

INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
OF INDEPENDENT
PUBLISHERS

2019-2021

rethink

celebrate

Meetings and workshops
2019 and 2020

International conference
in Pamplona-Iruña
(Province of Navarre / Spain)
23-26 November 2021

The “Conference”, a snapshot of independent publishing worldwide

Since the creation of the [International Alliance of independent publishers](#) (an international network of 750 independent publishers from 55 countries around the world) in 2002, the “International Assemblies/Conferences” have been held every four to eight years and bring together some 100 independent publishers from around the world: [in 2003 in Dakar](#) (Senegal); [in 2007 in Paris](#) (France); [in 2014 in Cape Town](#) (South Africa) and in 2021 in Pamplona-Iruña (Province of Navarre/ Spain).

They represent a landmark moment for international independent publishers, bringing together actors from all continents – they collectively provide a portrait of global independent publishing (Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Arab world and Oceania). They are a unique space for debate, meetings, and reflection on independent publishing – with no other equivalent worldwide.

Celebrate and REthink in 2021...

Between 2017 and 2018, when the Alliance network was planning and launching the 2019-2021 conference, the goals of this event were **obvious**: celebrating bibliodiversity and the work of independent publishers, REthinking the solidarity practices that we build through perseverance and determination, but also the relationships with other book professionals, and the relationships with readers.

This is obvious in view of the progress made since the last meeting in 2012-2014, but also in view of the experience of the **Alliance, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2021**.

2020, a global health crisis, a year of transformation

While the consequences of the health crisis are still difficult to assess in detail from an economic, social, and political vantage point, **REthinking remains obvious but also becomes a necessity**.

Why are independent publishers important actors in this period of crisis? How do they accompany societal transformations and transitions at work? What are the tools and practices that they put in place to apprehend the realities of tomorrow, to understand them? In what ways do books and the ideas they convey help defend and preserve the diversity of creations, points of view, ideas?

“Tomorrow’s” independent publishing?

This Conference is thus a moment of **documentation on the state of the world, an international mapping of the movements of transition and/or interruption**.

Its objective is to **question and inform discussions on the role of books – of ideas – as a social and emancipatory trajectory**.

It is a **space for reflection, sharing of experiences and practical know-hows** concerning the issues of today and tomorrow: ecology, social economy, inclusive publishing, cultural platforming...

Finally, the Conference is a **space of solidarity, trust, human relationships, and dialogues between cultures**.

Process and phases of the Conference

The Conference of the Alliance is built **of our own accord over a long period of time**, against the often-frantic rhythm that has become the norm. It follows a **common thread** that has been running for 20 years within the Alliance: the issues defended by the Alliance since its creation are always prominent (solidarity, equity of relations, rebalancing of flows, circulation of ideas, local creations and productions, fair speech, ecological concerns...). These are the foundations on which the independent publishing movement is based and are addressed considering contemporary issues and debates.

They are **built collectively**, based on the work carried out since the 2012-2014 conference and the [80 ensuing recommendations](#), from feedback from professionals in the field of books, from monitoring

independent publishing throughout the world, from regular dialogue with other cultural actors, but also from observation of practices, trends, and alternatives that emerge here and there.

The Conference is **built on two levels (public and “internal”)**, which feed each other and are complementary.

- A public level with an aim to meet, discuss, learn – which is embodied by meetings open to all (book professionals, readers, cultural actors, academics, civil society movements, etc.). **It is about taking advantage of the space that the Alliance is to REthink practices, question the relationship of independent publishers to the current world, explore themes, allow each other utopias, look together to the future.**
- An internal level (focused on the Alliance network) to formulate recommendations and tools, to elaborate objectives for the upcoming period, to define and refine the governance of the network.

The conference is **structured around working groups and thematic workshops set up since the 2012-2014 Conference of the Alliance** (1/on public book policies; 2/on the freedom of publishing; 3/ on digital publishing; 4/on publishing in local and national languages; 5/on solidarity-based editorial partnerships; 6/on the impacts of book donation practices). **The Conference is also built on collective discussions, the production of analyses and tools** (see workshops 2019 and resources available below).

Concretely, for the Alliance network, the aim is to achieve the following results for the period 2022-2025:

- Recommendations (based on the [80 recommendations from the previous Conference](#) but also in the context of the current crisis)
- Objectives and action plan for the period 2022-2025
- Adjustments and validation/ endorsement of the governance of the association

Tools and format of the Conference

Given its international dimension, the Alliance has acquired a solid **experience in remote working and communication**. Most of the exchanges and projects carried out over the past 20 years have been carried out using digital tools (emails, virtual meetings, discussions on social media, group discussions, etc.). However, this way of working has **never replaced human encounters, which are an elementary basis for building a network** and relationships of trust, both professional and social. Past and current conferences thus include these two dimensions (virtual and physical).

To allow a greater number of people to take part in the conference, each meeting will combine the face-to-face and virtual formats. The finalised programme will explicitly report on the possible uses for the participants, to promote exchanges between the actual participants and the remote participants. The programme of the meetings will welcome remote participants in the round table panels and workshops, the organisers ensure a broad participation of all despite possible technical difficulties. The international dimension of the Alliance and its Conference will thus be made possible through adapted tools.

A virtual space is under construction: it will be launched in the first half of 2021 and will be the virtual tool used during the 2021 meetings (and thereafter). This is an international trade fair for independent publishers, allowing for the visibility of publishing houses' catalogues (HotLists), the exchange of copyrights and the establishment of solidarity-based editorial partnerships (project fairs) and professional and public discussions/ meetings.

Conference in Pamplona-Iruña in 2021

The choice of the city (and the country) in which the conference will be held was the subject of a call for proposals from all the members of the Alliance: for the 2021 conference, the candidature of the **Txalaparta publishing house** (a long-standing member of the Alliance) was chosen by the members.

Several criteria motivated this choice, including to:

- organise this meeting in a large city that is not a capital, but with sufficient infrastructure capacity to accommodate a hundred international guests;
- organise this event within the context of a book fair (that of Navarra) to promote exchanges and contacts with local actors;
- create synergies and benefit from the experience of local actors on subjects and issues that are essential for this Conference: ecology, social and solidarity economy...;
- defend values that are dear to the Alliance: cultural and language diversity, to decentralise the debates of the major capitals, to create synergies with local associations and local civil society.

Practical information

- Dates: 23-26 November 2021
- In partnership with the Navarra Book Fair and the Association of Independent Publishers from Navarre
- 4 days of meetings, discussions and workshops in 4 languages (Basque, Spanish, French and English)
- Actors of the book ecosystem: publishers, booksellers, librarians, authors, etc.
- Academics
- Representatives of solidarity and civil society initiatives
- Representatives of public authorities
- 50 countries represented

Physical meetings, virtual window, sound archives

The meetings can be followed in streaming (via the virtual lounge and/or the Alliance's YouTube channel). They will also be recorded and may be the subject of audiovisual editing, depending on the agreement with the participants. The conclusions of the roundtables and workshops will be disseminated afterwards to all participants.

As mentioned above, whenever necessary, the speakers will also be able to participate in the meetings in a virtual way (via videoconference) to allow greater representativeness of the members of the Alliance and guests.

Bibliodiversity ambassadors!

Bibliodiversity ambassadors are public figures who have agreed to amplify the voices of independent publishers, to accompany the reflections and practices of publishers, to defend and support bibliodiversity. The public figures are not yet known at the time of writing this program, but authors and other public figures have been invited and will be present at the meetings in Pamplona-Iruña. They will follow the meetings and will be able to produce texts or creations that will be inspired by the exchanges.

Presence of international independent publishers at the Navarra Book Fair

A collective stand dedicated to the invited international publishers will present the variety and diversity of independent production internationally. This collective stand will be a meeting place for readers but also a space for sales/ purchases/ trade of copyrights between invited and local professionals.

Themes of the Pamplona-Iruña Conference

The main themes of the Pamplona-Iruña meetings have been identified by independent publishers as **priority issues for REthink**. These issues are obviously related to the values that have driven the international network of the Alliance since its creation (solidarity, equity in relationships, rebalancing of flows, circulation of ideas, local creations and productions, fair speech, ecological concerns...) and are articulated with **the 80 recommendations in favour of bibliodiversity formulated during the 2012-2014 conference**.

This programme will be finalised in the weeks to come, considering the international, intercultural, and collective dimensions of the Alliance. Based on the recommendations of the ICIP (International Committee of Independent Publishers), the decision-making body of the Alliance, a **working group** is set up, composed of ICIP members and publishers involved in the Conference in Spain. The working group's missions will be to identify speakers (academics, book, culture, civil society professionals, etc.) who can contribute to the round tables and support them in the preparation of their presentations.

The proceedings of the conference, formulated from the live sound archives, will be the basis for the Alliance's member publishers to develop the Alliance's **objectives and programme of activities for 2022-2025**.

Public part / round tables and workshops for REthink

- **"Biodiversity vs bibliodiversity"** (ecology of the book, what to say and where to say it ...)
- **Minority languages** (write and publish in "minority" languages)
- **The balance of power / domination in representations** (cultural colonialism, representation of minorities, women in the book industry, etc.)
- **Digital publishing** (platformization, GAFAM dependency, etc.)
- **"Freedom to publish / fair speech"** (launch of an unprecedented study on the freedom to publish carried out by the Alliance network)
- **Public books policies**

These public book policies workshops will follow virtual meetings in July 2021 and are built around [the mapping of public book policy](#) developed by the Alliance.

Closed work meeting for members of the Alliance only

All language networks of the Alliance will meet at least once between 2020 and 2021, virtually. The purpose of these meetings per language network is to prepare the 2021-2022 Conference (to highlight focus areas, themes and projects for the Conference), to draft the roadmap of the networks for the period 2021-2022, to work on the governance of the association.

At the end of the closing meeting of the Conference, the two essential objectives are the following:

- To establish the objectives and the 2022-2025 action plan of the Alliance – based on the focus areas of the Conference.
- To confirm and validate the governance of the association for the period 2022-2025 – consultation launched in the networks between March and October 2021.

Participants

The **geographic and linguistic representativeness** of the participants will illustrate the diversity of the Alliance's voices, as the Alliance includes more than 750 publishing houses in 55 countries around the world.

The **complementarity of points of view, professions and actors represented** will also be considered when drafting the programme: academics, book professionals but also other cultural sectors, representatives of other sectors (agriculture for example), representatives of associations and NGOs activists, readers...

The number of participants that we will be able to gather in Pamplona-Iruña is subject to the budgets that we will be able to mobilise in 2021, the health context and the visa application processes – it is to mitigate these different eventualities that the meeting will also be virtual.

For those participants who could travel to Pamplona-Iruña at their own expense (or partly at their own expense – airfare for example), please let us know soonest, as this will be extremely useful in adjusting our budgets.

For those participants who could obtain local support, please let us know what documents you would need to submit a funding request to your local partners.

You wish to participate in this international Conference?

Access to the roundtables and discussions is free and open to all (without prior reservation): we are expecting many of you!

For the professional workshops (the number of participants per workshop is limited), please register with the Alliance team before May 31, 2020 (equipe@alliance-editeurs.org).

If you need accommodation on site, the International Alliance of Independent Publishers will make available on its website a list of partner hotels for the event (preferential rates).

If you need a visa to participate in these meetings, the Alliance will be able to provide you with a letter of invitation and put you in contact with the local authorities.

For more information and details, please contact the International Alliance of Independent Publishers (equipe@alliance-editeurs.org).

Would you like to support this international Conference?

Your support is essential for these meetings. It can be of several kinds: direct financial support to the Alliance allowing a greater number of publishers to participate in the meetings; indirect support (purchase of a plane ticket for a participant); logistical support (for example: volunteer work for the preparation and during the meetings); intellectual support (contributions in terms of content, ideas, contacts...).

We thank you in advance for your involvement and commitment to bibliodiversity, which we will value in our communication tools and with all the participants of these meetings.

Appendices

Workshops and meetings of the Conference in 2019

- [Shifting the limits](#), meeting between independent publishers, Madrid (Spain), 4-5 April 2019
- [Diffusion-distribution between Francophone countries of the South and the North: what alternatives?](#) Assises de l'édition francophone (Geneva Book Fair, Switzerland), 1-5 May 2019
- [Youth literature in Francophone Africa](#), combined with copyrights transfers (B2B meetings), Salon du livre d'Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 13-17 May 2019

■ [Watch the recording of the workshop](#)

- [How to use typography and open digital resources?](#) Salon du livre d'Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 18-20 May 2019

■ [Watch the recording of the workshop](#)

- Launch and official presentation of the [mapping of public book policies in Africa](#), Salon du livre d'Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 17 May 2019
- Launch and presentation of the [mapping of public book policies in Latin America](#), Primavera del libro (Chile), 1-4 October 2019

■ [Watch the recording of the meeting](#)

Extraordinary Solidarity Fund in 2020

Between October and December 2020, the Alliance initiated and launched an extraordinary solidarity fund – financed from the association's own funds – intended for member publishers based in “Southern” countries where there was no support from public authorities in the face of the financial impacts of the pandemic. Thirty-four publishers from 24 countries were supported: aid for printing books in progress, support for the implementation of digital strategies by publishing houses, operating support (rent, IT maintenance, etc.). This fund, which is deliberately flexible and reactive, has allowed the publishers to take a breather, but does not replace more important structural support. The Alliance is a professional network of solidarity: it had to react within its means. However, and beyond this fund, it is a question of pursuing and strengthening a common advocacy for public book policies in the countries ([see the mapping realised by the Alliance](#)).

The testimonies collected make it possible to have an overview of the first real consequences of the health crisis for many cultural structures, particularly in Latin America – where the cancellation of book fairs and other cultural events has considerably weakened publishing houses. An analysis of the impacts of the pandemic for the international independent publishing sector is thus underway and will be a working and prospective tool used during the Pamplona-Iruña Meetings.

Resources available

Resources are not exhaustive, see all existing resources on the [Alliance website](#). New resources will be added during the year 2021 and at the end of the Conference for the period 2022-2025.

Advocacy

[80 recommendations in support of bibliodiversity](#) – from the International Assembly of Independent Publishers 2012-2014

[International declaration of independent publishers, to support and strengthen bibliodiversity together](#) – from the International Assembly of Independent Publishers 2012-2014

[Declaration of Santiago de Chile, for independent publishing at the service communities and diversity](#), 3 October 2019

[What to say, and where to say it? Open letter from independent publishers to authors and intellectuals committed to a fairer world](#), August 2020

[Declaration of independent publishers at the 8th Independent Book Fair in Mexico](#), September 2020

Bibliodiversity Observatory

[Mapping of public book policies in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Madagascar](#), March 2020

[Alternatives. Ecology, social and solidarity economy: the future of the book?](#) (special issue in the Bibliodiversity collection), February 2021

[Freedom to publish](#): publication of a ground-breaking study in 2021

[See other themes of the Bibliodiversity Observatory](#) (arising from the thematic groups set up during the 2012-2014 meetings)

HotLists

[2020 Latin American HotList](#); [2020 Arab world Hotlist](#); [2018 WomenList](#)

Solidarity-based editorial partnerships

[See here](#)



www.alliance-editeurs.org ♦ equipe@alliance-editeurs.org

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