



## Picture Books in Libraries in Senegal, Mali, Benin and Cameroon

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### Abstract:

*Introduction on African children's books and the need for promoting their acquisition for and by libraries, followed by forewords and lists of librarians' favourite picture books in Senegal, Mali, Benin and Cameroon, established for The World through Pictures Book programme. Directory of publishers' addresses.*

### 1. Introduction

### 2. Senegal

### 3. Mali

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Appendix : Publishers' addresses

### 1. Introduction

Libraries for children and young people (public or school libraries) are scarce in all countries in South-Saharan Africa<sup>1</sup>. As the majority of families in these countries cannot afford to buy children's books, librarians and libraries with the best books are badly needed.

When libraries exist, their picture book collections consist nowadays, fifty or sixty years after the actual states were born, mostly of books imported from Europe and the USA.

Are there not picture books published in Africa? Yes, there are, in some countries. But not many (around 10 new books per year in Ivory Coast, none in Central African Republic, for instance) and on the other hand book distribution is difficult - in a given country, intra-African book trade being still more difficult. But things are slowly changing for domestic book distribution and, very importantly, some of those in Europe and the USA who donate books understand more and more that it is vital to buy and donate books produced locally or in neighbour countries instead of only shipping books from the North<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> South-African children's book publishing and libraries situation is different from other Sub-Saharan countries and is not considered in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Cf papers in block « Boundaries between countries » in IFLA Satellite Conference in Joensuu, Finland, August 2012 <http://www.jns.fi/Resource.php/sivut/sivut-kirjasto/english/conference2012.htm>

Picture books are essential for a child to become a reader, anywhere in the world: books from his or her country, books from as many other countries as possible. African children cannot find, in general, but very few books issued from their own or nearby countries. It is particularly important, then, to promote their own books. Images and words close to small children's lives are necessary. Such picture books are very much appreciated by young readers<sup>3</sup>.

Picture books are also crucial in Africa to develop reading habits because images are particularly "useful" : the majority of children learn to read in a tongue (English, French, Portuguese) that is not their mother tongue (only in Tanzania has a non European language, Kiswahili, been chosen for education and publishing). Illustration is a great help for understanding the text and to enjoy a book. (On the big question of language in children's books and reading in Africa, see the issue "Languages and Children's Books" in the online journal *Takam Tikou*)

African children's literature is very rich, in the numerous languages of the continent. Until the arrival of colonial school, it was the means for education; until very recently, it was exclusively oral. A few reading books for schools were published by the colonial power. In Francophone Africa, the first book is emblematic, *La Belle histoire de Leuk-le-lièvre* (1952), telling the adventures of this cunning hero of the West-African savannah, written by the poet and first president of Senegal, Léopold S. Senghor. After Independence, picture books started to be published in some Francophone countries (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Togo) around 1975, and they have flourished since the late 1990s especially in Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Mali. They are diverse in themes and "tones", featuring stories from the oral tradition, stories of everyday children's lives, poetry... Unlike European children's literature, books can be, openly, educational. They are also diverse in illustration styles, as the "Amabhuku" exhibition showed in Bologna International Book Fair in 1999. Some writers and illustrators living in Europe publish in France; their books enrich French literature, but they only arrive in Africa when donors send them.

The French language adds difficulty to children's reading, but on the other hand it also grants books the chance to be read by a very large audience both in Africa and internationally. We hope these lists of favourites books made for The World through Picture Books programme<sup>4</sup> will be used for acquisitions by libraries with children's collections in French.

Notes :

- There is one big absence in these lists : Ivory Coast, which is, with Benin, the country where more children's books are published but where there are virtually no children's libraries. The Children's section of the National Library, very active, was ransacked and closed during armed conflicts in Abidjan in 2011 and could not participate.
- Most children's books published in African francophone countries can be found, thanks to publishers' generosity, at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse – La Joie par les livres (references and reviews online<sup>5</sup>). A travelling book exhibition is available.
- For book covers and more information on the lists below, see the corresponding country pages in *The World through Pictures Book* catalogue: <http://www.ifla.org/en/node/6718> All book reviews are adapted from those published in the journal *Takam Tikou*.

## 2. Senegal

Les Nouvelles Éditions africaines (later Nouvelles Editions Africaines du Sénégal) started publishing in the 1970s. One of their books from 1975, *Les Aventures de Leuk-le-lièvre* (number 1 on the list below), reprinted, is still a success. They have published some books by important children's author Fatou Ndiaye Sow (number 2 below is published abroad) : a series ("Mouss°) on children's rights, explained through stories based in real life in everyday Senegal. All other books on the list are published by BLD : Bibliothèque, Lecture, Développement (Library, Reading, Development), a local

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<sup>3</sup> Cf Marie Laurentin, « Le réseau de lecture critique de la Joie par les livres, ébauche d'analyse de la réception des ouvrages » in <http://www.takamtikou.fr/dossiers/dossier-2010-takam-tikou-a-20-ans/le-reseau-de-lecture-critique-de-la-joie-par-les-livres-e>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ifla.org/en/node/6718>

<sup>5</sup> a. In the journal *Takam Tikou* :

- journal on line since March 2010 : <http://takamtikou.bnf.fr/bibliographies/afrique>

- pdf of printed journal 1989-2009 : <http://bnf.lajoieparleslivres.fr> >Bibliothèque numérique>Takam Tikou

b. In the library catalogue : <http://lajoieparleslivres.bnf.fr> > cross search by place of publication (for instance for Senegalese books: Dakar) and genre, (livres d'images)

ONG for school libraries that became a publisher, with series for different ages; several of their titles are bilingual French-Wolof. Other publishers include Tamalys and Oxyzone.

The list for The World through Picture Books programme (copied below), was made by only two librarians. Children's libraries don't receive much government support (no budget for acquisitions or continuing training, low salaries); the network of community libraries "Lire en Afrique"<sup>6</sup> should be consulted for more voters for a second version of the list.

1. Adapt. of the text by Léopold Sédar Senghor • Abdoulaye Sadj, Georges Lorofi, ill.

**Les Aventures de Leuk-le-lièvre** [The Adventures of Leuk-the-Hare]

Les Nouvelles éditions africaines du Sénégal, 2003 (1st ed. 1975) • ISBN 978-2-7236-1583-9

Resourceful Leuk-the-Hare has much to learn from life, from other animals, from men, to become as wise as he aspires to be... This comic picture book tells, with jocular illustrations, some of the adventures of this traditional hero of the savannah and of other very human animals that never lose their sense of humour. First published in 1975, it is based on L.S. Senghor and A. Sadj's classic book for children *La Belle histoire de Leuk-le-lièvre*.

2. Fatou Ndiaye Sow • Moustapha Ndiaye, ill.

**Le Mouton d'Aminata** [Aminata's Lamb]

Nouvelles Editions Ivoiriennes, 1996 • ISBN 978-2-910190-84-2

Aminata is delighted with the upcoming Muslim Tabaski festival: the taylor has sewn her a beautiful dress, the braider has made her beautiful braids... but the main thing is missing, the lamb ! Aminata is very concerned. One of Fatou Ndiaye Sow's great stories, with stylized illustrations by Moustapha Ndiaye showing everyday life.

3. Lamine Diemé • Ndèye Daba Niane, transl.

**Nenne/Bébé Amine** [Baby Amine]

BLD, 2009 • ISBN 978-2-916859-07-1

When Baby Amine wakes up alone on a big bed, his eyes show perplexity, then anxiety and finally, great anger... Fortunately, Mother is not far away. A small, square picture book, with expressive illustrations, where the story is mostly told by the image and its skilful framing. Other good simple picture books for very young children in this collection "Tété": *Dem Dikk* on the blue and yellow Dakar mini-buses, and *Colobane*, on Colobane market in Dakar. Bilingual French-Wolof.

4. Béatrice Lalinon Gbado • Moctar Ly, ill.

**Waali le petit Talibé** [Waali the little Talibe]

Bibliothèque Lecture Développement, Ruisseaux d'Afrique, 2005

Little "talibes" – children who attend Koranic schools, led by a marabout – live and beg in the streets of big cities. Starving, they sometimes snatch a passer-by's handbag and end up at the police station. This is what happens to little Waali. It is Mister Ba the shopkeeper who tells this sad story to his family, that evening. What is the best solution for these abandoned children? To send them back to their home village? The powerful, warm illustrations enhance a story whose ending may not be a happy one.

5. Raphaël Ndiaye • Malang Sène, ill. • Mariame Kanté, Antoinette Fall Corréa, adapt.

**La Lutte** [Wrestling]

BLD, 2007 • ISBN 978-2-9527685-8-0

In Fadiouth village, on the island of clam shells, André explains to his cousin Leïty just arrived from France, all about traditional Serer wrestling: the origins, the training, the costumes, the different techniques, women wrestling... A quiz and charades complete this non-fiction picture book giving substantial information on a little treated subject, African martial arts.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf « Au Sénégal, un réseau de bibliothèques exceptionnel : ' Lire en Afrique ' » in [http://www.takamtikou.fr/vie\\_des\\_bibliotheques/2011-02-01/au-senegal-un-reseau-de-bibliotheques-exceptionnel-lire-en-afrique](http://www.takamtikou.fr/vie_des_bibliotheques/2011-02-01/au-senegal-un-reseau-de-bibliotheques-exceptionnel-lire-en-afrique)

6. Awa Ndir Seck • Falilou Fall, ill.

**Awa et l'âne** [Awa and the Donkey]

BLD, 2006 • ISBN 978-2-916859-00-2

Awa, a very poor girl, meets a donkey at a rubbish dump. He is in a pitiful state and Awa takes great care of him. One night, the donkey grants

Awa's greatest wish, to have a lavish home. But on one condition, the best room must belong to the donkey for ever. A tale on the importance of keeping one's promises, told by a concise text and pleasant, meaningful illustrations.

7. Malick Mayabé Fall • Abdou Karim Camara, ill.

**Oumar et Mariam** [Oumar and Mariam]

BLD, 2006 • ISBN 978-2-9527685-7-3

Oumar and Mariam go back to the village after spending the school year at their uncle's home in Dakar. It is a joy for them to see their parents again, and take part in the activities of every summer: help Mother cook and sell rice porridge, catch birds, harvest rice... Beautiful watercolours give charm to the book, a book serene as good family holidays.

8. Mariame Kanté • Pape Thierno Niang, ill.

**Moi, Sirou, chat sénégalais** [Me, Sirou, Senegalese cat]

BLD, 2007 • ISBN 978-2-9527685-6-6

Sirou, a kitten, tells the story. He's just arrived in a family home with its order, its rules to respect, a little girl Soukeye who wants to pamper him...

and a sofa, forbidden to him but of course, soon taken over. Sirou is punished and must go back to a stray cat's life. But because he foils a thief's

plans, he is welcomed back into the family. A lighthearted story, with humour and a peaceful vision of everyday family life. Cartoon speech bubbles, inserted into the illustrations, add to the book's playfulness.

9. Héléne Ngone Diop, Moustapha Ndiaye, ill., Mame Daour Wade, transl.

**Jinne yu mel nune – Des djinns de toutes les couleurs** [Djinns in all colours]

BLD, 2008 • ISBN 978-2-916859-06-4

First published in 1997 together with two other stories, this tale is published here alone, in a square, smaller and better suited format. It is not easy for djinns and men to live together, especially at siesta time when the little, invisible djinns make a racket... A very short text, in French and Wolof; amusing, colourful illustrations by Moustapha Ndiaye in his recognizable style.

### 3. Mali

Publishing for children started with the cooperative Jamana in 1989, then came Le Figuier, La Sahélienne, Donniya, Balani's, Cauris and others. Jamana, Donniya, Togouna and Edis publish in Bamanan and Fulfude. In 2011 took place the first International Festival of Children's literature of Bamako<sup>7</sup>.

The book list was made in collaboration with the Director and the Children's librarians of the National Centre for Public Reading. Mali has a wide network of public libraries and a very recent CLAC<sup>8</sup> network, whose librarians will hopefully be consulted for a new version of the list, when the situation is more serene in the country.

1. Moussa Konaté • Aly Zoromé ill.

**La Fileuse** [The Spinster]

Le Figuier, 2003 • ISBN: 978-2-84258-081-0

Published in a series on traditional crafts, together with *The Potter, The Dyer, The Weaver, The Miners of the desert*, this large picture book shows the spinster's work. The reader follows her different tasks, from the purchase of cotton flowers in the market to the delivery of reels to the weaver. Every

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.takantikou.fr/actualites/2011-03-04/10-12-mars-1er-festival-international-de-litterature-de-jeunesse-a-bamako-kala>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/CLAC\\_Francais-2.pdf](http://www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/CLAC_Francais-2.pdf)

successive task is clearly and simply depicted in a double-page illustration and a short text describing tools and gestures in a colloquial manner.

2. Ina Keïta • Karim Diallo, ill.

**Des jambes pour Aliou** [Legs for Aliou]

Donniya, 2006 • ISBN 978-2-911741-41-8

What an adventure ! Tidiane and Djénéba have decided to take care of Aliou, a disabled boy. Thanks to their solidarity, Aliou can start attending school. A very good story set in the city of Bamako, very well depicted in Karim Diallo's full page illustrations. Three other stories with the same characters in *Les Aventures de Tidiane et Djénéba*.

3. Modibo Sidibe • Svetlana Amegankpoé, ill.

**L'Épopée de Soundjata: d'après la tradition orale malinké** [Sundiata Epic: from Malinke oral tradition]

Donniya, 2005

ISBN 978-2-911741-42-5

Sundiata Keita, founder of the Empire of Mali in the XIII century, is undoubtedly the most popular historical figure of West Africa. In addition to its introductory page and the essentials of the tale itself, this remarkable Malian large picture book has the big advantage of being richly illustrated by S. Amegankpoé, with great historical accuracy. By the same author and illustrator, the excellent *La Légende du Ouagadou-Bida*.

4. Moussa Konaté, Aly Zoromé, ill.

**Tombouctou** [Timbuktu]

Le Figuiier, 2006 • ISBN 978-2-84258-096-4

*Tombouctou*, as well as *Djenné* and *Le Pays Dogon* published in the same series, make children discover, in an adapted, simple, attractive way, cultures and places that UNESCO has included in its World Heritage List. *Tombouctou* begins with a map and historical information on this city of the desert, known all over the world since the 14th century. Illustration takes a large place; it is full of significant details that the simple text takes up, inviting the reader to watch and explain them. Architecture, crafts, feasts, drought... The past and the present are linked naturally.

5. Isabelle Revol

**Cadou** [Cadou]

Donniya, 2009 • ISBN 978-99952-0-048-0

The beautiful yellow shades of the cover make one want to open this picture book. And one is not disappointed. The illustration, pretty and original, in collages of tissue and paper, tells in a childlike way the hard story that so many women live, in Africa and elsewhere. Cadou, an African mother, leaves her children to work far away for many years, so that the children can eat properly and can go to school. Her suffering from being separated from them is constant, as is their presence in her heart. Almost chanted, the text goes to the essential and renders, at child level, with restraint, Cadou's heart-rending feelings. A great book.

6. Halima Hamdane • Isabelle Calin ill.

**Sarraounia, la reine magicienne du Niger** [Sarraounia, Niger's magician Queen]

Cauris, 2004 • ISBN 978-2-914605-13-7

Told simply to young children, the life of the beautiful Sarraounia, born in present-day Niger at the end of 19th century. The daughter of a Haoussa king, she was soon initiated to magic and to hunting and war weapons. She was recognized by her neighbour enemies as a formidable warrior, but she mostly distinguished herself in the resistance to the European conquerors. Good illustrations and some historical information complete this portrait of a great heroine of Niger. Published in the "Lucy" series of biographies of Black outstanding figures.

7. Marlène Anna Amegankpoé • Svetlana Amegankpoé, ill.

**Petit Poussin veut... grandir** [Little Chicken wants... to grow up]

Donniya, 2009 • ISBN 99952-0-054-6

A picture book on an universal question: every child's wish to grow up and surpass his father or his mother. This is Little Chick's wish. He'll have to endure some setbacks before learning patience and find himself, one day, almost as beautiful as his father. Svetlana Amegankpoé's humorous drawings

show a terribly expressive chicken – curious, tender, ridiculous, sad or impatient. Images are as colourful as a backyard poultry, as joyous and lively as the story.

8. Ousmane Diarra • Massaré Tounkara, ill.  
**La Princesse capricieuse** [The Capricious Princess]  
Balani's, 2006

A version of the well-known story of the girl who puts an impossible condition on her marriage. This time, it is because she likes money too much and wishes to get rich thanks to her suitors... The man she marries is in fact a python, but with the help of her sister who has witch powers she escapes her husband and goes back home. The text by Ousmane Diarra, writer and storyteller, flows nicely; expressive, colourful illustrations are as lively as the text. The story is told in French and in Bambara in the accompanying audio cassette.

9. Moulaye et Zakaria Traoré • Nafogo Coulibaly, ill. • Ismaïla Samba Traoré, adapt.

**Nabi mon frère** [Nabi, my brother]

La Sahélienne, 2010 • ISBN 978-99952-54-14-8

The protective and affectionate relationship between a young boy and his toddler brother. A brief, simple text; illustration – somewhat clumsy and naïve, but with a certain charm – stages the two boys in a relationship of play and laughter but also of “education” that works well beyond language. And to grow up, nothing better than good stories... The Father is kindly asked to bring back, from Bamako market...picture books! Links between children are finely depicted, and the message is touching and lively. Some small punctuation and orthographic problems are to be regretted.

#### 4. Benin

There is in Benin a publishing house specialised in children's books, Ruisseaux d'Afrique, with the biggest production in Francophone countries (together with Nouvelles Editions Ivoiriennes in Ivory Coast), sometimes co-publishing with houses in other countries. This choice represents several of their series, some of which use fiction to deliver science or health information, and shows the art of Benin illustrators. This choice was made by one single library; hopefully libraries in the national network will be able to participate in the future.

1. Béatrice Lalinon Gbado • François Yemadje, ill.

**Le Rat et le serpent** [The Rat and the Snake]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, 2007 • ISBN 978-99919-63-21-1

This modern tale is based on the homonymy of the word “good”: the rat understands it as man's kindness, whereas the snake drools over man's delicious taste... François C. Yemadje illustrates this story with tapestries made of applied dyed cloth, using ancestral techniques of the royal court of Dahomey kings. Characters and landscapes become thus deeper and more symbolic. Other illustrated folktales are published in the same collection “Lunes enchanteresses” (Enchanting moons).

2. Béatrice Lalinon Gbado • Roger Boni Yaratchahou, ill.

**Le Roi de la palmeraie** [The King of the palm grove]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, Eburnie, 2007 • ISBN 978-99919-63-10-5 and 978-28477-01-47-0

Near Dékan palm grove, there lives a traveller's tree that dreams to reproduce with his palm neighbour... Why that is impossible, that is the enigma the squirrel must solve. A non-fiction picture book on the reproduction of unisexual plants, well illustrated with watercolours depicting an oasis with poetry and subtlety. Every title in this collection “À la découverte de la vie” (Discovering life) treats a specific natural sciences subject, starting with a fictional story, to enhance the pleasure of learning.

3. Alexandre Gbado • Claude Adjaka, ill.

**Je voudrais redevenir bébé** [I'd like to be a baby again]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, Eburnie, Kalaama, 2004 • ISBN 978-999

A baby will be born in the compound where little Kouagou lives. The informative side of this picture book in the collection “A la découverte de la vie” (Discovering life) is discreet here; what is important, is the child's questioning, and his concern about his own “past” as a baby. Tenderness and a tone that sounds right, in delicate harmony with large colour areas with the child in the centre. A picture book to read and to look at with small children.

4. Michèle Nardi • Hervé Alladayè, ill.

**Coco taillé tête d'œuf** [Coco taillé, egg-shaped head]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, 2006 • ISBN 978-99919-53-47-2

But where is "Coco taillé" ? He's smeared his face with corn flour. Then, he's put sand into the drinking water bowl. Then... ah, one has to keep an eye on him! This is one of six books featuring the youngest child in the compound, with stories told by images full of humour and tenderness, for very young children (as all titles in collection Le Serin).

5. Amour Gbovi • Hervé Gigot, ill.

**Boni, l'enfant qui voulait aller à l'école** [Boni, the child that wanted to go to school]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, 2009 • ISBN 978-99919-53-42-6

Boni, "blessed child" in bariba language, is meant to be a farmer and indeed, he does good work in the fields. However, he has one thing in mind,

to go to school and he decided to make his dream come true. Page after page the reader sees Boni's life flourish, through the simple words of the text and beautiful watercolours, full of light. Narration goes fast at the end of the book, with Boni as an adult, first a banker, then president of Benin (Benin current president's name is, in fact, Yaya Boni), a president much concerned about public education.

6. Askanda Bachabi

**Le Pipi rouge** [Red pee-pee]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, Eburnie, Kalaama, 2004 • ISBN 978-99919--53-05-2, 978-2-84770-085-5 and 978-2-915343-47-2

All children have lots of fun at the village pond, until the day when one of them notices his peepee is red. It's bilharzias. One must know more about this disease, treat it, not bathe in the village pond...

One of the titles in the collection "Enfant et santé" (Child and Health): small picture books using a story happening in children's daily life, to give information on health issues.

7. Georges O.J.R. Bada • Hector D. Sonon, ill.

**La Statuette sacrée** [The Sacred Statuette]

Nouvelles Editions Ivoiriennes, 2001 • ISBN 978-2-84487-119-0

Gbodja and Tété are inseparable twins. But Gbodja dies of fever and Tété is now alone. As is the custom and to relieve her pain, Tété is given a statuette representing her brother. But the sacred statuette disappears and the girl finds it at an art dealer's. The text sounds right and touches the reader; drawing and colours are tender. This picture book evokes death and the loss of a dear one and also, on another level, desecration and the traffic of artworks in Africa. It certainly expresses sadness, but in a cheerful way, full of life. On a similar subject, by the same publisher, *Grand-mère Nanan* by Véronique Tadjó.

8. Messan Agbopletou • Adamah Hanvi, ill.

**Le Caïman sacré** [The Sacred Cayman]

Graines de pensées, Ruisseaux d'Afrique, 2008 • ISBN 978-99919-63-33-4 and 978-2-916101-12-5

Because King Akuamu is very cruel, the Adan people decide to find a new homeland. But their march is soon stopped by a gigantic river. The crossing will be possible thanks to a miraculous bridge made of tree trunks – in fact, caymans, to which a cult is born, in acknowledgment for their help. These legend of the Adan people living in South Ghana, Togo and Benin, is completed by some pages of information on the cult of the sacred cayman. Other titles in this collection Cauris d'or, co-published in Togo and Benin, provide interesting fiction with a supplement on cultural traditions.

9. Gustave Akakpo • Kudzovi B. Norbert Kokoroko, ill. G. M. Kwasi Fiaga and S. Y. G. Gableame Gbedemah, transl.

**Titi la fontaine / Titi aDuDogó** (bilingual French – Ewe) [Titi the Fountain]

L'Harmattan, 2003 • ISBN 978-2-7475-3240-2

Titi has wet her bed again... Her mother is not happy, the children in her neighbourhood go looking for her, find her, tie a rope with three frogs around her waist... That night, Bibi Rikiki the frog-shaped monster enters Titi's bedroom and tries to put on her the mask that will steal her dreams. Titi is so scared that she wets her bed and the whole room, and the monster disappears in the water. Simple, lively text and colourful, expressive illustrations by an author and illustrator from Togo. Text in French and in Ewe, spoken in Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast and Ghana. Dozens of children's books in different African languages in the collection Contes des quatre vents (Tales from the four winds).

10. Cyrille Kakpo

**La Moto de l'oncle Assa** [Uncle Assa's motorbike]

Ruisseaux d'Afrique, Eburnie, 2004 • ISBN 978-99919--53-01-4 and 978-2-84770-083-1

What a pleasure it is to ride on Uncle's motorbike... But the fumes it gives off are so bad for the environment ! One of the titles in the collection "Enfant et santé" (Child and Health): small picture books using a story happening in children's daily life, to give information on health issues.

## 5. Cameroon

Clé publishing house started publishing for young people in Cameroon as early as 1970, but their picture books for young children came later. Picture books were really born in Cameroon with Akoma Mba and its group of illustrators, a house that was active from 1995 to 2004. Their books are very much appreciated in libraries, but no longer available so they are not on the list. Great illustrator from Cameroon Christian Epanya is mostly published in France but librarians included in the list some of his numerous books, the same as with authors Marie-Félicité Ebokéa and Alain Dzutap. The list was made by six children librarians working in active libraries, none of them state-funded.

1. Kidi Bebey • Christian Kingue Epanya, ill.

**Pourquoi je ne suis pas sur la photo?** [Why Aren't I in the Photograph?]

Edicef, Clé, 1999 • ISBN 2-84129-634-2

"Where are we when we are not yet born?", Titi wonders, realising that he does not appear on every photograph in the family album. He asks the question each day of the week to a different person, but only his mother's answer will really be satisfying... A simple text that sounds true, beautiful illustrations by Christian Epanya, full of life and colour. This very accomplished picture book delights children.

2. Ernest Mbanji Bawe

**Nfo: L'enfant qui n'en fait qu'à sa tête** [Nfo, the boy that does as he pleases]

Clé, 1999 • ISBN 978-2-7235-0400-3

A charming picture book featuring a small boy. Fetch water, crush maize with a mill: Nfo would like to do what his mother asks but he is in such a hurry, he so much wants to amuse himself... On the theme of a small boy doing one silly thing after the other and suffering the consequences, a simple text accompanied by large, lifelike illustrations, with singular charm: it is a pleasure to discover a West-Cameroon lifestyle.

3. Christian Kingue Epanya

**La Pipe de Tita Nveng** [Tita Nveng's Pipe]

Orphie, 2010 • ISBN 978-2-87763-535-6

The vanishing of a pipe in a small village near Ebolowa in Cameroon has remarkable consequences: grand-father is so furious to be deprived of tobacco that he refuses to harvest palm wine, which deprives villagers from their daily fix, which exasperates them... Until little Engoulou confesses: she is guilty of having broken her grand-father's pipe, ruining her holidays at the plantation that she had so much looked forward to... Misbehaviour, the weight of a secret, reconciliation: a very good story, for its themes, its progression and its rhythm. It is always a pleasure to plunge into Christian Epanya's illustrations, in shades of red and orange, creating, with just some details, a special atmosphere and characters that seem real.

4. Christian Kingue Epanya

**Le Petit camion de Garoua** [The Little Truck of Garoua]

Edicef, 2001 • ISBN 978-2-84129-794-2

Back from Garoua to his village in North Cameroon, Konan seems to have something in mind : he goes to his mother's kitchen, then to the grocer's, then to the bike repairer's, then to the basket-maker's... picking up different objects and materials. But what is he up to, this boy?, wonder all those who see him and follow him. He's made a truck! A beautiful truck! It's Uncle Amadou's truck, in Garoua ! Fanta is very proud of her little Konan, she hugs him tight in her arms. Luminous illustrations, colourful and warm, rendering the village life affectionately.

5. François Kammo Melachi • Katia Castanie

**La Fête de l'arachide** [Peanut Feast]

Tropiques, Cultures Sud, 2010 • ISBN 978-9956-042-2

A non-fiction picture book on peanut culture and its role in Cameroon's life and economy, by means of the story of a boy on holiday with his grandparents at the village. Information is given through the grandfather's answers to the boy's questions. The book, the first by the very young F. K. Melachi, is the laureate of a contest organised by an NGO wishing to give children in central Cameroon books depicting their daily life. Melachi's illustrations are informational (on the tools, the phases of culture, the houses...) and if they seem a bit stiff, character's faces are expressive and landscape, rendered with poetry.

6. Alain-Serge Dzotap • Philippe De Kemmeter, ill.

**Petit Hippo et son stylo magique** [Little Hippo and his magic pen]

Bayard jeunesse, 2010 • ISBN 978-2-7470-3208-7

Daddy Hippo gives Little Hippo a red pen for his birthday, a pen "full of beautiful things"... Little Hippo tries to take those beautiful things out of the pen, but cannot, nor can his sister, nor the Hen, nor the Giraffe... Finally, Mother Hippo shows him how to use the pen and soon, the whole world begins to come out of it...

7. Marie-Félicité Ebokéa • Clémentine Sourdis, ill.

**Mariétou Kissaitou** [Marietou Whoknowsall]

Le Sorbier, 2008 • ISBN 978-2-7320-3907-7

When you know all, you are afraid of nothing: this is what little Mariétou believes. Bold, brave, she's always the first to go at things. At least when there is light... For as soon as night comes, Mariétou is afraid of going across the courtyard to the toilet... Thanks to the words of an elder – the grand-father – Mariétou will get over her fear. A lively story, not without humour, that takes the reader to Douala. In *À l'eau Mariétou!* [Into the water, Mariétou!] (ISBN 978-2-7320-3971-8) we find little Mariétou and her neighbourhood in Douala again: she goes for a day on the beach with her class, in her beautiful new bathing-suit, but she is terrified to go into the water: what if Mamywater really existed?...

## Appendix : Publishers' addresses

Balani's

BP 83, Bamako, Mali

Tél. (223) 221 88 34 / 621 68 71 • [balanise@yahoo.fr](mailto:balanise@yahoo.fr)

BLD (Bibliothèque Lecture Développement)

BP 1046, Dakar RP, Sénégal

Tél. (221) 33 834 34 94 • fax 33 834 34 95 • [bld@sentoo.sn](mailto:bld@sentoo.sn) • [www.bld.sn](http://www.bld.sn)

Distribution Europe Anibwé, 52 rue Greneta, 75002 Paris, France. • Tél. /fax [33 \(0\)1 45 08 48 33](tel:330145084833) • [k2inter@voila.fr](mailto:k2inter@voila.fr) • [www.anibwe.com](http://www.anibwe.com)

Clé

BP 1501, Yaoundé, Cameroun

Tél. (237) 22 22 35 54 • fax (237) 22 23 27 09

• [editionscle@yahoo.fr](mailto:editionscle@yahoo.fr) • [editionsclemarketing@yahoo.fr](mailto:editionsclemarketing@yahoo.fr) • <http://membres.multimania.fr/webeditionscle/index.htm>

Culture Sud

22, rue Manet, 37300 Joue-lès-Tours, France

Tél. [33 \(0\)6 45 05 29 33](tel:330645052933) • [contact@culturesud.org](mailto:contact@culturesud.org) • [www.culturesud.org](http://www.culturesud.org)

Donniya

Cité du Niger BP 1273, Bamako, Mali

Tél. (223) 20 21 45 99 / 20 21 46 46 / 20 21 58 54 • fax 20 21 90 31

• [imprimcolor@orangemali.net](mailto:imprimcolor@orangemali.net) • [www.editionsdonniya.com](http://www.editionsdonniya.com)

Distribution Europe Alliance des éditeurs indépendants, [lhugues@alliance-editeurs.org](mailto:lhugues@alliance-editeurs.org)

Edicef

Hachette International, 58 rue Jean Bleuzen, 92 178 Vanves Cedex, France

Tél. [33 \(0\)1 55 00 11 89](tel:330155001189) • fax [33 \(0\)1 55 00 11 60](tel:330155001160) • [gmariesainte@hachette-livre.fr](mailto:gmariesainte@hachette-livre.fr) • [www.hachette.com/editeur/edicef-010.html](http://www.hachette.com/editeur/edicef-010.html)

Le Figuier

Moussa Konaté : [konatem@wanadoo.fr](mailto:konatem@wanadoo.fr)

Graines de pensées

30 Bd du 13 janvier, BP 7097, Lomé, Togo

Tél. 228 22 22 32 43 / 90 05 26 49 • [grainesdepensees@yahoo.com](mailto:grainesdepensees@yahoo.com)

L'Harmattan

7, rue de l'Ecole Polytechnique, 75 005 Paris, France

Tél. [33 \(0\)1 40 46 79 10](tel:330140467910) • fax [33 \(0\)1 43 29 86 20](tel:330143298620) • [diffusion.harmattan@wanadoo.fr](mailto:diffusion.harmattan@wanadoo.fr) • [www.editions-harmattan.fr](http://www.editions-harmattan.fr)

Nouvelles Éditions Africaines du Sénégal

BP 260, Dakar Ponty, Sénégal

Tél. 221 822 1580 • fax 221 822 3604 • [neas@sentoo.sn](mailto:neas@sentoo.sn)

Nouvelles Éditions Ivoiriennes / CEDA

01 BP 1818, Abidjan 01, Côte-d'Ivoire

Tél. 225 21 21 64 70 • fax 225 21 21 64 86 • [edition@nei-ci.com](mailto:edition@nei-ci.com) • [www.nei-ci.com](http://www.nei-ci.com)

Orphie Éditions

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Tél. [33 \(0\)2 62 30 61 62](tel:330262306162) • [orphie.run@wanadoo.fr](mailto:orphie.run@wanadoo.fr) • [orphie@orphie.net](mailto:orphie@orphie.net) • [www.orphie.net](http://www.orphie.net)

Le Bourg - Zone d'activité, 71220 Chevagny sur Guye, France

Tél. [33 \(0\)3 85 24 67 67](tel:330385246767) • fax [33 \(0\)3 85 24 67 66](tel:330385246766)

• [orphie.run@wanadoo.fr](mailto:orphie.run@wanadoo.fr) • [orphie@orphie.net](mailto:orphie@orphie.net) [www.orphie.net](http://www.orphie.net)

Ruisseaux d'Afrique

04 BP 1154, 04 Cotonou, Bénin

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France:

- Colline Diffusion, 23 rue Caristie, 84100 Orange, France

Tél. [33 \(0\)4 90 51 78 59](tel:3321490517859) • fax [33 \(0\)4 90 51 68 99](tel:3321490516899)

- Françoise Rambert, Tél. [33 \(0\)5 56 05 51 91](tel:3321556055191) / [\(0\)6 72 26 18 05](tel:3321672261805) • [rambertfrancoise@yahoo.fr](mailto:rambertfrancoise@yahoo.fr)

La Sahélienne

Rue 593 porte 164, Bako Djikoroni ACI, Bamako, Mali

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Distribution Europe : La Sahélienne France (33) [\(0\)7 60 54 44 79](tel:3321760544479) • [salatra2005@yahoo](mailto:salatra2005@yahoo)