

Ouishare's political commitment

Our observations

"Pessimism of reason, optimism of will"
Antonio Gramsci

Our era has much to make us pessimistic. Among climate change, the increase of inequalities and the trivialization of racism, the situation is alarming. And yet, nothing is moving. The forces of the status quo always win in the end, as the disappointing hopes of the Citizens' Climate Convention in France have shown us. And yet, we, Ouishare, are in contact with many people and organisations who are questioning and changing the situation. By acting on their own level but also on the scale of the system, these people and organisations encourage us to act, in turn : to cultivate the **"optimism of our will"**.

We have built our political project around three fundamental values that we believe are inseparable: **freedom, dignity and sharing**. This project is based on a key principle of action: to give their political dimension back to all the issues that affect us.

Why? Today, our entire political, economic and media system encourages **unbridled individualism**. Sharing my personal data? *«I have nothing to hide»*. Getting a meal delivered at 3am? *«That's my freedom»*. But how can such political issues be reduced to personal choices? Do we collectively tolerate political and commercial surveillance? Do we collectively accept the casualisation of the poorest workers?

In contrast to this phenomenon of depoliticisation, we affirm that **everything is political**. We are not autonomous individuals, but living, social beings, who live in communities and are deeply interdependent. The ways in which we express ourselves, eat, move and work affect the whole environment of which we are a part and in which we move and interact. They shape our lives in **society** and affect our individual and collective **freedoms**: they must therefore be decided **in common**.

Our mission is to reveal the political nature of our societal choices and to involve all parties concerned.

Our values

FREEDOM

"To be free is not just to throw off your chains; it is to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."
Nelson Mandela

We defend freedom.

The freedom of the Fralib workers who are taking back the power over their work tool. The freedom of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which has revealed many financial scandals such as the Panama Papers. The freedom of Bianca Wylie who is opposing Google's attempt to take over her city of Toronto.

We associate this **freedom**, with the power to act, which is, in the words of the 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza, the «power to exist». It is a power to - a power, a capacity - not a power over - a form of domination, of subjugation. The power to act of one feeds the power to act of others.

This **freedom** is therefore woven on a **collective** scale. It is by working for the freedom of others that I can increase my own power to act. Conversely, if my freedom enslaves others, I only diminish it: to have someone at your service is to alienate yourself.

This **freedom** does not mean the **absence of limits or constraints**: it is built on the recognition of the interdependencies that bind us together as human and non-human beings. Accepting the common framework that connects us to each other and to the environment we inhabit is the very condition for our individual and collective fulfilment.

And yet, freedom is nowadays claimed in a completely different sense. Freedom to produce and eat tomatoes in winter, freedom to buy a second home that is only occupied for one month a year, takes up land and drives up property prices, freedom to undertake anything and everything and to pollute... When freedom is invoked, it is to stimulate personal desires and feed the consumption machine on which our entire economic system is based. Taking a plane to travel is not freedom. It is a **privilege** and an act of **destruction**.

At the same time, between the phenomena of **social reproduction**, the **repeated states of emergency**, the **concentration of the media** in the hands of a handful of capitalists, the conditions for our individual and collective emancipation are not met.

It is for these reasons that in 2022 we, Ouishare, must continue to work to cultivate our freedom.

DIGNITY

"And I say to women three things, your economic independence is the key to your liberation, don't let anything pass in gestures, language, situations that attack your dignity, never resign yourself."

Gisèle Halimi

We defend the dignity of all.

The dignity of migrants and of those who, like the farmer Cédric Herrou, come to their aid, despite governmental dissuasion. The dignity of women and those who fight, like Adèle Haenel who stands up and leaves the Césars ceremony in the process of celebrating Roman Polanski's victory. The dignity of the people who sleep outside and of the people who go out to meet them, during night marauding.

This **dignity** is the fundamental quality and value of every human being on this planet. According to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, it refers to the fact that «*the person must never be treated only as a means, but always also as an end in itself*».

This **dignity** requires full consideration of one's peers, as equals. It focuses on the **singularities and experiences of people**, rather than seeing them as numbers and boxes to be ticked in a world dominated by numbers.

This **dignity** must be respected and cultivated in all circumstances, every day. It means refusing to **reduce our human relationships to commercial ones**. By refusing to seek profit at all costs.

This **dignity** implies working on ourselves: respecting the dignity of others means working on our own dignity and **making ourselves worthy of others** in our own actions. We must not give in to the torments of permanent acceleration, nor to the survivalist sirens of a supposed collapse. But rather: to act every day in a dignified and sincere way, anchored in the present moment. This is an ethic to which we subscribe: that of the *"dignity of the present"*.

And yet, human dignity today is reduced to mainly economic and social considerations. On the one hand, poverty is shameful and undignified, it is concealed. On the other hand, economic and social success is flaunted and maintains the phenomena of distinction: flaunting one's diploma from a "grande école" or one's status as a «high official», dressing in luxury boutiques or going to Club Med.

And all the while, the dignity of our lives as human beings is constantly being violated. How can we tolerate the fact that more than four million people will be poorly housed in France in 2021, and three hundred thousand homeless, both in summer and winter? How can we accept that a society penalises assistance to people in danger, whether they come from here or elsewhere?

It is for these reasons that in 2022 we, Ouishare, must continue to work to preserve our dignity.

SHARING

"The opposite of misery is not wealth. The opposite of misery is sharing."
Abbé Pierre

We defend sharing.

Sharing practiced on a daily basis by volunteers: in neighbourhood centres, amateur sports clubs or during nightly marauding. The sharing advocated by Framasoft in the face of the «enclosure» movement of modern times: that of the big technology companies. The sharing that cities such as Jackson, Mississippi, or neighbourhoods such as the Hypervoisins in Paris have established as a cardinal value.

This **sharing** involves the distribution of value and resources. We refuse the generalized competition that benefits some at the expense of others. **Capitalist and neo-liberal society is not inevitable**: many communities have never made the pursuit of profit a moral value.

This **sharing** also means **recognising what is common to us**. Some basic resources such as water, air, but also housing and food should be removed from the market sphere. We believe in the Commons, the idea that essential goods should be managed by communities of people, according to strict rules.

And yet, society is witnessing the perpetual shrinking of this value of sharing. In 2021, according to Oxfam, the richest 1% will own more than twice the wealth of 90% of the rest of the world's population. The **accumulation of wealth** among a handful of the ultra-rich and the increase in inequality undermines the principle of equity for all. Above all, it gives political power to the richest at the expense of the poorest.

At the same time, **common goods are being privatised** - resources such as land, air, water, but also knowledge. Patents hinder the sharing of knowledge and constrain our individual and collective freedom. Internet users are dependent on Google for their web browsing, farmers on agro-industries for their seeds, and patients on pharmaceutical companies for their treatments. Where sharing is a guarantee of emancipation, the capture of resources is a source of alienation.

It is for these reasons that in 2022 we, Ouishare, must continue to work for more sharing.

Our actions

We work with organisations and individuals who share our findings and values (freedom, dignity, sharing) and have the will to act at their level. We are a collective for critical **thinking** and **experimentation**.

Our mission? To politicise our societal choices.

How?

>>> How do we do this? Firstly, by including all the subjects we work on in their **social** and **ecological** dimensions.

>>> Secondly, by **involving** all the people concerned in discussions and decisions on these same subjects.

From food to access to energy, via the circular economy and new technologies, these are the questions we are asking all stakeholders: what consideration should be given to people? to workers? to resources? to the climate? To living ecosystems?

Our approach is both intellectual and experimental.

On the one hand, we contribute to **the debate** by producing articles, surveys and studies and by organising events ranging from debate evenings to multi-day festivals. We see ourselves as a form of media that contributes to deconstructing the myths that underlie our societal choices. In doing so, we nurture our collective **freedom**, understood as the power to act

On the other hand, we **accompany** public and private organisations on issues of general interest. We test and **experiment** with new mechanisms in specific territories and in collaboration with local residents and organisations.

Whatever our actions, we are committed to **giving a voice to those who are most affected**. We value their words and experiences. This is about respecting our **dignity**, theirs, but also about recognising the **political** nature of their personal situation.

Above all, we facilitate meetings and dialogue between people who do not, or rarely, speak to each other: residents, communities, companies, etc. This logic of **sharing** is in line with both the values and the operating mode of Ouishare, based on openness and collaboration.

The Ouishare Team