

International Conference of Independent Publishers, Fez (Morocco), November 2027

First draft - November 2025

The right to read, resist, hope *The new generation speaks out*

Initiated and coordinated by the International Alliance of Independent Publishers in partnership with En toutes lettres (Morocco)

Nota bene: *The Conference will take several months to organise, so this draft is subject to change. The final format of the Conference will also depend on several factors - some of which are unpredictable at this stage (financial resources, potential partnerships, geopolitical context, etc.).*

International Alliance of Independent Publishers

Created in 2002, the International Alliance of Independent Publishers is a professional association of over 980 independent publishing houses in 61 countries around the world. The Alliance is organised into 6 language networks (English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Persian) and thematic groups. The Alliance's members are national publishing houses and collectives of publishers. All the Alliance's activities are aimed at promoting bibliodiversity.

En toutes lettres

En toutes lettres is first and foremost an independent publishing house, specialising in the publication of essays by writers, researchers and journalists. Our books examine social issues relating to Morocco and promote investigative journalism to make the work of social science researchers and academics accessible to a non-specialist readership, to contribute to the dissemination of a culture of debate and critical thinking.

En toutes lettres is also [Openchabab](#), a platform for training emerging journalists and civil society activists in the founding values of a humanist society and the tools of independent journalism. The project won the Rive Sud media and information education prize at the Assises internationales du journalisme in Tours in 2019. Since 2023, the project has expanded to universities and civil society through the School of Critical Thinking in Fez, Tangiers and Beni Mellal.

En toutes lettres also has expertise in the creation of exceptional, accessible content showcasing the best practices of civil society, on themes such as human rights, media education, the environment, gender, youth, discrimination, popular education, vulnerable populations, etc.

Finally, En toutes lettres is a research space that invites different stakeholders - journalists, university researchers and civil society activists - to share their thoughts on their respective fields and methods, and to produce interdisciplinary knowledge.

En toutes lettres is a member of the International Alliance of Independent Publishers.

Promoting bibliodiversity, loud and clear!

Since the 2000s and the first Conference organised in Dakar, one of the specific and original contributions of the Conference (and of the Alliance network, which initiated it) has been to address and promote decolonial publishing. The goals were changing perspectives, decentring approaches, rebalancing relationships and exchanges. **It was in this context that the notion of “bibliodiversity” was born in Latin America, a notion that has been promoted and disseminated for over 20 years by the International Alliance of Independent Publishers in France and more widely in Europe and on other continents.** While in many countries of the North, bibliodiversity has now become a guarantee of diversity (of titles, publishing houses, authors, etc.), bibliodiversity takes on a fuller and more complex meaning (and is much more localised) for book professionals in the South: above all, it is a question of protecting and defending local publishing, which is often in competition with and threatened by the stranglehold of large international groups. For independent publishers in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Arab world, bringing bibliodiversity to life means being able to create their own pool of authors, publish their own texts, bring their own imaginary worlds to life, take part in their own society and assert the political and social role of books. It is with this philosophy and these convictions in mind that the Alliance is defending bibliodiversity and supporting the Conference.

What is the purpose of the Conference?

Since the Alliance was founded, Conferences have been held every 4 to 8 years (depending on the budgets available): see the [Conference in Dakar in 2003](#); the [Conference in Paris in 2007](#); the [Conference in Cape Town in 2014](#); the [Conference in Pamplona in 2021](#).

As a unique moment for the independent publishing movement, the Conference highlights another facet of the world of books, made up of a multitude of voices that are often marginalised and stifled. Based on intercultural dialogue, solidarity and a plurality of approaches, the Conference is a forum for discussion, reflection, research and action. It provides an overview of independent publishing worldwide (Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Arab world and Oceania): it sets the tone for the trends and issues that are shaping the world of books - and, more broadly, the state of the world.

Above all, the Conference is people-centred; it connects and unites an international network of solidarity:

- Being and doing together (getting out of isolation, (re)making contacts, discussing, debating, networking, sharing, laughing, making friends...);
- Making the voice of independent publishers heard on an international scale (echoing the issues raised by independent publishing, highlighting new generations of publishers, discovering the publishing markets in different countries, etc.);
- Taking stock of the Alliance's collective actions, its governance and the development of its agenda, and looking ahead (to retrace and “evaluate” the various achievements of the Alliance since its creation, to refine the collective decision-making processes, to define the objectives and main activities for the period ahead, etc.).

It also contributes to the creation of other imaginary worlds, other ways of connecting with the world, and provides a forum for proposals:

- to reflect the creativity of independent publishing, and to disseminate texts and ideas through editorial partnerships based on solidarity (transfer of rights, translations, co-editions based on solidarity, etc.);

- submit proposals to the industry, public authorities and other partners (based on long-term work by Alliance members, draw up recommendations and propose tools on several issues/ themes: supportive publishing partnerships, public book policies, book ecology, freedom to publish, minority languages, digitalisation/ AI, etc.).

Collective organisation

The Conference is built on several factors:

- the expectations/ proposals and concerns of Alliance members;
- the main themes/ priority topics discussed within the Alliance (in the Bibliodiversity Observatory and during the Babelica book fair);
- the societal and political issues in the countries represented within the Alliance (61 countries, 42 of which are in the southern hemisphere and 19 in the northern hemisphere)
- the changes underway for stakeholders in the book industry;
- the cultural/ political/ social/ professional specificities of the host country.

To lay the foundations for the 2027 Conference, the International Committee of Independent Publishers (ICIP), made up of the coordinators of the Alliance's language networks, met for 3 days in October 2025 with the Moroccan publisher En toutes lettres, which put forward Fez as a candidate to host the next Conference. Based on the various factors presented here, the ICIP and the publishing house En toutes lettres drew up the format of the Conference.

Common thread

“The right to read, resist, hope”

Strengthening and promoting the values of the Alliance

In 2021, while the world was living to the rhythm of the Covid pandemic, preparations were underway for the 2021 Pamplona Conference, with one key word in mind: REthink. How would independent publishing be built “after”? What would be the responsibility of independent publishers in the transitions and transformations of tomorrow? How can we (re)affirm the role of bibliodiversity in building more emancipated, freer and fairer societies? The Declaration that came out of the Pamplona Conference reflected (and still reflects) the collective will of independent publishers to work “For a decolonial, ecological, feminist, free, social and united independent publishing”, recalling their commitment to the cultural, social and political nature of books and reading; the democratisation of books in society; reading as an emancipatory practice that forges the critical spirit of citizens, as active participants within their society.

Following the 2021 Conference, several initiatives were set up: a Guide to Good Practice, thematic working groups within the Bibliodiversity Observatory, the [Babelica Fair](#) dedicated to independent publishing on an international scale, translation and co-publishing projects, mapping, analyses, workshops, meetings, etc.. At the same time, the Alliance network has grown and welcomed new publishing houses (particularly in Asia and the Arab world). A lot has happened in 6 years.

The Conference will therefore continue the work and reflection that are at the heart of the Alliance network around these issues (book ecology, public book policies, freedom to publish, solidarity co-editions, digitalisation/ AI, etc.) and commitments made by independent publishers.

- Passion at the expense of health (mental, financial, physical...)?
- Which book for which reader?
- Status of book donations?

- What are the alternatives to industrial piracy?
- What are the uses and practices of AI for independent publishing? What are the possible “ethical” alternatives?
- What are the good ecological practices for publishers?
- What translations from so-called ‘minority’ languages into the dominant languages?

Inclusive and welcoming; fostering dialogue and amplifying voices

The 2027 Conference is also shaped by several key words: ‘everyday’ youth/ Gen Z/ LGBTQIA+ voices/ censorship (and the circumvention of censorship)/ mental health/ well-being/ *safe spaces*/ inclusion/ critical thinking...

A chaotic and bruised world

Since 2021, new conflicts have erupted around the world, and the violence of war has become a daily reality for more publishers. The rise of nationalism, conservatism and authoritarianism has spread throughout societies, with waves of racism and sexism threatening diversity (gender, religious, cultural, etc.). Natural disasters have multiplied, rendering us powerless spectators of a predicted climate crisis. Financial and technological empires have been formed and consolidated, imposing a standardisation of content, undermining the current book ecosystem and limiting freedom of expression and critical thinking.

It is in this increasingly chaotic and bruised world that we find ourselves 6 years on... A world where it is becoming difficult to listen to one another, to engage in dialogue, to disagree. A world where the debate of ideas and books is threatened (even banned), where censorship (and self-censorship) prevents a plurality of points of view and testimonies...

Spaces of solidarity and resistance

In this context of retreat, difficulties and even dangers for the expression and representation of all diversities, there are many spaces of solidarity and resistance on a small or large scale that achieve great things. These “safe spaces” can be helpful, unifying and hopeful. **These spaces of solidarity and resistance will be at the heart of the forthcoming International Conference of Independent Publishers.**

- How can we resist together?
- What are the means of circumventing the attacks on freedoms?
- What social and political role do books and publishers play?
- How do we discuss complex and sensitive issues in an intercultural context?
- How do we publish in times of crisis and war?
- How do we take care of ourselves, of these spaces of solidarity?

Other voices/ directions

In Indonesia, Madagascar, Morocco, Nepal, Peru... the Generation Z is on the streets, demanding new possibilities, calling for greater social justice and dreaming of a dignified life. **This new generation will lead the Conference, thanks to a partnership with the School of Critical Thinking, an initiative run by En toutes lettres in conjunction with the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences at Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez. A group of students and emerging book professionals will develop the Conference programme, facilitate the debates and discussions and share their experiences and perspectives.**

- How and around what issues is the new generation organising its resistance?
- What role and place do books and reading play in this resistance - and more broadly for the new generation?
- What are the ways in which Gen Z organise themselves and their knowledge?
- What are the hopes and utopias of young people?
- How can we build bridges (between cultures, generations, etc.)?

Immediate, tangible outputs from the Conference

Several tangible “outputs” are expected at the end of the Conference:

- The [Pamplona-Iruñea Declaration](#) (2021 Conference) will be rewritten by the new generation (students and young professionals leading the Conference); the 2027 version of this Declaration will therefore mirror the 2021 Declaration;
- The [Guide to Good Practice](#) (which sets out the principles of the 2021 [Pamplona-Iruñea Declaration](#)) is an evolving tool, which will be developed and completed during this phase of building and holding the Conference. Priority topics to be developed in the Guide include AI and bibliodiversity (following the awareness-raising and workshops organised since 2024 by the Alliance on this topic);
- Toolkits and inspiration from the Southern Hemisphere: ‘Resisting in times of crisis’; ‘Inventing new economic models’; ‘Hoping and creating’
- Toolkits and inspiration from the Southern Hemisphere: ‘Resisting in times of crisis’; ‘Inventing new economic models’; ‘Hoping and creating’;
- A graphic report of the Conference will be produced (in partnership with local graphic designers and illustrators).

These various ideas and tools will be translated into several languages (English, Spanish, Arabic) and made freely available on the Alliance's various platforms (website, Babelica website, Digital Lab, etc.).

...and non-quantifiable outcomes that can be measured over time

In addition to the visible and quantifiable outputs, international meetings generate a multitude of knock-on effects, which are just as important to consider:

- A sense of well-being, of belonging to a support network, of not being alone
- Moments of reflection and respite to “get back on your feet” and question your practices
- New inspiration and ideas for projects
- Sharing of expertise, challenges, tips and networks
- Putting your work and context into perspective
- Co-publishing and translation projects (many publishing projects emanate from these events)
- Professional and friendly networking (and new and/or strengthened relationships of trust).

Audience

- Book professionals from Morocco and from all over the world
- Independent publishers from the Arab world, Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America (with particular attention paid to the geographical representativeness of participants)
- General public (especially the younger generation: children, students, etc.)

Date/ duration of the Conference

- The Conference will be held in November 2027 (precise dates to be confirmed); it will last 4 days (3 days of meetings and 1 optional day of visits).

Conference format

Planned activities

- Testimonies from around the world (interviews)/ general public
- Readings (in all languages), including the use of QR codes to feature readings given at Babelica/ general public
- International exhibition: books from all over the world presented and exhibited during the Conference/ general public
- Round tables (general public) including the voice of the new generation/ general public
- Professional workshops on AI, mental health, etc./ professional public
- Speed dating and B2B/ professional audience
- Workshops for children (partnerships with schools)/ school audiences
- Internal Alliance workshops (review of projects, governance of the association, etc.)/ Alliance members

These activities will be designed and facilitated by students from the École de la pensée critique. The Alliance's ambassadors for bibliodiversity (author spokespersons for the Alliance) will speak (face-to-face and/or remotely) during the Conference, as key witnesses to the discussions and debates.

Interpreting for the Conference

- Arabic/ English/ Spanish/ French
- Translations of documents and readings into Amazigh

Broadcasting of the Conference

The Conference will be held face-to-face; speakers who are unable to travel to Fez will be able to take part remotely. However, the sessions will not be broadcast live (but will be rebroadcast afterwards), as it would be too costly and technically complex to set up a streaming system for the Conference.

An ecological and inclusive Conference

As far as possible, the logistics of the Conference will embody the values defended by independent publishers; particular attention will be paid to the ecological and inclusive nature of the event.

For the ecological aspect, several levers will be activated:

- pooling participants' travel
- energy-efficient venues
- local and inclusive catering
- minimal printing for communications
- selective sorting and recycling of waste

The **inclusivity of the Conference** is particularly important to ensure that all participants feel recognised and respected. Several issues will be addressed throughout the process of organising the Conference:

- linguistic diversity – for communication and Conference materials
- representativeness of gender diversity; safe space, training of hosts
- welcoming people with disabilities
- geographical representation of participants
- generational and social inclusion
- digital inclusion and technical accessibility

These two axes will be detailed in an **“ecological and inclusive charter”** and posted on the Conference website, opening discussions on the ideal to be achieved and on the difficulties/ barriers/ obstacles encountered in doing so. This charter will be updated and made available to the public in a transparent manner and may be useful to duplicate and adapt for other events organised by book professionals.

Internal operations of the Alliance

- revitalise and strengthen the Alliance's networks (remain open and include new generations of publishers, as well as new editorial lines);
- develop the geographical representativeness of the Alliance: priority geographical areas such as Latin America, Asia, Portuguese-speaking countries, etc.;
- pay tribute to and preserve the memory of a number of leading figures in independent publishing (Samia Zennadi, Jean Richard, etc.);
- work on the governance of the Alliance.

Governance

- An online questionnaire will be sent to Alliance members in March 2026; publishers will have 6 months to respond (answers expected in August 2026). This questionnaire will be designed and worked on with volunteer members of the REthink group who wish to take part in drawing it up;
- Members' responses will be compiled and analysed at the ICIP meeting in October 2026;
- A session will be devoted to the governance of the Alliance (presentation of members' responses and areas of work for the next period) during the Conference in Fez.

Partners

In Morocco

- Publishing houses that are members and/or close to the Alliance in Morocco (Yomad, Tarik, Le Fennec, Le Sirocco, Le Sélénite)
- University of Fez (and all Moroccan partners working with En toutes lettres)
- Regional Observatory for the Right to Information
- Etc.

UNESCO, on an international scale

As with previous Conferences, the Alliance will seek UNESCO's patronage for this Conference.

Public authorities

- Europe Creative
- French Institute

- Goethe Institute
- British & Scottish Council

Private Foundations

Alliance members (in terms of time, logistical support, etc.)

Communication

- Local media (press, television, radio, podcasts, etc.)
- French-language media: RFI
- In-country media via Alliance members
- Social media, via students at the School of Critical Thinking
- etc.

Budget projection for the 2027 Conference

On average (based on the budgets for previous Conferences), we are looking at a budget of €1,500 per participant (including travel + visa, accommodation for 4 nights and meals).

Other costs must also be taken into account, as they are essential for holding such an event: interpreting (a minimum of €10,000 is required for interpreting into 3 or 4 languages) + remuneration of the partner publishing house in the country + promotional tools + costs of translating the materials/ programme into several languages + technical facilities for recording and rebroadcasting the meetings, etc.

To sum up, a minimum of €40,000 in 'fixed' costs is required + an average of €1,500 per participant - this is a minimum budget which does not include the time of the Alliance team.

Budget projections:

- 60 invited participants = 90,000 euros (travel for 60 participants) + 40,000 euros (fixed costs) = 130,000 euros
- 90 invited participants = 135,000 euros (travel for 90 participants) + 40,000 euros (fixed costs) = 175,000 euros

It should be noted that many publishers contribute financially to the Conference by covering their travel costs (some twenty publishers have covered their travel costs to Pamplona in 2021). This financial support from publishers is extremely valuable to the Alliance. Generally-speaking, the Alliance would not be able to organise the Conference without the investment of publishers (whether financial, logistical, in terms of content, in the search for partnerships, in terms of time, etc.). **A huge and heartfelt thank you for your help and commitment!**



www.alliance-editeurs.org
[Instagram / LinkedIn](#)
[Facebook / X / YouTube](#)