participants seem to yearn for.
  - f) That using program graduates as program ambassadors (for university recruitment) and as program advisors for program content could enhance the design and effectiveness of the program. There may be some merit in pairing new program recruits with program graduates in a guidance capacity.
5. **That CIDA consider leveraging the recruitment efforts of the program to recruit other kinds of candidates for which the department has a need.** At present the program spends considerable time and effort in screening Post-Secondary Recruitment Program applications and in interviewing prospective candidates at regional locations across Canada. CIDA executives and managers acknowledge that the program recruits high-quality, high-potential candidates. CIDA could leverage these existing efforts to recruit other kinds of staff. In making this recommendation, the evaluation team is not suggesting the creation of any new development programs, rather just simply leveraging the existing investments of time and money made in recruiting development officers.
6. **That CIDA not disband this program and replace it with recruitment and development through the Management Trainee Program (MTP).** The department has made a considerable investment in time, effort and money in developing a recruiting infrastructure for Development Officers. The program works. It recruits high quality candidates. Management sees a continuing need for such candidates. The program has given CIDA a national level of recognition for recruiting specifically for its needs. We see no advantage in replacing a specific recruitment and development program with a generic recruitment program.



7. **That CIDA not consider “linking” this program to more advanced management development programs such as CAP or AEXDP.** The mandate of this assignment was to evaluate the NDOP. The mandate did not extend to a general evaluation of the framework for and the continuum of professional, management and executive development in the CIDA. However, we were asked to give some thought to the notion of linkage. We believe that “linkage” is not a sound concept. The notion of “linkage” implies long-term, special development for a select few that extends from post secondary recruitment up to and including executive levels principally as a way of enhancing retention. To our way of thinking this proposition would create two classes of employee: “the haves” and “the have-nots” and would have a negative impact on the working climate and environment within CIDA. The damage to working climate would more than offset any advantages of enhanced retention.
  
8. **That CIDA consider taking action to mitigate risks that may result in the bottleneck foreseen at the high level of the pyramid of the PM5-6 classification.** Enhancing the learning and development opportunities available to all PMs not just those enrolled in the program. We note considerable dissatisfaction among all PMs concerning a lack of career development and career advancement opportunities. The table below shows that the largest part of the PM population is concentrated at levels PM-5 and PM-6 and that this concentration appears to be increasing. Given the age profile of these levels we expect that retirement will create a significant outflow from these levels over the next five years and thus free up promotional opportunities for those at lower levels. In other words, there is a bottleneck but it is likely temporary. The issue becomes what to do with those at levels lower than PM-5 for the next five or so years until the bottleneck dissipates.

	PM-1	PM-2	PM-3	PM-4	PM-5	PM-6	Total
2001-2002	08	46	33	94	196	161	538
2002-2003	07	57	37	79	232	151	563

We know that even with this temporary blockage, retention has not been and is not likely to become an issue. Nonetheless the lack of advancement and development opportunities will have an impact on morale, productivity and perceptions of CIDA as an employer and a place to work. These risks can be mitigated. CIDA should consider enhancing developmental opportunities to maintain employee interest and motivation. Measures could include a more rigorous use of developmental assignments within the Agency (both at HQ and in the field, as well as with partner organizations). CIDA could also consider the formation of specializations within the PM ranks through specialized curriculum, training, coaching and mentoring.