Meeting of FIMEM participants
for the 2026 Convergence(s) biennial

Video call of September 26, 2026

Present: Around forty participants – members of AECEMO (Cameroon), AIEM (Ivory Coast), AMEM (Morocco), MCE (Italy), MCEP (Spain) – FIMEM representatives at Convergence(s) and members of commission 15 "Convergence(s)" – members of the biennial organizing group in Verona

Apologies: a few members of ICEM, MCEP and COM 15

Translation into Spanish/Italian/French: Giancarlo
Translation into Italian/French: Anna and Léonard

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MEETING MINUTES

1st agenda item
Questions and points proposed by Francisco. Presentation by Anna

What is Convergence(s)?

Convergence(s) for New Education is an international dynamic open to organizations that draw inspiration from and act in their educational practices based on the principles and values of New Education.

In 2015, eight organizations gathered to revive the spirit of the 1921 Calais Congress: establishing

an international of education, a project to which Célestin Freinet later associated himself.
Among the eight organizations, initially there were only ICEM, CEMEA, GFEN, LIEN, etc. It was only later that our federation, FIMEM, joined them. This explains why, among the representatives of Convergence(s), there are some for both ICEM and FIMEM.
Convergence(s) was officially launched in 2021, on the occasion of the centenary of the Calais congress. While there were initially only eight, the movements currently adhering to Convergence(s) number approximately 26 (not counting member associations of the 3 international federations).

What are its ambitions?

To perpetuate the spirit of the historical congresses of the International League for New Education (LIEN) by fostering constructive debate and confrontation of ideas, pedagogical research, professional exchange, for an international of education. Above all, to encourage and support the militant commitment of educators, both at national and international levels. The network organizes regular international events, called Biennials, to debate contemporary educational challenges, share field practices, and sustain a shared political project.

Does Convergence(s) pursue the same objectives as FIMEM?

Convergence(s), through all its members, shares several values and pedagogical principles with FIMEM: cooperation, mutual aid, responsibility and autonomy of the child, and active learning articulating knowledge, know-how, imagination, and creation in the service of emancipation for all. As well as attention to individual/group relationships and the fight against systematic competition and exclusion. Above all, member movements of Convergence(s) adhere to the idea that there can be no democratic education if, parallel to the way of educating, one does not act on political and social levels to eliminate injustices.

What should be the future orientation of Convergence(s)?

To strengthen the community of work and action based on lucid solidarity bearing fruitful interactions. To strengthen the international network; to play a more significant political role within international organizations. In spring, meetings took place with the European Commission, and next spring an international day is planned in Brussels at the European Parliament.

What is its roadmap?

To show daily that a transformation of education is possible. Through meetings among activists, confrontation of their educational practices and research, thanks to biennials as an "idea fair," the aim is to acquire a collective force capable of carrying common values against international neo-liberal educational policies.
This is also the function of this moment during the biennial called "Un po' du più" during which participants are invited to define the perspectives of Convergence(s).

EXCHANGES WITH PARTICIPANTS

Francisco: we still do not fully understand what the objectives of Convergence(s) are, even though Anna presented the general objectives well. But what is Convergence(s) composed of? It is not clear to everyone, and we will need to discuss this among ourselves during the biennial. Because the objectives may not be the same for all Convergence(s) organizations. When we find ourselves in workshops presented by other organizations, we realize that our objectives are not so close. Many workshops are contradictory to our approach.

I wonder if it is not a space conducive to individualism, to the expression of egos, and if everything said there subsequently finds an echo in educational practices. Too often, we note that people presenting workshops promote their personal work, which is not always consistent with the objectives of the Convergence(s) Manifesto.
A discussion among us is absolutely necessary to clarify our objectives and agree on how to propose them.

Anna: I agree with Francisco; it takes a lot of energy to prevent Convergence(s) from becoming a bridge for individualities or for the sole promotion of an association, and to promote democracy in exchanges and solidarity. But this implies that FIMEM commits itself with more strength, energy, and better participation.

Nicoletta: Francisco has raised a question that we must discuss clearly among ourselves. He said there is an ego problem and that we must strongly support cooperation. Cooperation is not the sum of egos that can compromise the success of meetings.

Lidia: the question raised by Francisco is important. That is why in the Italian edition of the biennial we strongly tried to distinguish what pertains to a practice workshop, from testimony and debate. We also wanted to ensure that these were not individual expressions but were carried collectively and cooperatively by the organizations. It seems to me that this is a small step towards solving the problem raised by Francisco. And we certainly need to discuss it together to adjust the trajectory towards more cooperation.

Juan: we fully agree that FIMEM should engage particularly in Convergence(s). FIMEM delegates requested the presence of the Executive Board (CA) in this meeting, and that seemed very good to us.
Another aspect demonstrates the importance of Convergence(s): for the first time, we are stepping outside the French framework first, and then the Francophone one, to hold a biennial in Italy. Conservative and far-right ideas are advancing on all sides; hence the importance of educational internationalism from our point of view.
Since Freinet, we have distinguished ourselves from groups interested only in pedagogical activism without ideological or political concerns.
But, at FIMEM, we must take into account that our effort must be to converge with people who do not have exactly the same vision as us but who are close to us. We cannot impose our single vision, and that is what will make us strong.
In Spain, for example, a critical education network has been created, and I would like to talk about it at Convergence(s) and speak to this network about the biennials. What is important is to create convergences on certain values, certain objectives even if we do not agree on everything.

Léonard: as a representative of FIMEM at Convergence(s), I invite you precisely to carry this word as a member of FIMEM in the workshops you attend at the biennial, identifying interventions that are too egocentric and inviting workshop participants to develop these convergences together.

Anna: FIMEM must discuss the attitude to adopt regarding differences in approaches.
In Italy too, we collaborate a lot with other associations with which we do not share everything. However, it seems important to us, within the framework of the struggle we are waging for a just and democratic school, to have greater collective force on certain issues. It is in this context that we

try to bring about changes. For example, during the plenary session of the Biennial, we invited Teresita as a representative of Latin American pedagogy. We insist on having African participants present. This is to give voice to the stories of other peoples, to confront other pedagogies that are not solely Western, nor solely European.

Giancarlo: we can certainly find differences and inconsistencies in Convergence(s). But we also work with these with the aim of building greater unity and more sharing. Moreover, we also observe certain differences within FIMEM. I have participated in different FIMEM meetings that resembled much of what Francisco describes. I attended workshops with liberal privatization proposals, personal promotions. We are not angels either, and there are contradictions everywhere.

2nd agenda item
Communication regarding practical organization points

A – FIMEM Participants

Due to the particular management of movements by Convergence(s) and for the biennial, there are 3 distinct groups of participants for FIMEM: - ICEM (France) which has its own representatives at Convergence(s) for historical reasons; there are about twenty ICEM members for this biennial. – MCE (Italy) which has a very large number of participants (approximately 70) since the biennial is taking place in Italy;

- all other FIMEM movements for which there are 21 participants
- 1 from Belgium
- 4 from Cameroon
- 6 from Ivory Coast – 6 from Spain
- 1 from Morocco
- 1 from Mexico
- 2 from Poland

We will also have the great pleasure of seeing Teresita there, who will come with her daughter and granddaughter but is not coming as a FIMEM member because she is invited by the organizing group to speak as a representative of Latin American pedagogies.

B – Workshops/debates/testimonies

This year the workshops are therefore of 3 types. Each is well presented by individuals as members of their movement and not in a personal capacity, because that is precisely the aim of the biennial: to allow the meeting and exchange of practices, reflections, and research between movements. Some workshops/debates/testimonies are proposed by 2 or 3 different movements.
This year, the working group on plurilingualism has proposed that workshops/debates/testimonies be:

- Practice workshops, intended to actually propose an activity to participants. These workshops last 3 hours.
  - 3 from ICEM (free text – walking class – body and scripts)
  - 8 from MCE (literary creation – science and theater – evaluation – cooperative class – mathematical creation – games for citizenship – from object to pedagogical tool – taking speech into account)
  - 2 from MCEP (body as a tool for humanization – transdisciplinary study of the environment)
  - 1 from FFV and AECEMO (foreign languages and Freinet techniques)

- Debates last 1 hour 30 and are intended to allow an exchange between participants based on a proposal.
    - 5 from ICEM (co-educating – public space – young children – pedagogical repression – other adults in the school system)
    - 1 from MCE (1) (publishing as a development tool)
    - 1 from MCEP and MCE (democracy and education)

- Testimonies last no more than one hour because it is an opportunity for a movement to share a particular experience.
    - 4 from ICEM (free mathematical research – social pedagogy practices – Erasmus projects in secondary education – participatory research against school failure)
    - 4 from MCE (adult cooperative group – adult-centrism – MCE publishing experience – a school with active pedagogical practices).

C – Pre-biennial

The pre-biennial will be held on October 27 and 28. Its objective is to parallel professional cultures in the field of educator and teacher training.
The different approaches will be discussed to identify their common points. Currently, 9 activity proposals have been formulated and 40 participants are registered. Participants will alternate between the different proposals, then exchange on the experiences lived. They will prepare a report that will be presented during the Biennial.
For FIMEM there are 3 proposals: ICEM – MCE – AECEMO and AMEM.
A communication regarding organizational aspects will be sent shortly to registrants.

D – Solidarity

The Erasmus project for the biennial received a negative response. Convergence(s) has launched several avenues:
- voluntary participation of €10 at the time of registration
- voluntary participation from the movements themselves
- an individual appeal to movement members who wish and can give more than the initially proposed €10 (message sent to registered FIMEM members).
- depending on the actual number of biennial participants, the group would be able to complete the amount.

For now, we barely expect a budget between €1000 and €1500 per international federation since they are the ones concerned by expensive travel.

E – FIMEM presentation via display during Convergence(s) (TOTEMS)

A display space in the biennial premises will be reserved for Convergence(s) movements so they can present themselves to other movements as well as to Italian visitors. The display will be in the form of a totem composed of 12 panels of 60 cm by 40 cm each. Each present FIMEM movement will be able to have a totem.
We will need to indicate how many totems we will need for FIMEM.
FIMEM must absolutely make its TOTEM.
Other FIMEM member movements, particularly those present during the biennial, will be able to make their presentation in this form.
An appeal will be launched by email to COM 15 and FIMEM movements.

F - Reference groups

We need facilitators for the reference groups.
These groups serve to communicate between participants and the organizing group.
Facilitators receive written information from the organizing group to disseminate within the reference group, and the facilitator collects remarks or questions from participants which they will transmit to the organizing group in writing.
There will be 1 reference group per day lasting half an hour.
Reference groups are conducted in a single language (no translations).
Who would like to volunteer?
Marie-Céline (AECEMO, Cameroon) has already volunteered by email.
Rocio (MCEP, Spain) volunteers for a reference group in Spanish.
The Ivorian comrades will consult among themselves to propose someone.

G - Cooperative dinner on Thursday evening (first day of the biennial)

The biennial organizing group proposes that participants bring something to share a cooperative meal (drink and food) with international regional specialties.

3rd agenda item
VISA situation

Currently, we know that Philomène's visa (AECEMO, Cameroon), who applied for her visa at the Italian embassy, was refused due to insufficient financial resources.
Only Asma (AMEM, Morocco) has obtained her visa so far.
All other comrades from Africa are awaiting their embassy appointment or the results of their appointment (a two-week deadline announced for responses).

4th agenda item
Exchanges: questions, requests, practical information

BIENNIAL THEME

Nadine: is the theme the same for all workshops, debates, testimonies of this biennial, that is to say "Rehumanizing education"?
- Answer: "yes": this theme is proposed for all these moments.

TRANSLATIONS

Giancarlo: is the "translation" group concerned by the reference groups?

- Answer: no, translations are not planned for reference groups because people will be grouped by language. In the final registration, you will be asked for the language you speak primarily. Upon arrival, the question will also be asked.

Lidia: there will be a group of translators during the biennial. In the final registration, you will be asked if you agree to participate in translations.
All people available to translate will have a badge and can be identified if needed.
The plurilingualism commission will collect all availabilities and may invite these people to participate in translations during workshops. For plenaries, there will be headsets and certain translated interventions will be projected.

EXHIBITIONS

Nicoletta: I would like to know if I understood correctly regarding exhibitions. There are exhibitions requested from movements, there are also totems to present FIMEM and its movements, but there was also a request from Giancarlo for an intermediate exhibition: longer than totems but shorter than general exhibitions.

- **Lidia's response:** beyond exhibitions brought by movements and presentation totems, the "outdoor activities and cultural activities" group requested texts on the evolution of reforms in Italy.

  Explanation of the three types of exhibitions:

  1 – TOTEMS allowing the presentation of each movement adhering to Convergence(s). There will certainly be a totem presenting FIMEM, as well as others that can present the different associations;

  2 – thematic exhibitions that have already been announced;

  3 – an exhibition dedicated exclusively to people who have advanced active pedagogies in Italy.

Giancarlo: the cultural group's proposal for this third exhibition is this: it consists of a timeline with characters and a text of 1800 characters and a photo to be placed on a totem. It concerns only Italians.

FIMEM'S ROLE AT CONVERGENCE(S)

Juan: I think FIMEM has a great responsibility in the Convergence(s) project. We are a particular organization because we have relationships with many countries. This is verified through the invitation of African comrades but also thanks to the invitation of Teresita (from Mexico) who will speak about colonialism, and even if she does not intervene as a FIMEM member, we know well that she is part of it.

That is why, on behalf of the Executive Board (CA), I thank the FIMEM delegates and the commission who worked for this meeting and all FIMEM members who participated.

I commit to transmitting to the CA the information and discussions exchanged during this important meeting.

FINANCES

Anna: at the Convergence(s) Steering Committee, we discussed the financial question. We ask everyone to make their payment as quickly as possible because there are expenses that the biennial must already cover before it begins. We thank you for doing so.

Solange: we make a plea to allow the Ivorian group to make payments only when we are in Verona because money transfers are very complicated from Africa.

For RIDEF for example, a comrade sent her payment very early before the start of RIDEF and it still had not arrived at the Polish bank.

- **Answer:** yes, it is of course possible to make payments in cash on site for comrades coming from Africa to avoid additional costs and money transfer problems.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Marie-Céline: can each movement present a cultural activity during the biennial? Can African movements present something and is it within the framework of cultural activities?

- Lidia's response: yes, in the program there is a moment where movements can propose something. It is on Friday morning from 9:00 to 10:30 for free proposals from participants (in parallel with "Un po' di più").

5th agenda item
What orientations does FIMEM propose for Convergence(s)?

Anna: proposes that, regarding the development orientations of Convergence(s) which will be discussed a little later, everyone can write a few proposals or reflections and send them to the email address of commission 15 or to Anna and Léonard. Anna and Léonard will compile the sent reflections and share them with everyone. We will then try, during the Biennial breaks, to organize a meeting among all of us.

Francisco: I think that among the reflection proposals we should bring to Convergence(s), there are at least 3:
- the denunciation of the development of fascism on a local and global scale;
- wars, in Palestine and in the world;
- the importance that technologies take in school. Defending the school as the place where human encounters can develop, freed from technologies and the artificial.

6th agenda item
How to organize for Verona?

Anna: we propose to send the fundamental documents of Convergence(s) to participants so that they know the current positions of Convergence(s) and so that we can take a position. We will collect, Léonard and I, all the proposals you make.

Léonard: proposes creating a temporary WhatsApp group so that FIMEM members can meet during the biennial at a free moment.
Anna and Léonard are preparing minutes that will be verified by the speakers of this meeting and then distributed to all biennial participants and to the FIMEM Executive Board (CA).

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