



Call for Ajami and Arabic Manuscripts on Islam and Peacebuilding in West Africa

The Sanneh Institute project – [*Engaging the Mosque, the Church, and the Academy in West Africa for Transformation of Society*](#) – seeks to undertake a scholarly inquiry into the pacifist, non-violent Tradition of West African Islam. The project has four main outputs one of which is to identify and translate works on non-violence produced by leading clerics of the tradition in the vernacular languages (Ajami) and Arabic into French and English. The translation of these works, as Sheikh Babou notes, is to “**expand the Islamic library**” through making indigenous knowledge that have hitherto remained inaccessible to a wider readership. In making these indigenous works accessible to a younger readership, the project seeks to create a new meta-narrative that nuances the more dominant received and prevailing ones, namely those of militant jihad traditions. It will do so by amplifying the hitherto marginalized, yet deeply rooted and widespread non-violent narratives across West Africa.

For generations, influential Muslims in the West African subregion have contributed greatly to an enduring legacy of a non-violent and a-political tradition of Islam in West Africa. These figures through their teaching and works continue to play a central role in shaping the very nature and trajectory of Islam in Africa. *This project is soliciting manuscripts written by historical and contemporary clerics, scholars, imams, and other influential figures that espouse non-violence and peacebuilding from an Islamic perspective.* Given the enduring significance of orality in the West African subregion, the project is also interested in oral materials in the forms of recorded sermons, teaching, proverbs, etc that promotes peacebuilding and harmonious co-existence from an Islamic perspective.

The focus of this phase of the project is a general call for identification and recommendation of Ajami and Arabic resources as they relate to Islam and peacebuilding. All recommended sources will be reviewed and those that meet the criteria below will be selected for annotated translation into French or English. This process will be led by a Team of Ajami and Arabic Experts who represent the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of the West African subregion. Finally, the translated texts will be published and widely disseminated and promoted among different demographics in West African society, educational institutions, and organizations across the subregion. The long-term aim of the project is to curate, collect, and organize the resources into a database that can be utilized for research into Ajami works, Islam and peacebuilding.

1. The **subjects** and **topics** treated in the works may include but are not limited to the following:

The Ajami and Arabic manuscripts and/or oral material must relate to some aspect of non-violence and peacebuilding but may approach the subject from several angles. Key themes may include a critique of militancy and violence, the promotion of co-



existence and inter-religious engagement. Classical theological texts (teachings, sermons, etc.) are relevant, but so too are those from a socio-cultural and socio-political perspective. Works that deal with various aspects of peacebuilding, even if more practical and popular like poems, proverbs, etc, will also be useful. The genre might be autobiographical, biographical, historical, a collection of sermons, prose, etc. The works could be in any West African indigenous language or Arabic.

2. Submission of Manuscripts should include the following components:

1. A 300-word description of the content, including its major themes and topics.
2. Author and date (if available).
3. Genre.
4. Language.
5. Location, institution and accessibility of the text.
6. Page length.
7. Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the person submitting the works.

Ajami manuscripts that have been translated into French or English but not published can also be recommended for consideration. Proposals should be submitted via email by **31st December 2022** to the Academic Programs Coordinator, Matthew J. Krabill, at krabillm@tsinet.org.

Project Director
John Azumah, PhD