

County of Prince Edward Public Library

Diversity Audit

Phase 1

March 2021

“The public library is the principal means whereby the record of thoughts and ideas, and the expression of the creative imagination is made freely available to all.”

- County of Prince Edward Public Library Collection Policy
(excerpted from)

The County of Prince Edward Public Library conducted a diversity audit of its adult fiction collection, completed in March 2021.

Karen Jansen, one of the first librarians to promote the idea of a diversity audit noted, “A diversity audit takes inventory and determines what’s in a collection and what areas need to be better developed. It yields concrete data.”

SCOPE

The first phase was focussed on the authors of adult fiction. Some audits also include the ethnicity of characters but looking just at the authors to begin was a more manageable way to start.

METHOD

For this first audit, library staff were given a list of all adult fiction titles in their branch. They researched each author and based on the author’s own self-identification (through their website or other resource) they were included in a category of ethnic origin.

There are countless ways that people identify. For this audit, the categories and terminology used are from Statistics Canada.

LIMITATIONS

We recognize that this is an imperfect process. Not every author discusses their ethnic background or fits into just one category. Some books are ghost-written, and there are many other facets to human identity that were not included in this audit. To encourage library staff to also consider gender identity and sexuality, these were noted but not tallied.

The majority of books purchased by the library each year are directly requested by patrons. In publicising our results, we encourage anyone who does not feel represented by the library’s collection to request specific new titles they would like to read.

There are inequities in the publishing world impacting the titles which are available to purchase.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Coincidentally, during this process, 555 Brewing Co. held a fundraiser to purchase books by BI-POC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) authors. This fundraiser was a great success and appreciated by the library and our patrons. If you are interested in contributing to the purchase of books please visit peclibrary.org/donate and note that you would like your donation to go to the collection.

“Literature transforms the human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading then, becomes a means of self-affirmation.”
 - Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors by Rudine Sims Bishop

Ethnicity	Author Count	Catalogue %	PEC %	Difference	Ontario %	Diff
Aboriginal	76	0.53%	3.0%	-2.5%	2.8%	-2.3%
Arab	33	0.23%	0.0%	0.2%	1.6%	-1.4%
Asian – East	313	2.17%	0.7%	1.5%	7.6%	-5.4%
Asian – South	93	0.65%	0.3%	0.4%	8.7%	-8.0%
Asian – West	30	0.21%	0.0%	0.2%	1.2%	-1.0%
Black	152	1.06%	0.6%	0.5%	4.8%	-3.7%
Filipino	0	0.00%	0.1%	-0.1%	2.3%	-2.3%
Latin America	80	0.56%	0.3%	0.3%	1.5%	-0.9%
Multiple Visible Minorities	17	0.12%	0.1%	0.0%	1.0%	-0.9%
Not A Visible Minority	13579	94.81%	97.8%	-3.0%	68.0%	26.3%
Other Visible Minorities	30	0.21%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	-0.5%

We compared the number of authors in each category to the population in Prince Edward County and in Ontario.
 The terminology used is from Statistics Canada.

NEXT STEPS

1. Include in the 2021- 2022 Collection Development Plan a target to specifically seek out new books by authors in categories where the current collection is lacking, within budgetary and space limitations.
 2. Include in the 2021 - 2022 Marketing and Outreach Plan a goal to review any outgoing publicity suggesting books include books by authors of underrepresented groups. Include in the plan a goal to promote the request for purchase service.
 3. Include in the 2021-2022 Programming Plan a goal to ensure that a wide array of guest speakers and authors are included in programs. Include a goal to recognize Indigenous Peoples Month in June.
- The next collection area to be audited is the children’s fiction collection.

Citations

Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors by Rudine Sims Bishop
<https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>

Karen Jansen
 Conducting a Diversity Audit
<http://www.teenlibrariantoolbox.com/files/2017/11/Diversity-Audit-Outline-2017-with-Sources.pdf>

County of Prince Edward Public Library Collection Policy
<https://www.peclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LA-100-Collection-Policy-1-1.pdf>