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Canada's demographic profile is becoming increasingly diverse, with approximately fourteen percent of the 35 million strong population being people of colour. This level of diversity is not representative in the country's libraries, with only seven percent of the professional workforce identifying themselves as a member of a minority ethnic population. It should be noted however that Canada is not alone in this regard, with similar trends being apparent in other Western countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

The book is an initiative of the Visible Minority Librarians of Canada Network (ViMLoC), that was established in 2011 as a forum for minority librarians across Canada. The purpose of the volume is to enable the author of each chapter to tell their story about their involvement, experiences and challenges in working as a minority in the library profession. Therefore the chapters are semi autobiographical, with each author providing an overview of their careers, as well as providing advice to visible minorities starting out or considering a career in the library profession. It complements other books linking ethnicity with the library and information professions, Szekely (1999), Neely and Abif (1996) and the *Library Trends* issue from 2000 on ethnic diversity in library and information science.

The librarians in this volume are drawn from a broad range of minority groups including Aboriginal, Cree, Inuit, Metis, Chinese, Filipino, Jamaican and Indian. Although they have different ethnicities, their stories have many similarities. This is represented through their accounts of feeling isolated culturally and professionally; being subjected to micro-aggressions by colleagues and clients, acting as counsellors to minority clients (particularly youths or students), struggling for promotion and/or being viewed or treated differently by colleagues who feel that cultural issues are of no relevance in the workplace and/or the profession. A recurring issue throughout the volume is the pressure that the authors feel they face to be the oracle about their culture and all the nuances contained within it. Many of the authors highlighted the fact that unlike their non-minority peers they are expected to be available to educate their colleagues about their culture and customs, with this not always reflected in their workload or compensated for in their salaries. Although the issues discussed in the book are weighty and serious in nature, the stories themselves remain quite positive and the issues are presented as examples of the challenges faced on a daily basis. Understanding the impact of these issues on their minority colleagues or staff members will assist employers and their staff to

create environments that are more inclusive of cultural difference. Although the stories are only focused on Canadian librarians, they will resonate with minority librarians in other countries.

References

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