



## Strategic Research La recherche stratégique

# The Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2012

## Gender Differences in Métis Education and Employment

### Key Findings:

- Métis women are more likely than Métis men to hold a high school diploma and have finished post-secondary studies.
- The most frequent reason cited by Métis women for leaving high school was pregnancy or the need to take care of their own children, while work-related reasons, school problems, lack of interest, and money problems were cited by Métis men.
- Métis male and female school completers are almost as likely to be employed but male school leavers are considerably more likely to be employed than female leavers.

### Introduction

The 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is a national survey of First Nations people living off reserve, Métis, and Inuit aged six years and over. The Survey was conducted by Statistics Canada and reached over 38,000 Aboriginal respondents across Canada, for a 76% response rate.

“The education and employment experiences of First Nations people living off reserve, Inuit, and Métis: Selected findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey” was published by Statistics Canada on November 25, 2013. It is the first release of data from the 2012 APS. The report describes education and employment experiences of respondents who completed high school (“completers”) and respondents who did not complete high school (“leavers”), aged 18 to 44. It includes an analysis of personal, family, and school-related experiences during the last year of school and offers education-focused profiles of labour force activity. For added context, the

report incorporates some comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, using comparative statistics on the non-Aboriginal population from the 2011 National Household Survey.<sup>1</sup>

This strategic research brief provides an overview of key findings for the Métis population with respect to gender differences in educational and labour force outcomes. This is one in a series of three separate research briefs on gender differences among Aboriginal groups in Canada. Two other research briefs focus on gender differences for education and employment of First Nations respondents living off-reserve and Inuit respondents, respectively.

### Background

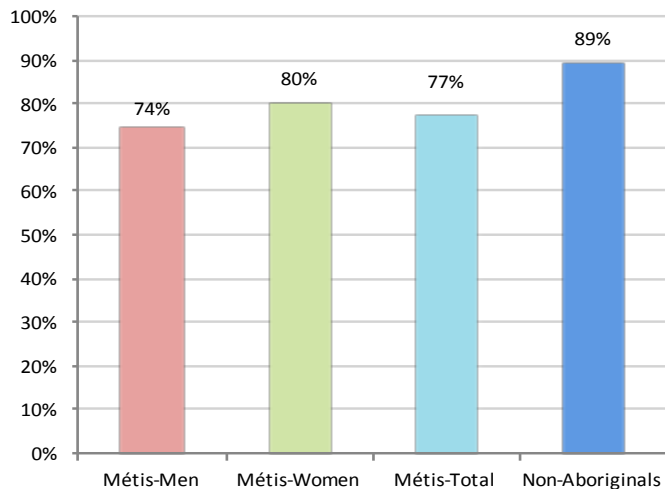
The Métis are one of three constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples of Canada. The Métis have a unique identity as the mixed race descendants of Europeans and Indians. The Government of Canada does not define who the Métis are. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), there were 451,795 persons identifying as Métis in Canada. Métis people represent 32.3% of Canada’s Aboriginal population and 1.4% of the total Canadian population total. Métis people make up a large proportion of the total population in the Northwest Territories and in the Prairies.

### Key Findings

#### Completers and leavers

Among other things, the 2012 APS allow for the distinction between the different realities of those Métis that completed high school and received a diploma (“completers”) and those who left high school before completing their studies (“leavers”). At the time of the 2012 APS, 77% of Métis aged 18 to 44 had completed the necessary requirements to obtain a high school diploma. According to the NHS, 89% of non-Aboriginal people in this age group in Canada held a high school diploma or its equivalent in 2011. Among Métis respondents to the 2012 APS, women were more likely

**Figure 1: Proportion of Métis and non-Aboriginals Aged 18 to 44 Holding a High School Diploma or Equivalent by Gender, Canada, 2011-2012.**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; National Household Survey, 2011.

than men to hold a high school diploma or equivalent (80% compared to 74%, respectively – Figure 1).

### Age at completion

There are no notable gender differences when it comes to the age at which Métis persons completed high school. The average age at which Métis finished their secondary studies was 18.1 years, effectively the same as the Canadian average of 18 years. However, 91% of Métis completed their high school diploma without interruption and did so at an average age of 17.8 years, while those who received a secondary certification through an equivalency program did so at an average age of 22 years.

### Family Situation

The data from the 2012 APS shows the different family experiences of Métis men and women during their education. It was found, for example, that 38% of female leavers did not live with their family during their last year of high school. This is a much higher proportion than for Métis female completers, 19% of which did not live with their families in their final year of studies. Among Métis males, 19% of the leavers and 11% of the completers did not live with their families in the final year of their secondary studies.

### Reasons for leaving high school

Métis women who left school before completion were more likely than men to cite pregnancy or the need to care for their own children as the main reason for leaving high school (25%). Twenty-one percent of male leavers left because they wanted to work, 21% reported school problems, 17% cited lack of interest or motivation, and 15% cited financial reasons. The APS 2012 also shows that 7% of high school leavers were registered in a high school equivalency program

at the time of conducting the survey. Female leavers (8%) were slightly more likely than male (5%) leavers to be enrolled in such programs.

### Postsecondary education profile

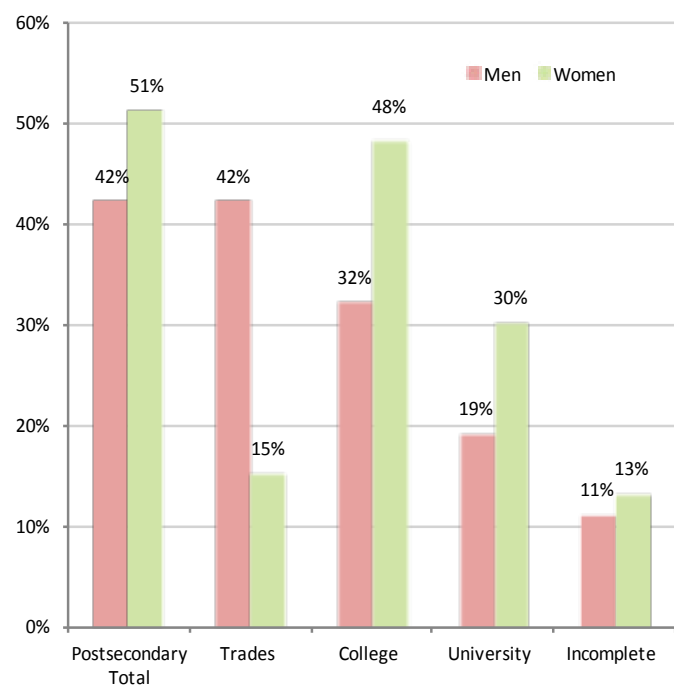
According to the 2012 APS, close to half (47%) of the Métis population holds a postsecondary certification or degree. Métis women (51%) are more likely than men (42%) to have completed postsecondary studies. In addition, 8% of the male and female Métis respondents reported having enrolled in a postsecondary program for the first time in 2012. There were no significant gender differences among men (11%) and women (13%) that started postsecondary programs but did not complete their studies.

The types of postsecondary certification held by Métis differ significantly between men and women. Similar to other Aboriginal groups, many more Métis men (42%) than women (15%) hold trades certificates. In contrast, Métis women are more likely than men to have received a college diploma (48% versus 32%) or to hold a university degree (30% versus 19%, respectively – Figure 2).

### Reasons for leaving postsecondary studies

One constant among all Aboriginal respondent groups as reported by the 2012 APS is gender differences regarding the reasons given for not completing postsecondary studies. Among all Métis respondents, the most commonly cited reasons for leaving a postsecondary program was the desire to work (20%), financial reasons (18%), a lack of interest or motivation (16%), and pregnant or caring for children (16%).

**Figure 2: Post Secondary Credentials of Male and Female Métis Aged 18 to 44, Canada, 2012**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

A significant gender difference was that women mentioned pregnancy or caring for their own children more often than men.

### Barriers to further education

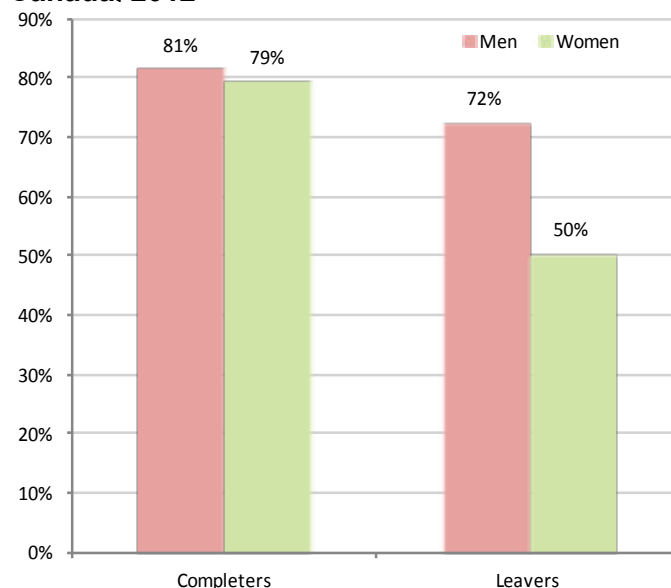
Financial concerns are often a factor that limits one's ability to complete high school or pursue postsecondary studies. Among Métis respondents, leavers (52%) were more likely than completers (37%) to cite this reason for not pursuing further studies. This was the case for both Métis men and women. Métis women, however, were much more likely (64% of leavers and 30% of completers) than Métis men (30% of leavers and 18% of completers) to mention personal or family responsibilities. Female leavers also cited their personal health as an obstacle much more often than any other group (20% compared to 8% of female completers, 7% of male leavers, and 4% of male completers).

About four in ten (41%) Métis leavers reported that taking courses was not a high personal priority, compared with 24% of completers. Men were more likely than women to indicate that further schooling was not a priority (32% versus 23%). In addition, 56% of female Métis leavers cited a lack of confidence, compared to 37% of Métis Male leavers and 20% of Female and 19% of male completers.

### Plans for further education

A small gender difference can be observed regarding intentions to pursue further education. Sixty-three percent of leavers planned to do so at the time of the 2012 APS, compared to 58% of completers. This trend was strongest among female leavers (73%), compared 55% of male leavers, and 59% of female completers and 56% of male completers.

**Figure 3: Proportion of Employed Métis Leavers and Completers Aged 18 to 44, by Gender, Canada, 2012**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

### Employment

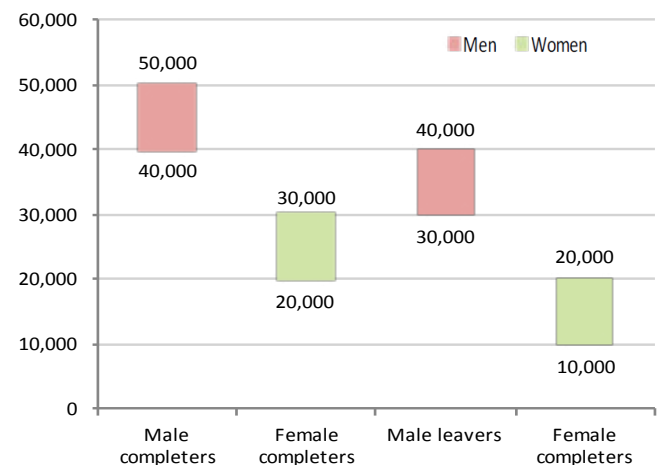
Métis men are more likely than Métis women to be employed. This is due to many different factors. For example, women tend to be more deeply affected by family responsibilities, as noted above. Nonetheless, there is only a slight difference among Métis completers, where 79% of Métis women are employed, compared to 81% of Métis men. However, there is a noticeable gap among Métis leavers, where 50% of Métis women are employed compared to 72% of Métis men (Figure 3). It was also found that among Métis completers, higher levels of education were not associated with greater likelihood of being employed. Rather, only those with a university degree (51% of women and 42% of men) were significantly more likely to be employed than those with only a high school diploma.

The majority of all Métis completers (82%) and leavers (84%) were working full time. With regard to a gender breakdown, the 2012 APS reports that among completers, 91% of Métis men and 74% of Métis women worked 30 or more hours per week, while among the leavers 94% of the men and 68% of the women said the same thing.

### Métis income ranges

Gender differences are also evident in employment income: a significant income gap exists between Métis men and women. Métis women are generally known to be more likely to work part time and to have lower income levels than Métis men. Among completers, Métis men's median<sup>3</sup> salary ranges from \$40,000 to \$50,000, whereas Métis women's median salary ranges from \$20,000 to \$30,000. Among leavers, Métis men's median salary ranges between \$30,000 and \$40,000, while Métis women had median salaries ranging between \$10,000 and \$20,000, resulting in an important employment income gap between those who completed their education and those who did not, as well as between the genders (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Median Salary Ranges for Métis Completers and Leavers, by Gender, Canada 2012**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

## Factors for non-participation in the labour force

Métis respondents who were not in the labour force but wanted a job at the time of conducting the 2012 APS were asked about their reasons for not looking for work. For both Métis men and women, the three main answers were an illness or a disability (32%), childcare (21%), and going to school (20%). Thirty-five percent of Métis women cited an illness or a disability most often, followed by childcare (29%). However, more than a quarter of Métis male respondents (28%) were going to school and an almost equal number cited an illness or a disability (27%).

## Conclusion

The results of the 2012 APS show that gaps between Métis men and women persist. Such gaps include the complex and sometimes profound differences in terms of employment and education experiences of Métis men and women. Like the other Aboriginal groups in Canada, Métis women are more likely than Métis men to have completed high school or to have postsecondary credentials, especially at the collegiate and university level. However, their employment and income prospects remain less advantageous than those of Métis men. As demonstrated by the reasons cited for leaving high school, or interrupting postsecondary studies, or for not participating in the labour force, the different realities experienced by Métis men and Métis women are as present as those of the First Nations and Inuit respondents to the 2012 APS.

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## Notes

1. It was possible to report both single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity questions on the National Household Survey (NHS) and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). The NHS data are based on single responses only, while the APS data represent a combination of single and multiple responses.
2. Statistics Canada defines school “leavers” as persons who had not obtained a high school diploma or the equivalent and was not attending an elementary or high school at the time of the survey. It is important to note that individuals enrolled in a high school equivalency program when they were interviewed for the APS are also considered “leavers”. It is also important to recognize that some “leavers” may return to school in the future and obtain high school credentials. Furthermore, high school graduation may not be the highest level of education of “leavers”, as some may also have a trades certificate, college diploma, or university degree.
3. Because personal employment income was reported in ranges, a median income range is calculated. The “median range” is the category for which the cumulative percentage of reporting respondents came closest to 50%.

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

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