

## 3.0 THE NON-POST-SECONDARY COHORT

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The economic environment in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2001 was encouraging - economic indicators including employment, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and retail trade showed growth while inflation had slowed and unemployment was at its lowest level since 1989. For the June 2001 high school graduate who chose not to continue pursue post-secondary studies but rather to seek immediate employment the prospect of finding a job was good, particularly in the St. John's area. The labour force characteristics for youth 15 to 24 years of age for the period 1998 to 2001 is shown in Table 3.1.1.

Youth	Unit	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population	(000's)	83.6	81.4	80.0	78.0
Labour Force	(000's)	37.0	37.7	38.2	39.7
Employment	(000's)	26.7	27.6	28.4	29.8
Unemployment	(000's)	10.3	10.1	9.8	9.8
Unemployment Rate	(%)	27.8	26.8	25.7	24.7
Participation Rate	(%)	44.3	46.3	47.8	50.9
Employment Rate	(%)	31.9	33.9	35.5	38.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, August 2002

**Table 3.1.1 Labour Force Characteristics (Unadjusted), Youth (15-24 Years)  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
1998 - 2001 Annual**

However, these graduates entered the workforce with limited job skills and, as shown in this section and more particularly in the text on current employment, there were also limitations on the types of jobs they obtained.

A number of non-post-secondary high school graduates had reasons, other than employment-related, for not pursuing post-secondary studies. These included a return to high school for the

improvement of grades, joining the military, addressing personal and/or family needs. Sociodemographic characteristics such as low parental income and low parental education also had an effect on the decision not to attend post-secondary education.

### **3.2 ACTIVITIES OF NON-POST-SECONDARY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

#### **3.2.1 What are non-post-secondary high school graduates currently doing?**

The majority of surveyed high school graduates from June 2001 who did not pursue post-secondary education immediately after graduation were working. Of these working graduates 37% (n=547) had found full-time employment while 21% (n=320) were working part-time or were self-employed. As shown in Figure 3.2.1a, just over one-quarter of graduates were unemployed with nearly 19% (n=283) actively looking for work and 8% (n=116) not looking for work. Another 9% (n=141) of non-post-secondary high school graduates reported that they had returned to high school to improve their grades, and it can be expected that these graduates will eventually find their way into post-secondary studies. Finally, 6% of graduates reported that they were engaged in personal/family activities (1%, n=16), had joined the military (1%, n=18), were waiting for school to begin (1%, n=13) or involved in the “Linkages” program or some other non-post-secondary activity (3%, n=42).

**Figure 3.2.1a The Post-Graduation Activities  
of Non-Post-Secondary  
High School Graduates  
June 2001 High School Graduates  
(n = 1496)**



Figure 3.2.1b illustrates the differences between the responses of males and female non-post-

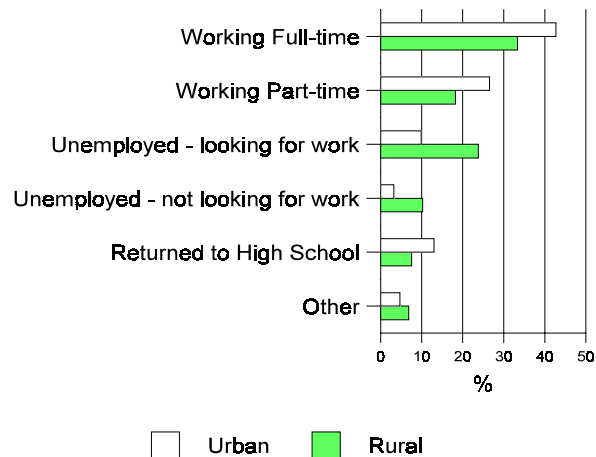
secondary high school graduates with respect to their post-graduation activities. Just over 62% of female graduates indicated that they were working either full-time or part-time at the time of survey compared to 54% of males. In contrast 23% of females were unemployed compared to 30% of males. However, 10% of males (n=84) had returned to school to improve their grades while only 8% of females (n=57) had done so. More females than males indicated that they were not engaged in post-secondary activities because they were engaged in personal and/or family activities.

**Figure 3.2.1b The Post-Graduation Activities of  
Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates  
by Gender  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



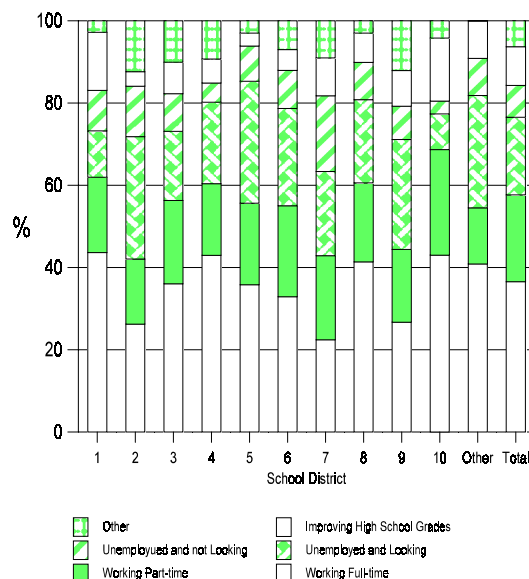
Whether respondents lived in an urban or rural setting was also a factor (see Figure 3.2.1c). Over two-thirds (69%) of graduates living in an urban area were employed either full-time or part-time at the time of survey while only 51% of rural graduates indicated that they had found employment. Furthermore, 34% of rural graduates were unemployed compared to only 13% of urban graduates. Lastly, more urban graduates had returned to school to improve their grades with 13% indicating that they were upgrading their high school marks compared to 8% of rural graduates.

**Figure 3.2.1c The Post-Graduation Activities  
of Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates  
by Urban/Rural Split  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



Non-post-secondary graduates living in School District 10 had the highest level of employment with 69% (n=302) reporting that they were working either full-time or part-time followed by District 1 (62%, n=43), District 8 (61%, n=60) and District 5 (60%, n=90). In contrast, with respect to non-post-secondary high school graduates, School Districts 2 and 7 had employment rates of 42% (n=24) and 43% (n=42) and unemployment rates of 42% (n=26) and 39% (n=38), respectively. Districts 10 (15%, n=67) and 1 (14%, n=10) also had the highest percentage of graduates returning to high school to improve their grades.

**Figure 3.2.1d The Post-Graduation Activities of Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates by School District  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



### 3.2.2 In what sectors are non-post-secondary high school graduates working?

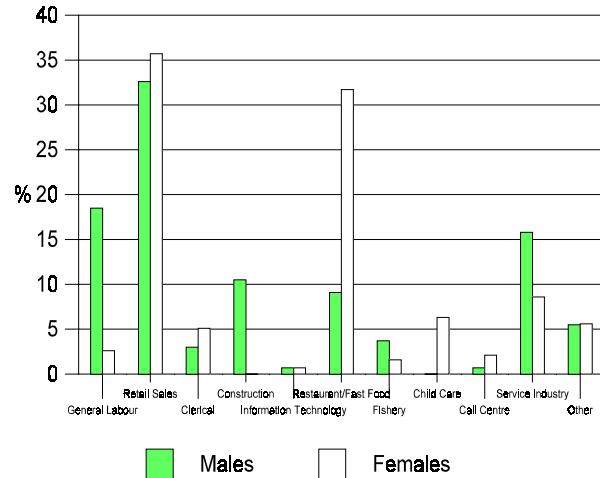
The high school graduates of June 2001 who were not currently pursuing post-secondary studies and who employed either full-time or part-time at the time of survey are generally working in low-skill sectors such as retail sales (34%), restaurant and fast-food services (20%) the service industry (12%), and general labour (11%) (see Table 3.2.2). Others cited working at clerical (4%), construction (5%), fishery (3%), child care (3%), call centre (1%) and information technology (1%) positions.

Sector/Position	# of Graduates	% of Graduates
Retail Sales	296	34.1
Restaurant/Fast Food	176	20.3
Service Industry	106	12.2
General Labour	92	10.6
Construction	46	5.3
Clerical	35	4.0
Fishery	23	2.7
Child Care	27	3.1
Call Centre	12	1.4
Information Technology	6	0.7
Other	48	5.5
Total	867	100.0

**Table 3.2.2 Where Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates  
were Working at Time of Survey  
June 2001 High School Graduates**

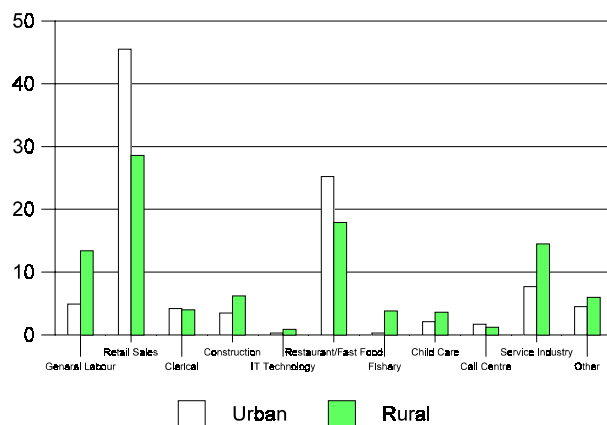
Female graduates found work predominately in retail sales (36%) and in restaurants and/or fast food establishments (32%). As shown in Figure 3.2.2a, while a considerable percentage of males also found work in retail sales (33%), male graduates also found work in general labour (19%) and service industry (16%) positions.

**Figure 3.2.2a Where Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates were Working at the Time of Survey by Gender  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



Over 70% of non-post-secondary high school graduates living in urban areas worked in retail sales (46%) or the restaurant/fast food industry (25%), likely reflective of the greater availability of these positions in high population areas (see Figure 3.2.2b). While rural graduates also found work in retail sales (29%) and the restaurant/fast food industry (18%), a significant percentage also found work in service industry (15%), general labour (13%), and construction (6%) positions. School District level data provides similar results - school districts located in urban areas have high numbers of non-post-secondary high school graduates working in retail sales and restaurant/fast food establishments whereas the positions obtained in school districts in rural areas is more diverse.

**Figure 3.2.2b Where Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates were Working at the Time of Survey by Urban/Rural Split  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



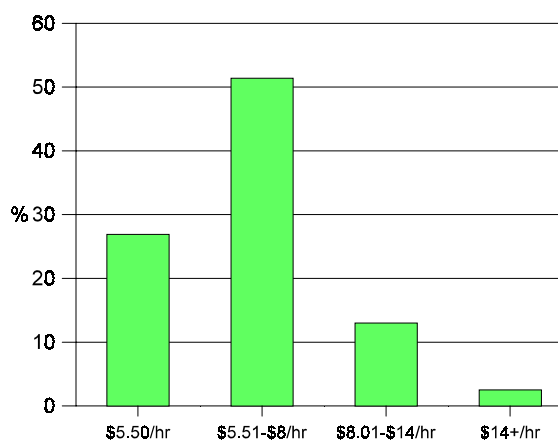
3.2.

### **3 What hourly wage are non-post-secondary high school graduates, employed either part-time or full-time, receiving?**

At the time of survey, the minimum wage in Newfoundland and Labrador was \$5.50/hour - this translates into a yearly salary of \$11,440 provided that a 40 hour week is worked.

As shown in Figure 3.2.3a, of non-post-secondary high school graduates employed part-time or full-time during this period, almost 27% were receiving minimum wage. Just over half (51%) of employed respondents were receiving \$5.51 - \$8/ hour (maximum of \$16,640/year) and 13% were receiving \$8.01- \$14/hour (maximum \$29,120/year). Only 3% were in receipt of more than \$14/hour.

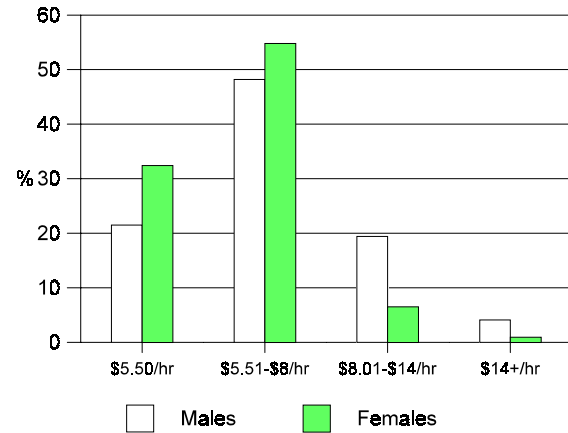
**Figure 3.2.3a Hourly Wages of Employed Non-Post Secondary High School Graduates at the Time of Survey  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



The hourly wage of non-post-secondary high school graduates by gender is presented in Figure 3.2.3b. More females than males received the lowest wages with 32% of females reported receiving minimum wage (\$5.50/hr) compared to 22% of males while 55% of females and 48% of males earned between \$5.51 - \$8/hr. In contrast, a greater percentage of males had high wages - of those earning between \$8.01 - \$14/hr, 19% were males while only 7% were females. Similarly, 4% of males had earnings of more than \$14/hr compared to less than 1% of females.

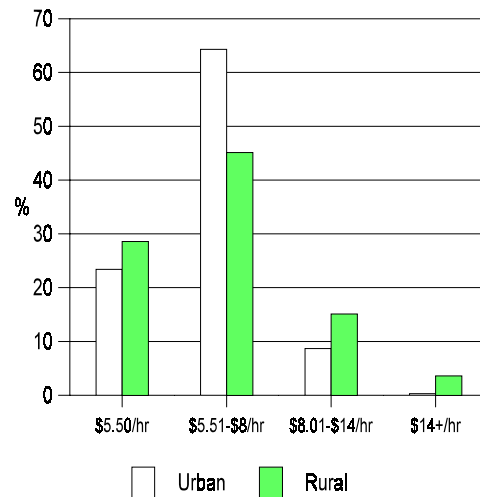


**Figure 3.2.3b Hourly Wages of Employed Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates at the Time of Survey by Gender**  
June 2001 High School Graduates



Almost 88% of non-post-secondary high school graduates living in urban areas had wages below \$8/hour compared to only 74% of rural graduates (see Figure 3.2.3c). Accordingly, only 9% of urban graduates had wages of \$8.01-\$14/hr and less than 1% had wages of \$14/hour or more whereas 15% of rural graduates earned \$8.01-\$14/hour and 4% earned more than \$14/hour.

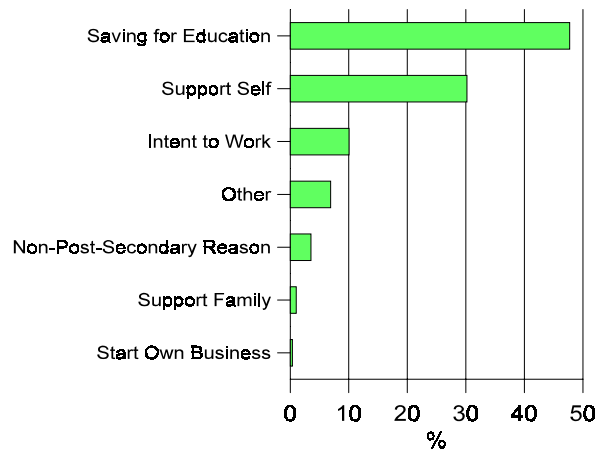
**Figure 3.2.3c Hourly Wages of Employed Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates at the Time of Survey by Urban/Rural Split**  
June 2001 High School Graduates



### 3.2.4 Why did non-post-secondary high school graduates choose to seek employment rather than pursue post-secondary studies immediately after graduation?

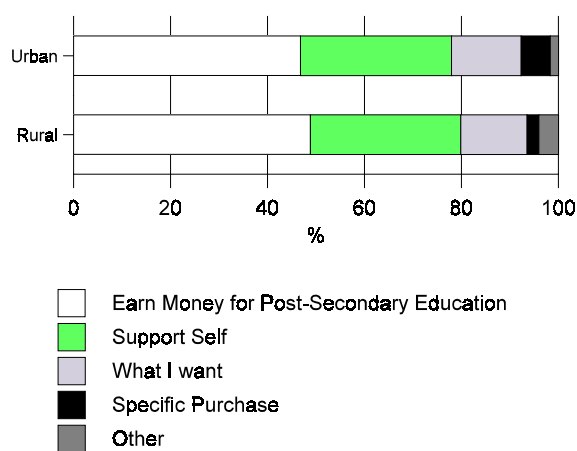
Almost half (48%) of the non-post-secondary high school graduates surveyed reported that they were working to finance their future post-secondary studies (see Figure 3.2.4a). A further 30% of graduates indicated that they needed to work to support themselves while 10% stated that it was their intent to work rather than to pursue post-secondary studies. The remaining 12% cited other reasons for working after graduation including earning money to support their family, to use for a non-specific non-post-secondary reason or to start a business.

**Figure 3.2.4a Reasons Cited by  
Non-Post Secondary High School Graduates  
for Seeking Employment  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



Overall, as shown in Figure 3.2.4b, there were only minor differences in the responses of urban and rural graduates - almost half of both cohorts were working to earn money for future post-secondary studies. One notable difference is that more urban graduates (6%) than rural graduates (2.4%) were working to make a specific, non-educational purchase such as a car or trip.

**Figure 3.2.4b Reasons Cited by Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates for Seeking Employment by Urban/Rural Split June 2001 High School Graduates**



### 3.3 REASONS FOR NOT PURSUING POST-SECONDARY STUDIES

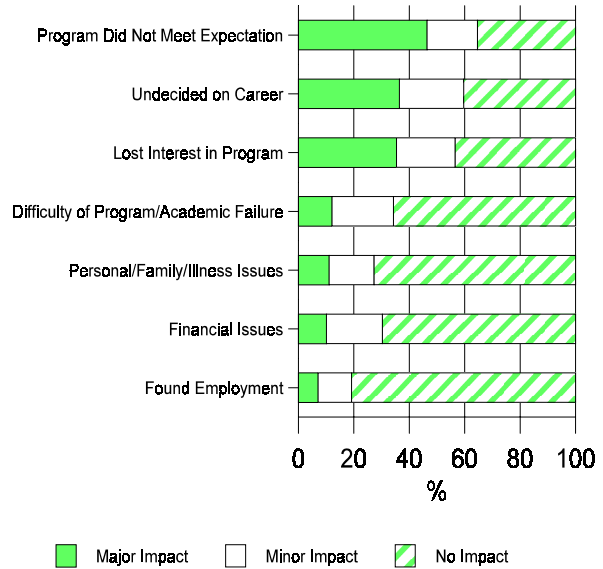
#### 3.3.1 Did any non-post-secondary high school graduates attend a post-secondary institution after high school and subsequently discontinue their studies and, if so, why?

The majority (93%) of non-post-secondary high school graduates indicated that they have never undertaken any post-secondary studies. Of the small minority (7%, n=99) that did so and have since discontinued their studies, most (88%) were from rural Newfoundland and Labrador and more females (55%) than males (45%) made the decision to give up. While 42% of this group reported being unemployed subsequent to leaving post-secondary studies, almost 51% were working with the largest component (32%) finding employment in the retail sales sector.

The most significant contributing factor to the decision of these graduates to discontinue their studies was that the program of study in which they had enrolled did not meet their expectations

- 47% of respondents cited this as having a major impact on their decision and 18% cited it as having a minor impact. As shown in Figure 3.3.1, other factors reported as having a major impact were the loss of interest in the program (35%) and career indecision (36%).

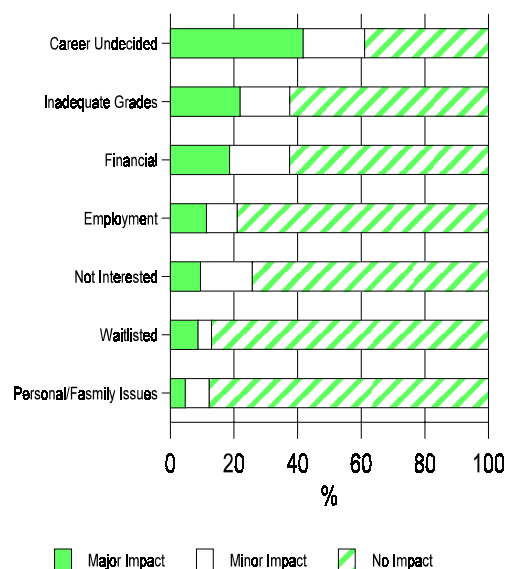
**Figure 3.3.1 Factors Influencing  
Non-Post-Secondary Cohort to  
Discontinue Their Post-Secondary Studies  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



### 3.3.2 What factors influenced non-post-secondary high school graduates in their decision not to pursue a post-secondary education immediately after graduation from high school?

Seven potential barriers to post-secondary education were presented to non-post-secondary high school graduates (n=1397) who were asked to rank them as having a major, minor or no impact on their decision not to pursue post-secondary at this time. The inability to decide on a career path was cited as a major reason for not pursuing a post-secondary education by 42% of graduates who had not engaged in post-secondary studies (not including those graduates who had discontinued studies) immediately after graduation and as a minor reason by 19% of this cohort. Other reasons cited as having a significant impact on the decision included inadequate grades to gain entrance into a post-secondary program (22%) and insufficient finances (19%).

**Figure 3.3.2 Impact of Barriers to Post-Secondary Education on Non-Post-Secondary Cohort June 2001 High School Graduates**



While there was little difference reported between male and female non-post-secondary high school graduates with respect to barriers to post-secondary education, there was a notable difference between urban and rural graduates, particularly with respect to grades. In fact, 32% of urban graduates indicated that inadequate grades had a major impact on their decision - in comparison, only 18% of rural graduates saw this as a major impediment. Barriers of more consequence to rural graduates was career indecision, waitlists and finding employment.

### **3.3.3 What were the factors influencing the decision of non-post-secondary high school graduates not to attend a post-secondary institution after graduation from high school?**

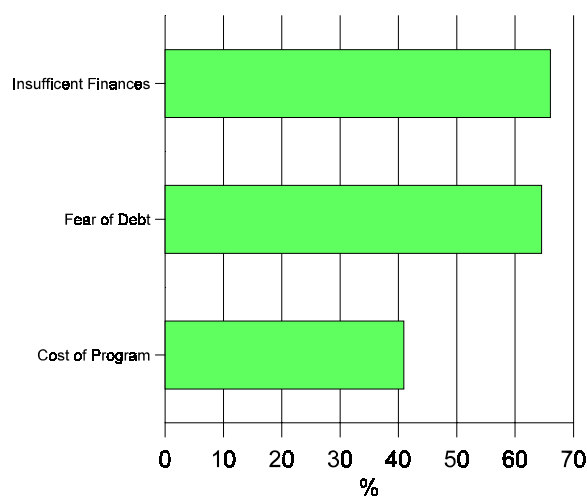
Graduates from the non-post-secondary cohort were asked to indicate whether specific financial, career path, or entrance requirement issues were a factor in their decision to engage in post-secondary studies. A further rationale for a general lack of interest in post-secondary education was also requested. The results are presented in Figures 3.3.3a to 3.3.3e.

### 3.3.3a Financial Issues

A lack of financial resources and a fear of too much debt were reported to be factors in the decision of approximately two-thirds of non-post-secondary high school graduates who cited financial issues as a barrier to post-secondary studies. Almost 41% also stated that their desired program was too expensive for them to consider at this time.

Female graduates were more concerned with debt than male graduates - 71% of females graduates considered the debt they would acquire from post-secondary studies as a factor in their decision not to attend post-secondary while only 59% of males reported this as a consideration. Additionally, 72% of non-post-secondary high school graduates whose parents had less than a high school education saw acquiring debt as a limiting factor compared to only 47% of graduates whose parent(s) had some post-secondary education.

**Figure 3.3.3a Financial Issues as a Barrier to Post-Secondary Education for Non-Post-Secondary Cohort June 2001 High School Graduates**

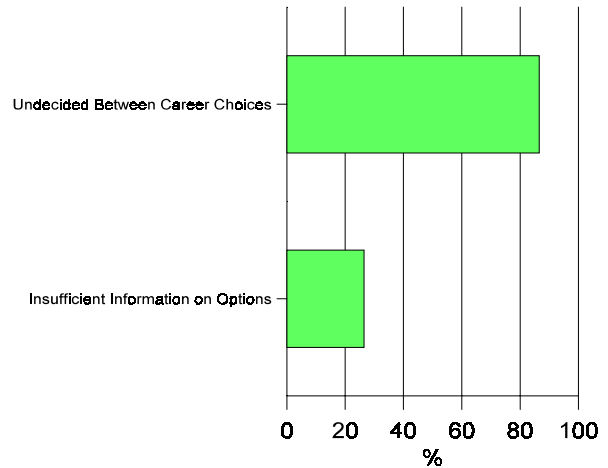


### 3.3.3b Career Path Issues

Of those non-post secondary high school graduates who indicated that their indecision on a career choice was a barrier to their post-secondary education, the majority (72%) stated that there was sufficient information on post-secondary options available to them to make a decision on a career choice but they were unable to decide on a career path. In fact, 88% of graduates indicated that they were undecided between more than one career choice. There was little difference noted in the responses between genders or whether graduates were from an urban or

rural area.

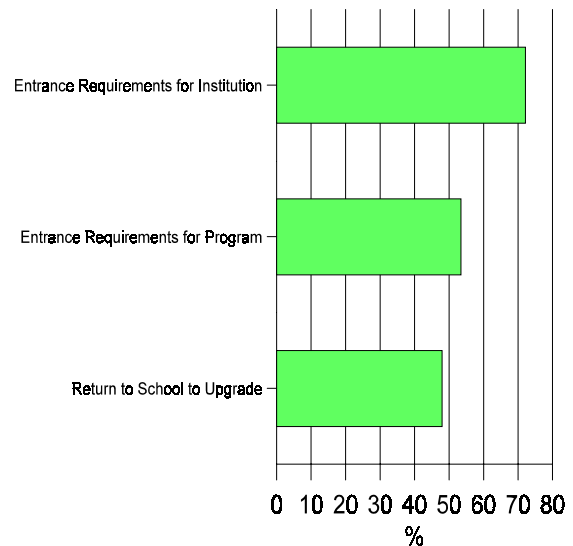
**Figure 3.3.3b Career Path Issues as a Barrier to Post-Secondary Education for Non-Post-Secondary Cohort June 2001 High School Graduates**



### **3.3.3c Entrance Requirement Issues**

The inability to meet the entrance requirements for the post-secondary institution of choice was the major reason cited by 72% of non-post-secondary high school graduates who indicated that entrance requirements were a barrier to their post-secondary education. Just over half of graduates (53%) also indicated that they were unable to meet the entrance requirements for their chosen program of study. Having realized this as an obstacle to their further education, 48% of respondents reported that they had returned to high school to improve their grades.

**Figure 3.3.3c Entrance Requirement Issues as a Barrier to Post-Secondary Education for Non-Post-Secondary Cohort June 2001 High School Graduates**



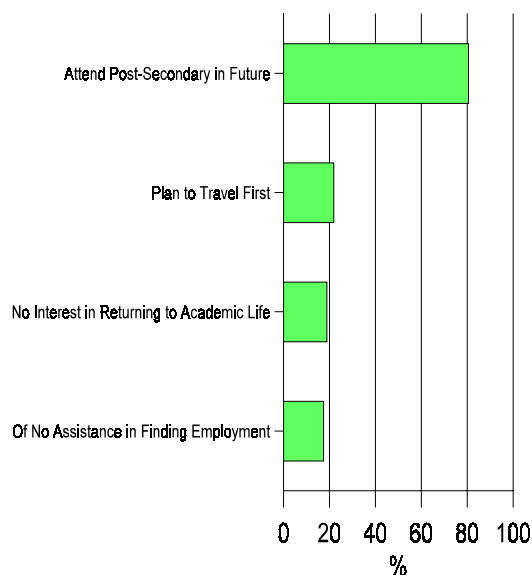
### **3.3.3d Lack of Interest Issues**

The overwhelming factor in the decision of four out of five graduates who indicated they were not interested in attending post-secondary at this time was that they planned to explore their post-secondary options sometime in the future. Almost 22% of non-post-secondary high school graduates who cited a lack of interest also stated that they planned to travel prior to making a decision on post-secondary while 17% felt that a post-secondary education would not be beneficial to them in finding employment and 19% expressed no interest in returning to academic life.

Female graduates were more likely to view post-secondary as a possible future option - 87% stated a desire to attend post-secondary in the future compared to 77% of males. Additionally, 30% of females stated that they planned to travel prior to making a decision, thereby not closing the door on future post-secondary studies. However, a greater percentage of male graduates (22%) than females (13%) expressed a lack of interest in returning to academic life as did a greater percentage of rural graduates (21% compared to 15% of urban graduates). Additionally, one in five rural graduates also expressed the opinion that a post-secondary education would not help them find a job.



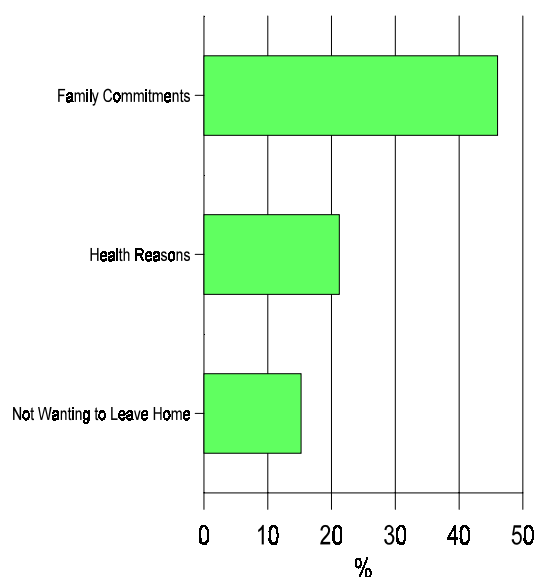
**Figure 3.3.3d Lack of Interest Issues as a Barrier to Post-Secondary Education for Non-Post-Secondary Cohort June 2001 High School Graduates**



### **3.3.3e Personal or Family Issues**

Almost 41% of those citing a personal or family issue as a barrier to post-secondary studies indicated that the greater importance of family commitments was the major factor in their decision not to attend post-secondary. Of those graduates, 82% were female and 72% were residing in rural areas of the Province. Just over 21% reported health issues as the main reason for their non-attendance and 15% stated that the reason they chose not to attend post-secondary was that they did not want to leave their home and/or their community.

**Figure 3.3.3e Personal/Family Issues as a Barrier to Post-Secondary Education for Non-Post-Secondary Cohort June 2001 High School Graduates**



### **3.3.3f Waitlists for Program Placement**

The non-post-secondary high school graduates who indicated that waitlists were a barrier to their post-secondary education were asked what program(s) they were waiting for placement in. Of the 121 responses, 91 respondents or 75% stated that they were waiting for admittance to courses offered by the College of the North Atlantic and 85% were from rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **3.4 GOALS OF NON-POST-SECONDARY COHORT**

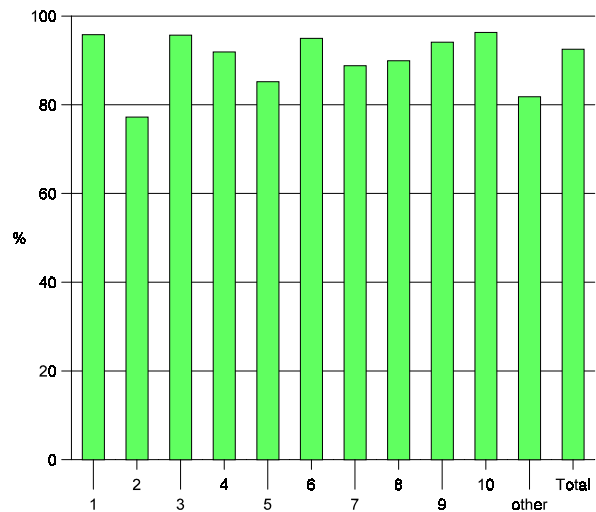
### **3.4.1 Are non-post-secondary high school graduates planning to attend a post-secondary institution sometime in the future?**

A desire to attend a post-secondary institution in the future was expressed by 93% of non-post-secondary high school graduates with female graduates (95%) more inclined to want to further their education than males (90%). Additionally, just over 96% were from urban areas and 91% were from rural areas of the Province. The intent to attend post-secondary in the future was greater among those graduates whose parent(s) had higher levels of education. In fact 96% of graduates with at least one parent who had completed post-secondary planned to attend in the

future compared to 89% whose parent(s) had less than a high school education.

The percentage of non-post-secondary high school graduates with plans of future post-secondary studies varied significantly by school district with only 77% of graduates from School District 2 intending to participate in the future compared to 96% from School Districts 1, 3 and 10 (see Figure 3.4.1).

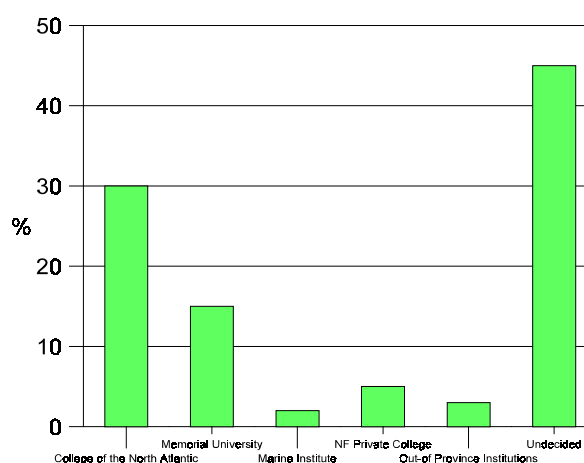
**Figure 3.4.1 Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates with Future Post-Secondary Intentions by School District  
June 2001 High School Graduates**



### **3.4.2 Where are current non-post-secondary high school graduates planning to study in future?**

The College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University is the institution of choice for 30% and 15%, respectively, of those graduates who are not currently attending post-secondary but plan to attend at some future date. Another 10% indicated that they plan to attend one of the private colleges in the Province (5%), the Marine Institute (2%) or an out-of-province post-secondary institution. However, nearly half (45%) of non-post-secondary graduates who have indicated that they are planning to engage in post-secondary studies in the future are undecided about where they will study.

### 3.4.2 Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates with Future Post-Secondary Intentions by Planned Institution of Study June 2001 High School Graduates



### 3.4.3 How will current non-post-secondary high school graduates pay for their future post-secondary studies?

Overall, the greatest percentage (48%) of non-post-secondary high school graduates who intend to undertake post-secondary studies in future plan to avail of government student loans to do so (see Table 3.4.3). One-quarter of graduates will also use personal savings to pay for all or part of their post-secondary education while 13% expect that family will assist them in realizing their education plans. Noteworthy is the 10% of non-post-secondary high school graduates indicating that they will access HRDC/Employment Insurance funding for their future studies - in contrast less than one percent of graduates who entered post-secondary studies immediately after graduation considered this as a funding option.

A greater percentage of females (58%) than males (39%) indicated that they will use government student loans as all or part of their post-secondary funding source whereas more males (36%) than females (29%) suggested that they will use personal savings or employment earnings to finance their education.

Urban youth have greater access to employment opportunities and over half of the urban non-post-secondary graduates (51%) indicated that they will use personal savings from a previous job or earnings from a current job to facilitate their future post-secondary plans compared to only 25% of rural graduates. Family financial support was also considered to be a possible source of funding for almost one-quarter of urban non-post-secondary high school graduates whereas only

9% of rural graduates saw this as a possible option. Alternately, more rural graduates (13%) suggested using HRDC/EI funding as a source of educational funding than did urban graduates (3%).

Expected Source of Funding	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
	%		%		%
<b>Government Student Loans</b>	39.4	57.8	43.1	49.7	47.9
<b>Bursaries/Scholarships</b>	1.0	1.2	1.9	0.7	1.1
<b>Bank/private Loan</b>	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7
<b>Earnings from Current Job</b>	8.4	6.2	11.9	5.7	7.4
<b>Savings from a Previous Job</b>	27.3	23.2	39.4	20.1	25.4
<b>RESP/Education Plans</b>	1.5	1.2	2.4	0.9	1.3
<b>HRDC Sponsorship/EI</b>	11.5	8.7	2.7	13.1	10.2
<b>Tutoring for Tuition</b>	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
<b>SWASP</b>	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.2
<b>Family Financial Support</b>	13.0	13.4	24.3	8.9	13.2
<b>Other</b>	4.3	2.9	1.9	4.3	3.7

Note: Graduates were permitted to name multiple sources thus totals may exceed 100% for each indicator.

**Table 3.4.3 How Non-Post-Secondary High School Graduates Plan to Finance All or Part of Any Post-Secondary Education Plans by Gender and Urban/Rural Split  
June 2001 High School Graduates**