

Who is Andines

Andines is a commercial association company for an other economy ; the head office is in Paris.

Its project was born in Bogotà, the capital of Columbia through discussion between some French people who were living precariously in this country, and some artisans, farmers and other Columbian workers continuously living precariously too.

We concluded that social justice can not exist without economic justice, and in order to reduce the level of insecure, it was necessary to take our situation in hands, notably on economic level.

Why ever not to set up two businesses in Columbia and in France to market products so that workers, products and services producers can live on their work as best as possible, in Columbia as in France ? This dream had just only come to light when we tried together to put it into effect because of necessity and beliefs.

Let say no more about these adventures of such a story...in Columbia and in France. Before and during we set up these two businesses in 1987, Interprex in Bogotà and Andines in Paris, we drew up our own definition of equity : a maximum of respect and economic justice, not only within our business but also in all the business transaction with our partners, downstream (products and services supplies) and upstream (customers). _ Moreover, we decided to give partners in difficulties priority and to create jobs in South America and in Europe. We knew that set up a company which was not aiming at seek exclusive individual or corporatist benefit but set up on viability and in the same time on social, equitable and united values, was a new initiative. Fortunately, and unlike a way of marketing "fair trade" in vogue, this requirement of equity in human exchanges goes back to the year dot.

Until nowadays, human history has experienced a multitude of socio-economic practices of this type. From our establishment, we had draft Company Status that defined our values and our commitment. To respect these commitments we did not find anything else that a full transparency of our activities for anyone involved or not in our delivery or production networks. By recognizing that we live in a global society increasingly unfair, we consider equity as an approach, a goal to get to closer to and a daily fight and job.

Although our commitments were considered at this time by our circle (and banks !) as a generous and pleasant challenge but utopian and lost right from the start, little by little our two companies could develop without any loan or subsidy, thank to their employees' work and the enthusiasm of some friends and citizens' who took part in this initiative too by bringing in their saving (by the way of financial shares or personal and collective loans). Andines nowadays....

25 years later, Interexpress still exists ! And other structures could have been created in other countries, included European countries based on an "equity for all" commitment, without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, age, beliefs, territory...

Andines is still in full operation, consisted of two additional structures : ☺ The first one Andines Cooperative is responsible for professional activity (set up and follow-up of channels, importation and distribution of products and services). It employs 7 salaried employees and is made up of 8 collaborators : 5 salaried employees and 3 corporate

bodies (Andines SA- public limited company-, Cooperative Garrigues, and la Socodem). ☺
The second one, Andines SA, is more and more responsible for the financial activities.
This public limited company is not speculative. Today this company is made up of 106
shareholders included 21 citizen co-operative (more than 300 people). Andines could not
have been able to maintain its development without this rallying. Nowadays this
development is still hard to ensure because of an insufficient working capital.
Andines, it is also a network of 200 groups of producers, collaborators, customers and
friends, with a turnover of one million euro in 2004. Andines also permits to keep and
generate hundreds of jobs, in France and in the 19 countries where our suppliers work.
Thanks to the best of the lot, Andines is now rooted in a large professional and united
network.

We immediately chose the company statutes and not the associative one, simply because
Columbian producers and we wanted to keep brotherly working relations, the most
professional and egalitarian relations as possible on the economic level, independent of
any financial, political or religious power. "Support" does not mean paternalistic, charitable,
or political assistance. By founding a company, it aimed at generate paid jobs, in Columbia
and in France, a country of 4 millions unemployed.