

OPENING DOORS TO THE 'LESS PRIVILEGED' The Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) Experience

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the results of a survey study that investigated the profile of typical Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) learner and contribution made by MCA in the provision of access to tertiary education by marginalised groups. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used and data was collected through a questionnaire and interview schedule from 102 randomly selected MCA distance learners and one female interviewee. The respondents were drawn from 6 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Descriptive data analysis was mainly used, including frequency distribution tables, graphs and figures.

The results of this study indicate that there are more female enrolees than males at MCA, since three out of every four MCA learners are females. A significant number of MCA learners are mature working adults and a majority of these learners are from less privileged income groups. The survey also shows that women generally consider ODL to be compatible with motherhood and job constraints, while most respondents view MCA programmes as affording them a second chance. In addition, many of the respondents find the cost of MCA programmes affordable.