
Foreword

Library and leadership are two words that we often hear in the context of the future of libraries. Regardless if you are attending a conference, participating on a webinar, attending training, or even listening to a guest lecturer, we hear about the multi-layered leadership challenges libraries, of all types, are facing. Are we, the library profession, in a leadership crisis? If so, how will we prepare, select, and place future leaders that represent a diverse society that is ever changing? Maha Kumaran has taken a bold leap to offer her thoughts through this book, *Leadership in Libraries*, with its focus on ethnic and immigrant minorities. When we think of ethnic minorities, we use a privileged Western-centered definition that focuses solely on race. Kumaran's work documents the needs of immigrant librarians and how other countries consider their backgrounds, regardless of race, as ethnic minorities. This text offers advice to those immigrant librarians who are interested in library leadership by offering tips on communication, transitions, cultural norms, and cultural differences (such as the value placed on time, for example). The advice given addresses the idiosyncrasies that exist in libraries, in the West, and will help prepare and develop immigrant librarians who may consider a leadership role in the future. This advice will not only prepare the immigrant librarian, it will also provide guidance for managers who want to motivate immigrant librarians to pursue a leadership role in the library.

Leadership theories are amongst the vast pool of knowledge in the literature. Maha provides an overview of leadership theories and connects them to the needs of immigrant librarians. Though the various leadership theories and training programs exist, there is still an urgent need to prepare and recruit future leaders from diverse backgrounds and immigrant librarians are another group that will add diversity in the library profession. As the world continues to develop globally, and our cultural borders blend, libraries should encourage immigrant librarians to help fill the leadership gap. Maha describes the issue of race and the tensions facing countries that have historical issues, and provides examples of such historical tensions when discussing the election of President Barack Obama. “To the world watching, what was obvious during this election campaign was that it is not easy for a visible minority to assume a leadership role in a country where the majority of the population is white.” This same sentiment could be true for visible minorities leading organizations that are, like the US, predominately white. Regardless if it is race, language, and/or religion, and the issues surrounding diversity are the same in every country. “While there are some commonalities of this concept of leadership among various countries, there are differences as well.”

This book will help immigrant librarians, who are transitioning into a new culture, to adapt to a new environment and as Maha states, “emerging leaders should not take adversity and conflict personally.” *Leadership in Libraries* will encourage the embracing of differences while sharing the comprehensive needs for immigrant librarians. There is so much more in this volume that will aid managers, leaders, supervisors, and librarians alike. Maha has taken care to provide a well-rounded approach towards motivation, understanding needs, skills development, and styles. This

book will add value to the vast collection of leadership literature by adding a unique voice and reflection on immigrant and ethnic-minority librarians and their journey to become leaders.

Jerome Offord, Jr
Assistant Professor, Dean of Library Services and University
Archives
Head, Department of Library and Information Science
Lincoln University
Missouri, USA
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