

‘Le Zeybu solidaire’, a fair trade market for Eybens



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To combat the closure of their food stores, residents of a district in the town of Eybens (France) have launched a cooperative, fair trade market for local farm produce. The project was a winner of the 2013 REVES European Excellence Award.



Eybens is a town of some 9,000 inhabitants, near Grenoble, in the department of Isère in south-eastern France. Faced with the closure of many of their local food shops, residents of the Maisons Neuves district started the community-led co-operative project, “Les Amis du Zeybu”.

Launched in 2009, the concept is simple: namely it aims to meet a demand locally, for quality food produce at reasonable prices. Additional goals are to ensure ‘fair trade’ for both producers and purchasers and to be environmentally sustainable e.g. by keeping transport costs to a minimum and ensuring the good management of any waste.

Solidarity

Held on two Tuesdays per month the Zeybu market sells certified locally-produced farm food. Distribution is organised by member volunteers. Meanwhile, customers who are all Zeybu members, collect their pre-ordered goods (selected in advance via the Internet). They use a special credit card and ‘currency exchange’ system.

An innovative social aspect is that as well as supplying the ordered goods, producers can, if they wish, also donate an additional 10% of their products free of charge. If requested, this can be added to a customer’s original order and paid for at the market with the card. Any money raised is then donated to a local association that credits the accounts of local people in difficulty. This means they too can collect pre-ordered items on market day using the card just like any other member. Importantly, there is no stigma attached as they are not identified.

Widening social links

Various other social activities have been developed around the Zeybu fair trade market. These include workshops focused on bread making (the Zeybu bakery), events such as a Christmas market and music festival and training courses to teach children about environmental issues.

Finally, the project has attracted widespread interest and support regionally, nationally and internationally. It was a winner of the 2013 REVES European Excellence Award, organised by the

European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy. It was also recognised as a ‘Social Innovation Village’ at the Social and solidarity economy (ESS in French) convention held in Paris, in June 2011.

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