

2021 programme...



A flourishing and culturally fulfilling year!

Discover the cultural recommendations of independent publishers: international playlists and selections of music, books and films made by members of the Alliance, published once a week throughout the year, to be found on the social media and the [website of the Alliance](#).

([Facebook](#) ♦ [Twitter](#) ♦ [YouTube](#) ♦ [Instagram](#))!

International Conference of Independent Publishers in Pamplona November 23-26, 2021



The International Conference of Independent Publishers is a time for reviewing and **documenting the state of the world, through the international mapping of movements of transition and/or rupture in progress**. Its objective is to **question and feed discussions on the role of books – ideas – as a social and emancipatory vector**. These meetings are a **space for reflection, sharing of experiences and practical applications** concerning the issues of today and tomorrow: ecology, solidarity economy, inclusive publishing, cultural platforming...

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

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

Alternating between **public meetings/debates and professional workshops**, the Pamplona meetings are a fundamental part of the Conference: they will bring together book professionals, academics and civil society actors from all over the world. However, 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 full programme of the conference is [online on the Alliance's website](#). To participate in the Conference, [contact the Alliance team](#)!

An online multilingual fair for independent publishers

An online space is being developed: it will be launched in the first half of 2021 and will be the online tool used in the Pamplona meetings (and thereafter). It is an international fair for freelancers, allowing both the visibility of publishing houses' catalogues (HotLists), the exchange of copyrights and the establishment of solidarity editorial partnerships (project fairs) and professional and public debates/meetings.

Observatory of **bibliodiversity**

“Bibliodiversity” collection

- [“The Alternatives. Ecology, social economy: the future of the book?”](#), February 2021
- “Inclusive publishing” (provisional title), to be published in January 2022

Thematic working groups of the Observatory

[Mapping and analysis of public book policies](#)



- Continuation of advocacy activities and adoption of the tool by professionals and public authorities.
- Thematic workshops in July 2021 (preparation of the Pamplona Meetings and public policy workshops to be held in November 2021) in partnership with the Afrilivres collective and the Association Internationale des Libraires Francophones – AILF (International Association of Francophone Booksellers)/ focus on textbook markets in French-speaking Africa and with Spanish-speaking publishing collectives/ focus on public purchases.



[Freedom of publishing](#)

Publication of the collective study “What freedom of publishing for independent publishers?” in November 2021.

[Solidarity editorial partnership](#): publication of a special issue on youth solidarity publishing in the *Takam Tikou* magazine (April 2021).



[Publishing in local and national languages](#) [Rethinking book donations](#)

These working groups will present, during the Pamplona Meetings, a report on the activities carried out since the 2014 Conference and will draw up the perspectives and objectives for the period 2022-2025.

Establishment of new working groups (created in 2021 at the Pamplona Meetings, continuation of the work done by the groups for the period 2022-2025): book ecology, inclusive publishing, etc.



Alliance Lab [\(see here\)](#)

- opinion articles on piracy, copyrights (copyright/ copyleft), platforming, etc.
- development of partnerships (digital players in Africa, Latin America, the Arab world, Asia, etc.).

Activities in **the networks**

- Virtual meetings of the language networks (preparation of the Pamplona Meetings; roadmaps for 2021...).
- Thematic Zoom meetings (role of the literary agent, book ecology, etc.) on subjects and issues arising throughout the year according to members' expectations.

Editorial solidarity partnerships

Working groups based on catalogue affinities



“Youth book” (children’s book publishing): children’s books HotList, co-edited in solidarity in 2021 and 2022;

Terres solidaires (African literature): publication of the 14th and 15th titles of the collection, *Des fourmis dans la bouche* de Khadi Hane and *Les 700 aveugles de Bafia* de Mutt-Lon; Reading committee for the selection of titles to be published in 2022 and 2023

Communication & **valorisation of catalogues**

- [Indie Book Day](#), 20 March 2021

- [International Bibliodiversity Day](#), 21 September 2021

- Children's books HotList: selection of children's books from independent publishing houses from around the world (in partnership with the Bologna Book Fair)

Governance

- ICIP virtual meeting in June and November 2021
- Work carried out to refine, adapt and complete the governance of the Alliance, initiated at the Pamplona Conference and completed in 2022.

Report on the year 2020

International Conference of Independent Publishers (2019-2021)

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 conference 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?

Extraordinary Solidarity Fund initiated and managed by the Alliance

Between October and December 2020, considering the extremely precarious situation the Alliance's publishers were in (and still are), the Alliance initiated and launched a one-off solidarity fund. This fund, financed from the association's own funds, was intended for member publishers based in countries of the 'South' whose public authorities do not provide relief funding to mitigate the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Thirty publishers from 24 countries were supported. The support (between 500 and 2 000 euros maximum per publisher) went mainly for printing books in progress, support for the implementation of digital strategies by publishing houses, operating support (rent, IT maintenance, etc.). In some cases, this support was dedicated to the survival of these publishing houses, some of which were already very fragile before Covid 19 (political unrest, natural disasters...).

This fund, which is deliberately flexible and reactive, allows a little breathing space for publishing houses but does not replace more important structural support. The Alliance is a professional network of solidarity: it was its duty to respond within its means. However, and beyond this fund, the end-goal is pursuing and strengthening common advocacy in favour of public book policies ([see mapping carried out by the Alliance here](#)).

The testimonials collected between October and November 2020 make it possible to have an overview of the immediate 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. These testimonies reflect the absence of support from the public authorities in many countries; they make it possible to understand the ripple effects that the pandemic has engendered (cancellation of book fairs, closure of borders, end of public purchases, etc.); they also show the creativity and adaptation of publishing houses, some of which have developed digital strategies, and have tried to

reach readers through other distribution channels. Several publishing houses have also used this period to enhance their holdings: unable to publish new titles in 2020, they have chosen to highlight and exploit their catalogues.

Here we share some initial findings and testimonials (published with the permission of the publishers). A more detailed analysis of the impacts of the pandemic for the international independent publishing sector is also underway and will be a working and prospective tool used during the Pamplona Meetings in November 2021 (International Conference of Independent Publishers).

Specific (and recurring) contexts in Latin America

- fairs, festivals, cultural events cancelled (a considerable loss of income)
- prolonged closure of bookstores
- interruption of public procurements (especially for schools)
- significant investments by publishing houses in online sales: strategies for promoting digital books (social media) and online marketing
- debts to printer (and/or creatives); 2021 publication programme compromised

Testimonials

In Argentina

Our publishing house has been publishing since 2007 at a steady pace. Due to the lockdown that began in March 2020, all major events and fairs (including the Buenos Aires International Book Fair), which account for a large part of our revenues as publishers, have been suspended.

The interruption of activities by bookstores affected their payment regime, forcing them to opt to maintain only essential operational expenses. Therefore, a large part of our publishing programme for 2020 (which already included books impacted by the depression of 2019) could not take place: six titles could not be published, printers were paid late, and we barely managed to pay royalties.

In Chile

Our main source of income has always come from direct sales at events such as book fairs, illustration festivals and others. Since October 2019, many events have been cancelled due to social conflicts and now, with the pandemic, no more events are likely to allow us to generate the revenue needed to print the books planned for this year.

We have made sales through social media platforms, but our jobs outside the publishing house have prevented us from devoting the time necessary to generate stable revenues from these sales. We are a two-person team.

In Chile

Our small publishing house has seen its sales drop by about 60%. Direct sales in bookstores and trade shows, our flagship initiatives, have been sacrificed throughout the pandemic and are still in slow motion. We were therefore forced to modernise and improve our old website (shopping cart and new graphic design). Given this investment, the impact of which we cannot yet measure, we no longer have the means to print the three books we had planned to publish in 2021.

In Peru

One of the main activities of the publishing house was its participation in national and local fairs. At present, sales are difficult due to the termination of such activities. Similarly, the other potential market, that of textbooks, has come to a complete stop. As a result, the lack of budget has led to the closure of the publishing house's activities.

In Brazil

The coronavirus crisis has had significant consequences as schools have been closed since March and States and municipalities are facing declining revenues due to business closures and bankruptcies. The purchase of books has therefore not been and will not be a priority in 2021.

Various contexts in French-speaking Africa, the Indian Ocean and Haiti

- very tense and fragile political context in many countries before Covid 19
- prolonged closure of bookstores
- school closures (loss of textbook markets)
- border closures (difficulty in getting books printed abroad; local printing much more expensive and often of lower quality)
- book fairs cancelled (a considerable loss of income)

Testimonials

In Guinea

A hike in transport prices has impacted on staff movements, low productivity, the halt in marketing and loss of income due to the closure of schools that are our main customers. Drastic drop in revenues while fixed charges remain: rents, salaries, electricity, water, maintenance of premises, etc.

In DRC

Activities are stalled because the crisis has caused the fall of the local currency, the Congolese franc, against the US dollar. This has resulted in the weakening of the purchasing power already affected for years by the socio-political problems facing the DRC.

In Togo

Our publishing house used to print 90% of its books outside the continent but with travel restrictions, everything is frozen (a good part of our stock is between Europe and Asia). Since our editorial choice is to publish affordable books, we are forced to print at a loss in Togo until things normalise.

The publishing house usually funds its activities through work commissioned by NGOs, but this year, the usually busy period from May to August has been exceptionally quiet...

In Algeria

The survival of a structure like ours will depend almost exclusively, from now on – for a year or two at least – on aid. It is, moreover, to an activity of this kind (proposals to international institutions and foundations) that we will devote our efforts this fall, especially since the SILA (Salon du livre International d'Alger/ Algiers International Book Fair), a vital meeting for us in terms of cash flow, is in jeopardy. We no longer have cash flow (booksellers and distributors, themselves, have no more) to pay the salaries of our employees and reduce our debts to printers. We have put our publishing programme on hold for the year (we published only one title, in January 2020).

In Morocco

Many of our booksellers and publishers are closing. We are in a country where books are a luxury, so people are primarily looking for food.

In Haiti

The political crisis (demonstrations, violence, strikes) that has been ongoing in the country since March 2019 has had a heavy impact on our operations, making us very vulnerable. From March to July, we were unable to participate in the various book fairs in schools and throughout the country. Our sales dropped considerably. In addition, we missed the start of the school year.

We are almost on our knees. After having paid the royalties, we have not yet been able to restart our activities properly. If this persists, we will be forced to close shop.

Advocacy

- **Call for the release of Angels Félix N'Dakpri, President of the Association of Publishers of Côte d'Ivoire (Assedi), 9 November 9, 2020 – [read the call here](#)**
- **Declaration by independent publishers at the 8th Independent Book Fair in Mexico, September 2020 - [read the declaration here](#) (in Spanish)**
- **Call for the release of Iranian authors, October 2020 – [read here](#) (in English)**
- **[What and where to say it?](#): open letter from independent publishers to authors and intellectuals committed to a fairer world, August 2020**

Bibliodiversity Observatory

“Bibliodiversity” collection

- [Minority languages](#) (special issue edited by Nathalie Carré and Raphaël Thierry), publication in January 2020

Thematic working groups of the Observatory

[Public book policies](#)

Launch of the [mappings and analyses](#) of public book policies in Latin America and French-speaking Africa

[Freedom of publishing](#)

Completion of the collective study “What publishing freedom for independent publishers”

[Solidarity editorial partnerships](#)

[Publishing in local and national languages](#)

[Rethinking book donation](#)

For these working groups: feeding the resource centre and continuation of awareness/ advocacy activities

Glossary of independent publishing produced by the publishers of the Spanish-language network – a tool that can be adapted in the other linguistic networks of the Alliance.

Alliance Lab

- adaptation and update of the [Alliance Press web template](#) to create its website
- individualised tutoring for the digitisation of books, outsourcing, digital diffusion and distribution, etc.

Solidarity editorial partnerships

- “Youth book” (children’s book publishing): Pan-African adaptation and coedition of *1001 activities around the book* by Philippe Brasseur; see the [six other children’s book coeditions published in 2020 here](#)
- **Terres solidaires** (African literature): publication of *Munya, les larmes de la patience* by Djâili Amadou Amal and launch of the 14th and 15th titles of the collection.
- *Oneness vs the 1%. Shattering illusions, seeding freedom by Vandana Shiva and Kartikey Shiva*: English co-edition followed by a Spanish translation and co-edition within the Alliance’s Spanish-language network

Communication & valorisation of catalogues

- [International Bibliodiversity Day](#), (21 September 2020)
selection of titles from 35 Latin American publishing houses
- [Latin American HotList 2020](#)
- [The Arab world in 1001 languages](#)



Governance

Governance

- ICIP’s virtual meetings in September and November 2020
- New coordination teams in the language networks ([see list of ICIP members here](#))

Movement in the Alliance’s staff

- Arrival of [Mariam Pellicer](#) and [Camille Cloarec](#)... in forced remote working for part of the year!



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