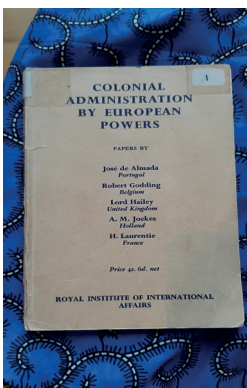




25 special items from the ASCL Library collection

1947 | Colonial administration by European powers: a series of papers read at King's College, London 14 November to 12 December 1946



This is the first item of the ASCL Library collection, published in 1947, the same year as the founding of the ASCL. This booklet contains a series of lectures read in 1946 by 'authoritative' representatives of France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal and the United Kingdom, on the evolution of colonial policy of their respective countries. The Foreword states that the principle of self-determination was already an unexpected consequence of World War I. But now, just after World War II, the 'concept of progress towards self-government' accelerated a movement for 'interracial adjustments.' 'In this fluid post-war epoch the major colonial powers of Western Europe are being called upon to adjust and re-define their relations with overseas dependencies.' The

almost 100,000 books that would be acquired after this first item can perhaps be seen as a contribution to this redefinition of relations, in the sense that the collection has developed into a major source of knowledge on the people of Africa and their agency.

Europe; lectures; colonialism

1952 | Africa in ebullition: a handbook of freedom for Nigerian nationalists

Dedicated to the 'silent millions of mother Africa', Adegoke Adelabu's book has an introduction by Nigeria's first president Nnamdi Azikiwe. Since then the title has been continuously republished. The 2008 edition is advertised as 'an ode to liberty, a guide to nationalism, a handbook of freedom, a grammar of politics, a revolutionary manifesto, an *encyclopedia Nigeriana*, the voice of the people, an indictment of colonialism, an invitation to youths, a call to arms, a sacrament of patriotism, a dissection of our souls...'. In the first chapter 'In quest for freedom' the author remembers: 'In January 1931, as a young striping of 16, I entered the Ibadan Government College. I met the white man. His too easy assumption that England was the hub of the Universe, that the European prospective was the only correct vantage point to survey life, that we less fortunate species of homo sapiens were created mainly to exhort, applaud and pay homage to the mighty empire on which the sun never sets, exasperated and infuriated me.' Apart from the colonial languages English and French, the book appeared in Arabic, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and Efik.

Nigeria; political manifesto

1955 | Trois écrivains noirs

This book is the first item in the literary collection of the ASCL Library, recognisable by its shelf number: Lit. 1. The volume contains three French-language novels: *Ville cruelle* by Eza Boto, pseudonym of Mongo Beti, *Coeur d'Aryenne* by Jean Malonga, and *Nini, mulâtresse du Sénégal* by Abdoulaye Sadj. *Présence Africaine* was a magazine, and later publishing house, founded in Paris in the late 1940s by Senegalese-born intellectual Alioune Diop. It played an important role in the publishing of African writers and intellectuals. The volume marks the start of the ASCL Library literature collection, which now comprises over 13,000 books.

Cameroon; Congo; Senegal; literature

1960 | The sociology and culture of Africa. Its nature and scope

Kofi Abrefa Busia, Prime Minister of Ghana from 1969 to 1972, was Professor in Leiden from 1960 to 1962. As leader of the opposition against Kwame Nkrumah, he fled Ghana in 1959. In 1960, Busia became a Professor of Sociology and Culture of Africa at Leiden University, with a dual appointment at the African Studies Centre and the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. From 1962 until 1969, Busia was a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. In this Inaugural Address in Leiden, Busia addresses the nature and scope of sociology and culture of Africa. He quotes Kipling ('East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet') – and rebukes: 'Sociological studies have shown that there is no support for this.' At the end of the lecture, Busia thanks Van Lier and Idenburg (resp. president and director of the African Studies Centre): 'It was on your initiative that approval was given for the establishment of this Chair, and for my appointment to it as its first incumbent.'

Ghana; sociology; inaugural lecture

1961 | Le Congo, terre d'avenir, est-il menacé ?

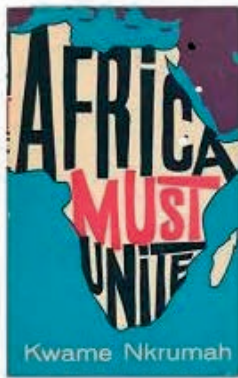


1957: Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961), one of the leading figures of the nationalist movement in Belgian Congo, was part of a growing class of 'évolués': educated urban Africans working in white-collar jobs, who began to demand greater equality in the 1950s. The associations formed by these 'évolués' later laid the foundations for the Congolese nationalist movement. Lumumba wrote this book during his imprisonment in 1956, for charges of embezzlement, and sent the manuscript to the publisher in 1957. While the book takes a relatively mild stance on the relationship between the Belgians and the Congolese, this point of view rapidly changed in the following years when

Lumumba founded his nationalist party, the *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC), and as articulated in his famous independence speech. The book was published after Lumumba's death, in 1961. This copy includes a small booklet, entitled *À propos d'un livre posthume de Patrice Lumumba*, by Jules Chomé and Maryse Perin, providing some context to the posthumous publication. It also includes a 1961 newspaper clipping from *The Guardian*, in which Conor Cruise O'Brien, former chief United Nations representative in Katanga, asks the interesting question if Lumumba, if still alive, would have agreed to the publication of his, by then much altered, views.

Congo; political manifesto

1963 | Africa must unite



In this book, Kwame Nkrumah presents the case for his dream. Nkrumah (1909-1972), Ghana's most important independence leader and first head of State, was a strong advocate for Pan-Africanism, a united Africa under one federal government. Nkrumah arranged the publication to coincide with a meeting of the heads of independent African states in Addis Ababa on establishing an all-African governmental organisation. In 1963, when the book was first published, critics said that Kwame Nkrumah was pursuing 'a policy of the impossible' (p. 170). But, in the words of Nkrumah: 'to suggest that the time is not yet ripe for considering a political union of Africa is to evade facts and ignore realities in Africa today⁴⁵'. Nkrumah concludes this book: 'Here is a challenge which destiny has thrown out to the leaders of Africa. It is for us to grasp what is a golden opportunity to prove that the genius of the African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa's greater glory and infinite well-being, into a Union of African States.' (p. 221-222). The book is one of many speeches and writings of African independence leaders in the ASCL Library collection.

Ghana; political manifesto

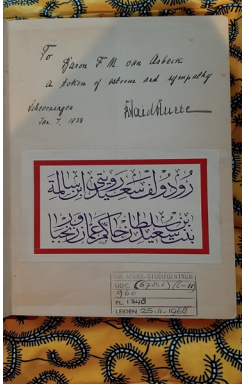
1966 | La noire de...

First feature film in the ASCL collection by 'the father of African cinema', the 'voice of the voiceless', Ousmane Sembène. It is about the exploitation of a young black woman, who travels from her native country Senegal to Antibes, with the French family who has employed her as a nanny. She is looking forward to coming to France, of which she has an idealised image, but once there, she realises that she has to do the work of a housemaid. She is kept busy all day in the family's apartment as a modern slave, loses all sense of dignity and identity and sees no other way out than suicide. The film is based on Sembène's short story with the same title, published in *Voltaïque (Présence africaine, 1962)*. In all of his later films, Sembène would deal with social and political problems in post-colonial Senegal, tackling themes such as racism, neo-colonialism, social inequality, and the position of women.

Senegal; France; labour migration; neo-colonialism; feature film

⁴⁵ From Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), pp. xi-xiv.

1968 | Said bin Sultan (1791-1856), ruler of Oman and Zanzibar. His place in the history of Arabia and East Africa



This book from 1929 found its way into the library of the African Studies Centre in 1968. After twenty years of collecting in Leiden, it was only the 1348th book in the collection of the library! It was a gift from ASCL Board Member Professor Baron Frederik Mari van Asbeck, to whom the book was given by the author, Rudolph Said-Ruete, 30 years before, in his home in Scheveningen. The book is about the history of the Sultan's family, rulers of Oman and Zanzibar. His mother, Sayyida Salama bint Said aka Emily Ruete, was a friend of Leiden Professor Snouck Hurgronje. She wrote her memoirs, *An Arabian Princess Between Two Worlds*, and donated her library to the *Oostersch Instituut*, later the *Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten (NINO)*. Said-Ruete's dedication text, his signature and his ex libris make this copy of the book a rare specimen – and create a special link to Leiden.

Zanzibar; history

1968 | Histoire de ma vie

Fadhma Aïth Mansour Amrouche's *Histoire de ma vie* is the earliest autobiography of a woman in the ASCL Library. Born out of wedlock in a Berber village in Algeria in 1882, Fadhma was the third child of her young mother, who already had two sons from her deceased husband. But her mother's motto is *Tichert-iou khir t'mira guergazen !* (The tattoo on my chin is better than a man's beard!), and when Fadhma is three or four, her mother takes her to a French orphanage to protect her illegitimate daughter from the harsh treatment of the villagers. There, Fadhma goes to school and learns to read and write. In *Histoire de ma vie*, written in 1946 and 1962, Fadhma Amrouche brings to life the Algeria of more than a century ago. She also writes about her life in Tunis, where she and her husband, as Christians, went into exile and where they were granted French nationality in 1913. After losing three adult sons in 1939 and 1940, she started singing and writing Berber poetry. She dedicates *Histoire de ma vie* to her son Jean Amrouche, known as 'the Berber poet': *Pour lui j'ai écrit cette histoire, afin qu'il sache ce que ma mère et moi avons souffert et peiné pour qu'il ait Jean Amrouche, le poète berbère.* Fadhma Amrouche died in France in 1967, having felt, as she says in her autobiography, *'l'éternelle exilée'* – an exile all her life.

Algeria; autobiography

1970 | Eritrea. A physical feature map



This is a small map of Eritrea (70 / 50 cm). The map is not exactly in mint condition: there are many folds, traces of adhesive tape, some browning and tears. One corner is severely damaged. Scale is 1: 1,5M. This map is precious because of its goal; it was used as a political instrument, with the name of the editorial organisation printed in large font in the left corner: Eritrean Liberation Front. The name of the organisation has also been printed a few

thousand times, in light blue colours, all over the map, in the territories of Sudan, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The map was printed in Beirut (Lebanon) at the height of the Ethiopian-Eritrean War, around 1970. The map collection of the African Studies Centre may be small but holds some extraordinary maps.

Eritrea; map

1977 | History of Botswana from the earliest times to 1966: a resource pack for teachers

The small but steadily growing ASCL collection of educational materials from Africa shows the shift away from colonial objectives and interests towards curricula benefiting African societies. Apart from a more learner-centred approach and competence-based learning outcomes, the 2018 history textbook focuses much more attention on local and regional African history, compared to the 1966 teacher's guide.

Botswana; textbook secondary school

1980 | The patriot: Celebrating being Zimbabwean

In 1980 Zimbabwe was the last country to gain independence from European colonisers. The newspaper *The Patriot* takes a very clear, uncritical nationalist view of events before and after the declaration of independence and shows itself to be a staunch supporter of the ZANU-PF regime and of Mugabe, who was in power from 1980 to 2017. A lucid illustration of how journalists view Zimbabwean society is seen through the weekly book section. It offers razor-sharp, devastating reviews of novels written by white and black authors (often living in the diaspora) which have been well received by the Western press. In contrast, the Zimbabwean reviewers expose these best-selling books as examples of a false nostalgia and the authors as traitors yearning for a former

Rhodesia and lamenting the loss of their wealth through the introduction of the Land Reform Programme. They accuse the writers of wanting to change history, for example, the role of Mugabe in the Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland in the 1980s.

[Zimbabwe; newspaper](#)

[1981 | Elsa Joubert's *The long journey of Poppie Nongena*: significance, synopsis, reviews](#)

Besides novels, short stories, plays and poetry, the ASCL Library also collects documents on literature. An example is this booklet from 1981 about *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena*. Elsa Joubert's book was published in Afrikaans in 1978 under the title *Die swerfjare van Poppie Nongena* and in English in 1980. The book made Poppie Nongena's ordeal as a black woman and mother under the apartheid regime palpable for a large white audience. Joubert claimed in the book that it was a true story, but that the names had been changed. Should *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena* be regarded as a novel or as a collaborative autobiography? Could Joubert claim full authorship? Could she, as a white woman, speak for a black woman? Questions like these are not addressed in this booklet, which tells something about Joubert's process of realisation what blacks in South Africa were going through, and further contains a summary and reviews.

[South Africa; literary history](#)

[Archive : Sjoerd Hofstra Collection](#)



The ASCL library collection also comprises a small but steadily growing archival section. One of these collections is the Sjoerd Hofstra Collection. Sjoerd Hofstra (1898-1983) was a Dutch anthropologist who was appointed Professor of African Anthropology at the University of Leiden in 1947. Between 1934 and 1936 Hofstra did research among the Mende in Sierra Leone. Though Hofstra never published a book on the Mende during his life, he wrote a few scholarly journal articles on the subject, and his letters home were later crystallised into the book *Among the Mende in Sierra Leone*.

The archive contains handwritten notes, mostly in English, about a variety of subjects, amongst which the social organisation of the Mende, their law system, hunting customs, healing rites and burial customs, Mende proverbs and Mende grammar. It also contains interviews with local people. In addition, there is some statistical demographic material, a series of the Sierra Leone Royal Gazette and a few (school) books in Mende language. The photo collection shows the special relationship between

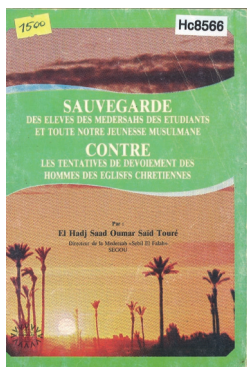
Hofstra and the Mende people. Most photographs have been digitised by the ASCL Library and made available online via Wikimedia Commons. [Sierra Leone; archive](#)

1988 | A discussion of the rules of the Shariah pertaining to the sighting of the Hilaal

In many Muslim societies the determining of the beginning of the new lunar months has been made more complex by local debates and emotional upheaval. Based on Islamic jurisprudence it is not the actual birth of the Astronomical New Moon which marks the start of the Islamic month, but rather the visibility of the new crescent. This lunar crescent visibility depends on a number of factors, such as the location of the observer, sky conditions, and the moon's distance from the earth. These variables usually make it impossible to see the new moon within 24 hours after the Astronomical New Moon, although occasionally sightings between twelve and fifteen hours have been reported. Discussions on this topic have increased since the era of African independence and as a result of liberalisation politics in the 1990s. This booklet is an early example of the South African debate. For a more historical description of the phenomenon Vahed Goolam's 2014 article "Moon sightings and the quest for Muslim solidarities in twentieth century Natal" is a good source.

[South Africa; Islamic internal polemics](#)

1993 | Sauvegarde des élèves des medersahs des étudiants en toute notre jeunesse musulmane contre les tentatives de dévoiement des hommes des églises chrétiennes



Written by the Malinese director of the Ségou-based Islamic educational centre *Sabil el-Falah al Islamiat* and printed in Morocco, this book finally reached Leiden via an Islamic bookshop in Ouagadougou where it was picked up by ASCL colleagues during an acquisition trip. It warns against Christian attempts to convert Muslim students into their religion. The author informs pupils by citing Christian sources and providing arguments to counter the conversion efforts of missionaries. An important work used by the author is Maurice Bucaille's *La bible, le Coran et la science* supporting the infallibility of the Qur'an deduced from scientific facts. *Sauvegarde des élèves* is

a fine example of the globalising networks in which local African religious polemics developed in the 1980s and 1990s.

[Mali; interreligious polemics](#)

Ca. 1999 | I - 304 rêves ; II - Les tremblements de toutes les parties du corps et leurs significations ; III - Les facteurs d'identification ou repérage des caractères

Both Christianity and Islam have a long history of dream interpretation which is reflected in an extensive written record, of which this booklet by Ahmed Tidiane N'diaye is an example. Numerous edifying leaflets and books educate the reader how to interpret (alphabetically listed) phenomena, objects and people appearing in dreams. The available print material by African authors on this subject is remarkably similar in both religions. The reality of spiritual warfare, possession, sorcery and witchcraft are known by Christians and Muslims alike.

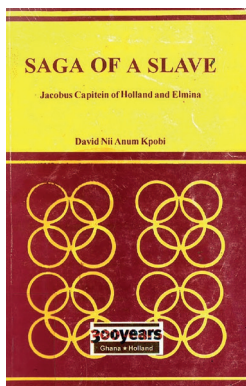
Guinea; religious dream explanation

2000 | Africa in the world: a history of extraversion

In this influential article in *African Affairs* (vol. 99, no. 395), Jean-François Bayart sets apart the extraversion paradigm, in which Africans are seen as active agents in the dependency-independency relationships of their societies, this in contrast with the till then dominant dependency paradigm. The article is part of the centenary issue of *African Affairs: the journal of the Royal African Society*, edited by Jean-François Bayart and Stephen Ellis. This article is still listed among the most cited journal articles in *African Affairs*. The ASCL Library collection holds many print journals, which from the 2000s onwards have become increasingly available online.

Africa; political science; journal

2001 | Saga of a slave. Jacobus Capitein of Holland and Elmina



This book by David Nii Anum Kpobi holds a shameful story, a stain on the relationship between Leiden and Africa. Slavery, abuse of the Bible, hypocrisy – it has it all. There is a logo on the cover of this book: *300 years Ghana * Holland*. The story in short: a small boy is born around 1717 in Ghana. He is abducted as a child, brought to Elmina and given by Captain Steenhart to the merchant Jacob van Gogh. Two years later, in 1728, he is shipped to the Netherlands, via Middelburg to The Hague. Baptised under the name of Jacobus Capitein, he goes to school and catechism classes, and is registered as a student of theology at Leiden University in 1737. He writes a dissertation in 1743 about slavery not being contrary to Christian freedom: *Dissertatio*

politico-theologica de servitute, libertati christianae non contraria. Capitein stresses examples of spiritual freedom, such as those of Paul (Hebrews 12: 20) and Peter (Acts 15: 10). Capitein's dissertation was successful and the Dutch translation had four printings in one year. Capitein toured the country and two of his sermons (in Muiderberg in May 1742 and in Ouderkerk in June 1742) were also published. His fame can for a large part be explained by the fact that he was a black man and a former slave who was advocating slavery. He will live on as one of the first Africans to defend a dissertation at a European university, but most of all as the first person to translate the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments (omitting the Fourth) into the local Mfantse language.

Ghana-Netherlands; slavery

2003 | African Studies Abstracts Online, number 1

In 2003 *ASA Online* succeeded the printed abstracts journal of the African Studies Centre Leiden, published since 1968, first as *Documentatieblad*, then as *African Studies Abstracts* (1994-2002). It provided a quarterly overview of journal articles and edited works on Africa in the field of the social sciences and the humanities available in the ASCL Library. ASAO no. 60 (2017) was the last issue.

Africa; African Studies bibliography

2005 | Zahrah the Windseeker

This book by Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu is a mythic fantasy novel for the adolescent age bracket. The Nigerian-American author incorporates Nigerian myths and folklore, as the narrative follows the thirteen-year-old girl-protagonist on a quest in an otherworldly jungle. The book was the winner of the 2008 Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa.

Nigeria; fantasy genre

2007 | La commune de Ngouoni dans le Haut-Ogooué : origines et évolution

This book by Solange Oligui, published by Éditions Raponda-Walker in Libreville, Gabon, is an example of the many monographs in the collection about local history. The book deals with the history of the village of Ngouoni in South-East Gabon, from the 18th century onwards. The first part starts with the different waves of migration that led to the foundation of the village, then describes the social-political organisation of the village and its agrarian economy. The second part examines the history of Ngouoni from

the colonial period to independence. The association 'Tsoumou' is engaged in the development of Ngouoni, and the author explains that the book has been written at the request of this association, in order to prevent the younger generations to be cut off from their past. The author was born in Ngouoni and studied history at the University Omar Bongo in Libreville. In the conclusion, she stresses the importance of oral traditions as a source for the study of the pre-colonial period. The book is illustrated with old photographs of village chiefs and other notable individuals.

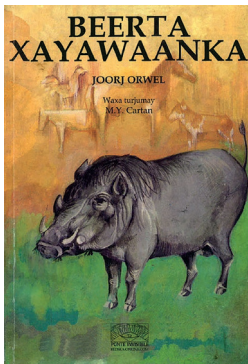
Gabon; local history

2009 | The traditional man and the modern woman

This is a booklet from Ghana concerning marriage. It aims to instruct the reader on how to apply Christian principles for a happy marriage and to encourage singles to contemplate the institution of marriage. This guide has been written by the Reverend Moses Kofi Amponsah, who is both a minister and a marriage counsellor.

Ghana; marriage counselling

2011 | Beerta xayawaanka [= Animal farm]



This translation by Maxammed Yuusuf Cartan of the famous book *Animal farm* by George Orwell was published in Hargeysa and is a nice example of a book purchased during one of the acquisition trips undertaken by the ASCL Library in the last two decades. The ASCL visited the 12th Hargeysa International Bookfair from 17-25 July 2019 in Somaliland and as a result, ASCL and partner Leiden University libraries have added 500 titles in the fields of history, social sciences, politics, religion and fiction. The books bought in Somaliland (14% in Arabic, 12% in English and almost 75% in Somali) are a valuable addition to the libraries' research and education resources.

The ASCL Library also compiled a web dossier on Somali literature, added Somali book data to Wikidata.org and helped to organise a Somali Day in Leiden in June 2021.

Somalia; world literature; translation

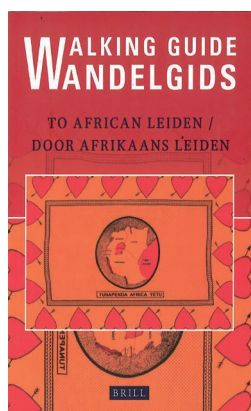
2016 | Les deux visages d'une femme bamiléké

Filmmaker Rosine Mbakam was born in 1980 in a traditional Bamiléké household in Cameroon. She left her country when she was twenty-seven.

This film is an account of her journey back home, together with her European husband and their son, after having lived in Europe for seven years. The film shows her reunion with her mother and is structured around places where the filmmaker lived when she was a young girl. Now a mother herself, she sees her mother and aunts from a different perspective, and the daughter asks questions about things she used to take for granted. Mbakam's mother was sixty-eight at the time the film was made. She grew up in a time of national liberation struggles and experienced the atrocities of the French repression. She got married at eighteen to a man her parents had chosen for her. The film focuses on the daily life of the women, showing them doing chores in the village of the ancestors, as well as on the compound of the family house in Yaoundé, where Rosine Mbakam grew up and where her mother still lives. While the women are preparing meals, they talk freely about their lives. In beautiful images, filmed very close to the women and their surroundings, Rosine Mbakam gives life to voices hidden in the silence and sheds light on the faces of the women of her community.

Cameroon; women; generations; documentary film

2017 | Walking guide to African Leiden = Wandelgids door Afrikaans Leiden



This walking guide, compiled and edited by Edith de Roos and Jos Damen of the ASCL Library, offers an overview of all the - sometimes hidden - links between Leiden and Africa. In many museums, socio-cultural organisations, restaurants and shops, people can discover bits of Africa, one will find African poetry on murals and street names reminding of the Boer Wars in South Africa. And of course, at Leiden University, home of the ASCL, Africa can be studied through many disciplines. The cover shows a so-called '*kanga*', a piece of cloth worn in Eastern Africa, from the collection of the Leiden-based Textile Research Centre (TRC). The booklet also contains several interviews with people who were born in Africa and came to live in Leiden

for different reasons: as a refugee, because of love, or because one of their parents migrated to the Netherlands. Like Houssin Bezzai, son of a so-called '*gastarbeider*' (labour migrant) from Morocco, who became a professional football player and who now (some time after publication of this booklet) has been appointed 'programme manager racism and discrimination' at the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB).

Africa-Netherlands; local history in diaspora

2019 | My first time

This book by Kenyan media personality and women's rights advocate Janet Mbugua is about menstruation. Menstruation is not a topic easily discussed in many places in the world, and certainly not when it comes to one's own experiences. Yet, talking about their own experiences is precisely what Kenyan women - and some men - do in this book. They share their personal stories in order to fight ignorance, taboo and shame, and to normalise the conversation. The book advocates for correct and timely information about menstruation and for access to period products and sanitation for all girls and women - at home, at school and in the workplace.

Kenya; personal narratives; women's health education

2020 | Twirinde Koronavirusi



Mpano wants to go to school but is stopped by his mother. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, school is now through radio and television. This booklet in Kinyarwanda by Oliviette Nyiraminani focuses on how to avoid picking up the Coronavirus: regularly wash your hands with soap, do not shake hands, but keep a distance from other people, and wear a face mask! The booklet was acquired during the ASCL Library's trip to Rwanda in 2021. A list of children's books on COVID-19 in our collection is included in the 2021 Library Highlight on the topic.

Rwanda; civic health education

2021 | The Oxford Handbook of the African Sahel (2021)

In this Oxford handbook, edited by Leonardo Alfonso Villalón, scholars based in Africa, Europe and the United States explore communalities as well as diversity and variation in the Sahelian region. Focusing on six countries - Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad - they address topics such as the Sahel as a region, challenges of climate change and of governing and development, intellectual and religious landscapes, social organisation and conditions, mobility and migration. Handbooks such as these can be borrowed from the ASCL Library and are often also digitally available via the Leiden University library catalogue.

Sahel; African studies; collective work

