

# Evaluation of the NFP (2002-2010)

*Main outcomes and conclusions*



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# Overall purpose of the evaluation

... to account for Netherlands funding and other inputs provided for the NFP in the period 2002-2010 and gain lessons for future policy development and implementation

Issues of the evaluation:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency

+

- Lessons for the future



# The NFP in a nutshell (1)

## General objective of the NFP:

‘To help alleviate quantitative and qualitative shortages of skilled manpower at mid-career level, in the context of capacity building within the framework of poverty reduction in developing countries’

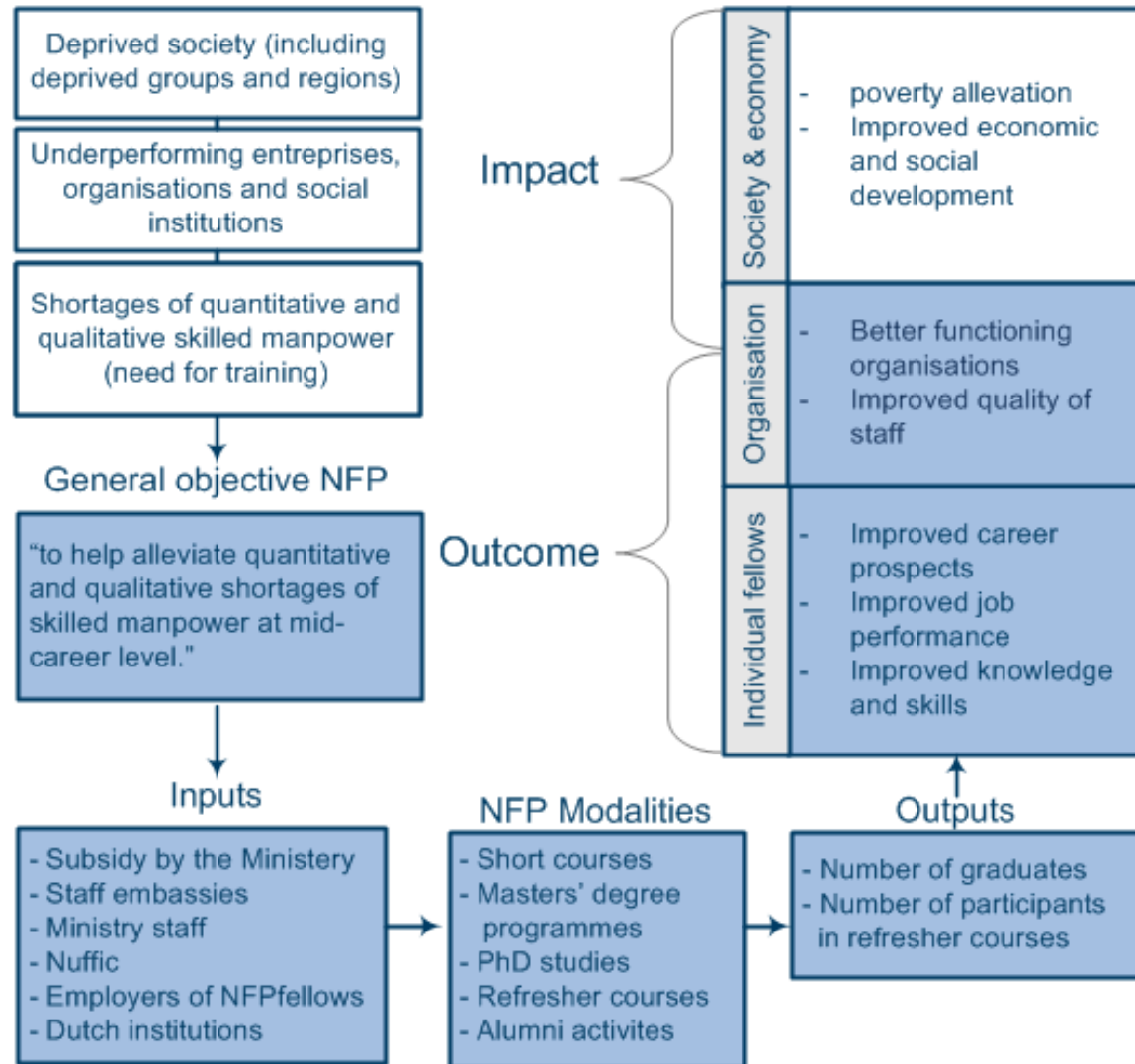
## More specific the NFP aims at:

capacity building by educating and training individual employees working as mid-career professional in an organisation

## Implicit objectives:

- The NFP has a potential relevance for Dutch HE institutes in generating knowledge products (e.g. research output, dissertations, new educational programmes)
- The Dutch state might potentially benefit from the NFP through improved bilateral relations from the network of NFP alumni

# The NFP in a nutshell (2)



# The NFP in a nutshell (3)

## Target groups:

- Mid-career professionals (at least 3 years work experience)
- Living and working in and originating from one of the 60 eligible countries on the NFP country list
- At least 50% of the number of fellowships to women
- At least 50% of the available budget on candidates from Sub-Saharan Africa

## Demand driven approach:

- Grants are distributed according to the number of applications per country
- Applicants require a support letter by their employer

## Selection of candidates:

- Based on scores for relevance by the Dutch embassy and academic quality (by the Dutch education institute)

# Some key figures of the NFP (2002-2010)

- Budget spent: 244 million euro (+ 12,5 million for management and implementation by Nuffic)
- 12,750 fellows participated in one of the NFP modalities (+ 233 Refresher courses). Completion rate: approximately 98%
- Main focus was on short courses (58% of the NFP fellows) and Master's Courses (38%)
- 47% of the grants (short courses, Master's Courses and PhD studies) were awarded to women (target of 50% almost met)
- Participation shows a focus on a selection of countries, with Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Nepal, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda being the largest beneficiary countries (>600 fellows).

# How was the evaluation performed?

- Desk research (policy documents and reports)
- Interviews with: Dutch government officials, Nuffic, Dutch education institutes (10) and the Dutch Platform for International Education (PIE)
- Online questionnaire among NFP alumni (Tracer Study)
  - 2700 fellows responded (response rate: 31%)
- Online questionnaire among the employers of NFP fellows
  - 220 employers responded (response rate: 13%)
- Field visit studies to Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Uganda.
  - interviews were held with alumni and their employers, embassy staff, government officials and NGOs
- Evaluation conducted between August 2011 and March 2012



# Conclusions: Relevance (1)

- NFP education and training are perceived (by fellows as well as their employers) as relevant for individual employees by:
  - increasing knowledge, skills, competences
  - enhancing personal development,
  - enhancing their career opportunities

.... whereas reasons like ‘higher salary’, ‘opportunity to go abroad’, ‘requested by the employer’ appear to be much less important for fellows to apply for an NFP fellowship.

- NFP education and training are perceived (by the employers) as relevant for the organisations by:
  - improving quality of staff
  - contributing to better quality of services
  - enhancing innovative developments
  - reducing skills shortages (quantitative and qualitative)

## Conclusions: Relevance (2)

- There are structural mismatches on the labour markets among others due to lack of appropriate mechanisms in HE to respond to skills shortages
- Due to its combination of theoretical and practical content and the quality of its courses the NFP provides a highly relevant supply of education and training for regional labour markets in the South

And...

.... assumed relevance for the Dutch education institutes and the Dutch state (implicit objectives)

# Conclusions: Effectiveness (1)

- The questionnaire among NFP alumni indicates positive effects of the NFP at the individual level:
  - increased subject knowledge and skills (94% of the fellows)
  - developed a more critical and analytical attitude (92%)
  - learned to collaborate with others (91%)
  - a higher job position for about 50% of the alumni
  - increased responsibilities in their work (70%)
- The questionnaire among NFP alumni and their employers indicate positive effects at the organisational level, especially regarding:
  - introduction of new techniques and methodologies and 'new technical skills', leading to ....
  - 'improved quality of services and products'.

## Conclusions: Effectiveness (2)

- About 70% of the respondents noted that there could have been more effects for the organisation.
- ... depending on factors as follow-up by the employer and 'embeddedness' in the organisation (e.g. relation to HRD plan).
- It is difficult to find empirical evidence for contribution of the NFP to socio-economic developments in the regions or countries the fellows reside.
- Although the total number of NFP fellows is quite substantial the number of fellows is limited at national level. This sets limits to the ambitions of capacity building and alleviating skills shortages.
- Furthermore, many employers indicate remaining structural skills shortages

## Conclusions: Effectiveness (3)

- Based on the outcomes of the questionnaire there appear to be little brain drain:
  - almost 90% of the alumni returned to their employer after their NFP education or training
  - 70% is currently still working for the same employer as when they started their NFP education.
- ... However, findings from the field visits provide evidence of sometimes considerable brain drain at the level of organisations.
- No active Netherlands alumni association was present in any of the countries visited.
- Alumni information is not actively used by the Dutch government to develop relations between the Netherlands and NFP countries.

# Conclusions: Efficiency (1)

- Contrary to the policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tuition fees for Master's courses increased considerably (+50% in the period 2002 – 2010)
- This was (mainly) due to policies of the Dutch Ministry of Education regarding higher tuition fees for non-EER students ... and the possibility given to the education institutes to charge cost-effective tuition fees for NFP fellows
- Nevertheless, the NFP tuition fees are still below the ISPAC tuition fee level (fees for non-EER students)

## Conclusions: Efficiency (2)

- There appear to be little incentives to make use of alternative supply structures to reduce the costs of the programme (for instance e-learning, larger regional components, co-financing).

# Three options for the future

1. Continuation of the programme with an emphasis on improvement of bilateral relations and internationalisation of Dutch higher education
2. Continuation of the programme with a clearer emphasis on capacity building (development cooperation)
3. Phasing out of the programme (*fellowships can be provided through other capacity building programmes such as NICHE or through sector support programmes*).



# Options and choices (1)

## Options regarding Main Policy Objective:

More focus on bilateral relations (foreign policy)?

More focus on capacity building (development cooperation)?

More focus on internationalisation of Dutch education?

## Proposition 1

*Notwithstanding new focus areas in Dutch foreign policy the NFP should strictly focus on capacity building.*

## Proposition 2

*To really create impact the NFP should shift focus from individual capacity building towards capacity building of organisations.*

# Options and choices (2)

Options regarding the number of countries (60 at the moment)

## Proposition 3

*To really have an impact the number of eligible countries for the NFP should be substantially lowered (creating more critical mass)*



# Options and choices (3)

## Options regarding types and location of courses

### **Proposition 4**

*The NFP course supply should reflect the unique selling points of the Dutch economy and expertise in Dutch education.*

# Options and choices (4)

## Options regarding efficiency

### **Proposition 5**

*In the context of budget constraints price/quality ratio should play a prominent role regarding future directions of the NFP*

# Thanks for your attention!

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