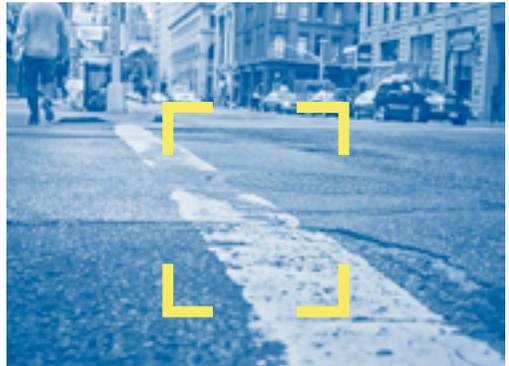


Hatento

Hate crimes
against homeless.



Executive report.



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Hate crimes against homeless.
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First edition: 2015

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Executive report.

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Presentation.

Dioni decided to go to sleep at a cash point because it was raining. It was at around two o'clock in the morning when four youths, coming from a nightlife area nearby, walked past the cash point. When they saw him, they turned around and opened the door, and "there I was caught sleeping in a bag and, as the bag was military, with no zipper, I did not have the time to do anything and got beaten.

They left happily and bragged to each other that 'we have beaten up a tramp'. While beating him they called him "a filthy tramp, who would infect the area, as if I had a disease or something". Dioni decided not to report the incident, because he thought that it would be useless. He did not sleep in that area again, because he was afraid that they would return.

Just as Dioni, many homeless people face such experiences, based on intolerance and prejudice towards their situation of extreme social exclusion. Hate incidents and crimes are acts of violence, hostility and intimidation directed at persons chosen for their identity. The fundamental motivation for such acts rests on intolerance, prejudice and rejection of certain groups of people, who are considered as different, as the others. In the case of homeless victims of a hate incident or crime, they would be selected because of the fact of living in the street, of being in a situation of grave social exclusion and vulnerability. However, what is the difference between a hate incident and a hate crime? In the latter case, behaviour characterised by violence, hostility or intimidation should be classified as a crime in the Spanish

Criminal Code. In the case of incidents, motivation is also based on intolerance and prejudice, but the behaviour does not qualify as a crime and cannot be classified as such in the Spanish Criminal Code. It is not for us to determine whether a particular type of behaviour is a crime or not, and whether such behaviour has the legal status of hate crime. In any case, the right to physical and moral integrity of homeless victims is clearly violated, without us even knowing with any certainty the extent of this phenomenon.

Different organisations dedicated to the provision of care to homeless persons and to the defence of human rights have formed Hatento, the Observatory on hate crimes against homeless people. The Hatento Observatory aims to combine the knowledge and resources of the organisations that are part thereof in order to act against this problem from a rights-based perspective and a clear focus on social innovation, through which we are able to provide new answers to old problems.

The generation of specific, rigorous and reliable knowledge on the extent and mechanisms underlying the specificity of hate crimes against the homeless is a priority for the Hatento Observatory. It is impossible to articulate comprehensive responses to any phenomenon without starting from a minimum amount of knowledge of it. In this sense, the prevalence of hate crimes against homeless people in Spain is unknown. Currently there is no reliable data source or research that analyses the scope, characteristics and impact of these crimes among people experiencing homelessness. This situation, which we exposed in the report *Muchas preguntas, algunas respuestas* (Many questions, few answers), is precisely what has led us to undertake the present study, the main results of which are summarised in this report.

METHO- DOLOGY

Objectives.

The general objective of this study has been to facilitate the generation of specific and reliable knowledge on the extent and mechanisms underlying the specificity of hate crimes against homeless people.

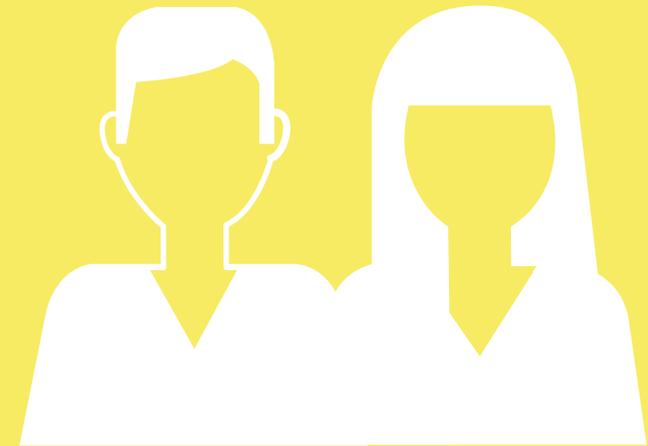
In more concrete terms, the specific objectives have been the following:

- To know the prevalence of hate crimes against homeless persons attended to in the resources and services of the member organisations of the Hatento Observatory.
- To explore the principal typologies of aggressions, humiliations or intimidations experienced by homeless people, motivated by intolerance and prejudice towards homelessness.
- To analyse the extent to which factors of a personal character could be significant in generating vulnerability to hate incidents and crimes.
- To carry out a detailed analysis of the hate incidents and crimes with the greatest impact on interviewees, allowing us to know:

- What these hate incidents or crimes consist in.
- Which are the most common places and times of the day for such acts.
- Who commits hate crimes against homeless people.
- What are the most frequent physical, emotional and practical consequences of such hate incidents or crimes.
- How witnesses react, in cases where there are any.
- The extent to which victims request help and report the crimes.

Sample characteristics.

261
Persons interviewed



Men	Women
81,6%	18,4%



Spanish nationality	Other nationality
56,3%	43,7%



Average age	Average duration of homelessness
46 years	51 months

Minimum: 20 Maximum: 80 Minimum: 3 Maximum: 312



Disability
33,5%

1. Population

People experiencing homelessness attended to by member organisations of the Hatento Observatory specialised in homelessness – ASSÍS Centre d’Acollida, Asociación Bokatas, RAIS Euskadi, RAIS Fundación and Zubietxe.

The size of the population attended to was 7,126 persons in 2013.

2. Sample size

The total number of homeless persons interviewed was 261.

3. Sampling error

For a confidence level of 95% (two sigma) and $P=Q$, the error for the total sample is ± 5.95 .

4. Sampling method

Incidental sampling was used for the selection of the sample, which is included among non-probability samples and is characterised as not based on the random selection of persons from the target population, so that it is not possible to determine whether the sample is representative, and the generalizability of the results is limited. In the case of incidental sampling, individuals from the target population are selected directly and intentionally in order to fulfil certain requirements. Thus, in the case of the present study, the following selection criteria were established:

- Having spent at least 3 months in a situation of homelessness.
- The selected sample should include at least 20% of women.
- The selected sample should include at least 40% of immigrants.

5. Information gathering

In-depth interviews were the chosen method of information gathering. Interviews were conducted by the organisations’ technical staff and volunteers, who received prior training for this purpose. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous.

Interviews were conducted by specialised organisations forming part of the Hatento Observatory in the cities of Alcobendas, Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Mostoles, Murcia, San Sebastian and Seville. The types of centres and services in which the interviews were conducted included streets, threshold day centres and short- and long-term accommodation centres.

6. Survey period

Interviews were conducted between 1 December 2014 and 30 April 2015.

**KEY
RESULTS**

2.1 Victimization.

47.1% of interviewees reported at least one incident or crime related to aporophobia during their history of homelessness. In fact, 81.3% of the latter have gone through this kind of experience on more than one occasion.

With regard to the type of victimisation reported by interviewees, the most common forms are insults and humiliating treatment, discriminatory treatment, physical assaults, harassment and intimidation and theft of property, with percentages above 20% in all cases. It is particularly noteworthy that one in three interviewees report that they have been insulted or received degrading treatment for the fact of living in the street, and almost one in five have been victims of a hate crime involving physical assault.

1 in 3 homeless persons have been insulted or received degrading treatment

1 in 5 homeless persons have been assaulted physically

The primary risk factor for a homeless person to become a victim of a hate incident or crime is to encounter another person who believes that the homeless do not deserve their respect and are willing to act accordingly. Those who commit hate crimes based on aporophobia are solely responsible for their behaviour. Beyond this unshakeable consideration, the Observatory Hatento considers, however, that homeless persons constitute a social group particularly vulnerable to hate crimes. In this sense, it is necessary to analyse the extent to which certain personal factors could be significant with regard

to the degree of vulnerability to hate incidents and crimes. To this purpose, we analysed whether statistically significant differences exist in the data on victimisation, addressing different variables.

Firstly, we identified statistically significant differences in data on victimisation between women and men, so that while 60.4% of the women interviewed reported at least one hate incident or crime, this percentage dropped to 44.1% in the case of men, constituting a very high percentage anyway. These results would indicate a greater degree of vulnerability among homeless women in relation to hate incidents and crimes.

Moreover, the country of origin also appears to play a discriminating role, and we observed statistically significant differences between Spanish homeless people and homeless people from other countries. Thus, while the percentage of victimisation among the former reached 57.8%, in the case of foreign homeless people 33.3% had suffered an incident or crime based on aporophobia. It is likely that the different exclusion itineraries followed by individuals have a lot to do with this degree of vulnerability.

Among the variables under analysis related to the health status, the only statistically significant differences have been observed in relation to problems caused by alcohol consumption, so that people with drinking problems would show greater vulnerability. We understand that this factor may be one of the most stigmatising symbols, which allow aggressors to identify more easily a situation of homelessness. At the same time, alcohol consumption has a direct impact on the alertness and ability to respond, which could hinder protective behaviours against potential attacks.

Finally, the duration of situations of homelessness also appear to be an important factor, so that among people reporting at least one hate incident or crime, the average amount of time in homelessness is significantly greater than in the case of people who have not suffered any experience of this type.

VULNERABILITY FACTORS

Homeless women present a higher degree of vulnerability



Spanish homeless persons suffer a greater risk of victimization



A higher percentage of homeless people with alcohol consumption problems have been victims



The average amount of time in situations of homelessness is over 5 years among victims



2.2 Analysis of experiences.

In order to gain insights into the characteristics of the hate incidents and crimes experienced by homeless people, interviewees were asked to describe the experience that struck them the most.

Of the 123 respondents who asserted that they had experienced at least one hate incident or crime, 121 agreed to tell us the experience that had impacted them most, representing 98.3% of respondents. Only two people asked not to pursue the interview because recounting the details of the victimisations suffered affected them emotionally. Seven of the experiences collected were finally dismissed due to inconsistencies in the stories. Therefore, the analysis presented below was undertaken of 114 reported experiences of hate incidents or crimes.

23.7% of the experiences correspond to hate incidents or crimes suffered by homeless women and 69.3% by people of Spanish nationality. The average age of people who recounted an experience to us was 46 years old and the average duration of situations of homelessness a little over five years.



Men	Women
23,7%	76,3%



Spanish nationality	Other nationality
69,3%	30,7%



Average age	Average duration of homelessness
46 years old	5 years

What did the hate incident or crime consist in?

Homeless people were insulted or treated in a degrading manner in 42.9% of the experiences of victimisation under analysis, and in 40.8% of cases they suffered physical assaults. It is necessary to clarify, however, that a single experience can include different types of victimisation and, in fact, physical assaults are most frequently accompanied by insults.

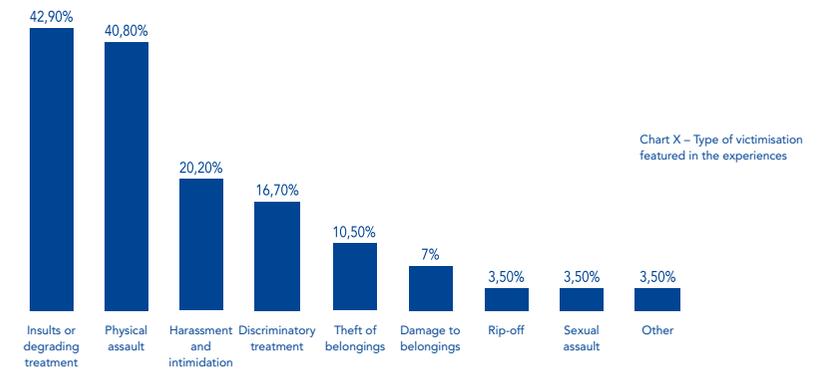
In fact, there were particularly offensive messages in 61.1% of the experiences under analysis. Their content was heterogeneous, but it is possible to identify some common patterns. An important part of the messages had to do with the expulsion from the space in which the victim found him/herself, with expressions such as “bastard, what are you doing here, get out of this town,” “go sleep in the dumping site” or “out of here, you piece of shit”. However, another group of messages consisted in direct threats, such as “come again tomorrow, and we’ll get you harder”, “we’ll kill you” or “if we see you here again we’ll burn you alive”. The last group of messages consisted of insults and degrading language, which frequently alluded to the situation of homelessness from a pejorative perspective. Examples include “this starving tramp can’t even defend himself”, “you are human scum”, “filthy beggar”, “tramp, slut” or “you’re a disgrace to Spain”.

According to the interviewees’ reports, in 40.7% of episodes, the person or persons involved carried some type of intimidating device, most frequently sticks, batons, stones and bottles.

Six out of ten hate incidents or crimes occurred during the night or early in the morning, when the level of vulnerability of homeless people is highest. At those times, the inflow of people on the streets is lower and an act that is as ordinary as sleeping becomes high-risk behaviour among homeless people. In fact, in 60% of cases, the place where the hate incident or crime occurred coincided with the place where the victim was sleeping. It is evident that aggressors take advantage of the added vulnerability of homeless people during their sleep.

However, with regard to the location where the hate incidents or crimes occurred, more than 50% of the experiences took place in the street and 14.90% in enclosed spaces on the street, such as cash points or doorways.

What did the hate incident or crime consist in?



Who are the aggressors?

According to the information provided in the interviews, 87% of those responsible for the hate incidents and crimes were male and 57% were between 18 and 35 years old.

In 28.4% of cases, persons responsible for the aggression or humiliation were partying youths; 10.1% of experiences related to the treatment received by police forces; Finally, Nazi groups were involved in 7.3% of experiences.

Who is responsible?

87% of persons involved in hate incidents or crimes were men.

57% were 18 to 35 years old

28,4%

Partying youths

10,1%

Police forces

7,3%

Persons linked to Nazi ideology

What were the consequences of such experiences?

Two out of three people who suffered a physical assault sustained injuries as a result. 28 interviewees detailed the types of injuries, and the most frequent that we observed were bruises, broken bones and loss of teeth.

Regarding the emotional impact of the hate incident or crime, only 5.3% of victims reported feeling indifference to the experience they shared with Hatento Observatory. Anger toward those responsible for the acts is the emotion most frequently referred to, affecting 45% of the victims. It is also noteworthy that almost 30% claim to feel helpless or powerless to do anything about it. These types of experiences could be aggravating the levels of disempowerment already felt by homeless people.

What were the consequences of such experiences?

2 out of 3

homeless persons assaulted physically presented injuries

45%

felt anger towards those responsible

30%

felt helpless or powerless to do anything about it

63,8%

changed the place where they spent the night as a protection measure

53% of victims indicated that they changed some of their habits, and among them, 63.8% changed the place where they spent the night as a protection strategy.

Where there witnesses?

Two out of three experiences were witnessed by other people. In 68.4% of these cases, the witnesses did nothing. These data may reflect the indifference of society in the face of violations of the rights of homeless people.

2 out of 3 experiences were witnessed by other persons



In 68.4% of these cases, the witnesses did nothing

Did victims resort to any type of service or received care?

63% of persons who reported a hate incident or crime did not resort to any type of service or specialised organisation. 43.1% of them considered that it would be useless and 19.4% did not trust any service. A priori, it is not a matter of ignorance about resources, but of trust in their usefulness and responsiveness. It is important to tailor our responses to the needs of homeless persons who have suffered this type of experience.

Did victims request support or help from some type of service or resource?

63%

Did not resort to any service

43,1%

think that it is useless

19,4%

do not trust any service

37%

Relied on at least one type of service

57,1%

Police services

54,8%

Health services

Among those who did resort to a service or organisation, 57.1% and 54.8% relied on the attention of the police and health services, respectively. Care organisations for homeless people are the third type of resource that victims rely on in such situations.

Regarding the assessment of the care provided, 87% of respondents who resorted to the healthcare system considered that the attention was somewhat or very satisfactory. Conversely, satisfaction with the care provided by police services was much lower, so that 68.4% considered that the attention was little or not satisfactory. The reasons for dissatisfaction were that no solutions were offered, they were told that nothing could be done, or they simply were not believed.

Did they report these acts?

Only 15 out of the 114 persons who recounted in detail a hate incident or crime filed a complaint. None of them informed us of any conviction. Of the 47 persons who recounted a physical assault, only eight referred to filing a complaint, representing 17 of the former. Of the four people who suffered a sexual assault, only one filed a complaint.

Finally, 70% of persons who did not report these acts consider that reporting serves no purpose and 11% were afraid of possible reprisals from the aggressors.



**CONCLU-
SIONS**

1.

Almost **half of homeless people may have suffered assaults, humiliation and intimidation motivated by intolerance and prejudice** towards their extreme social exclusion on the part of their aggressors. Sleeping and living in the street involves a component of structural violence, further exacerbated by the direct violence to which they are subjected.

2.

Particular **factors of a personal or socio-demographic character seem to indicate a greater degree of vulnerability** to hate incidents and crimes. Being female, of Spanish origin, having spent a longer period in a situation of homelessness and having problems of alcohol consumption appear to be related to a greater likelihood of having suffered these types of experience. Understanding the mechanisms underlying this relationship would facilitate the prevention of this phenomenon and the protection of persons in situations of greater vulnerability.

3.

Identifying the most common patterns and specificities of hate crimes committed against the homeless, regarding the types of aggressors, locations, times of day, etc., is fundamental in designing **safety and protection policies**.

4.

Building trust in the services and resources that are currently available, adapting their responses to the needs and characteristics of homeless people is essential if we want to repair the damage suffered and support the victims of such crimes.

5.

Organisations providing care to the homeless must have an inescapable role in preventing and addressing hate incidents and crimes. Undoubtedly, **the emotional support to victims should be a priority**, given the significant impact that these experiences have on victims.

6.

Bringing the reality of homeless persons closer to citizens, breaking down stereotypes and fostering empathy is an indispensable step to prevent hate incidents and crimes.

7.

It is essential to remember **that the right to housing is directly related to the quality of life, the safety and health of people**, so that it interacts with the other fundamental rights. A democratic society cannot afford to abandon part of its citizenry beyond its margins.



What is hatento?

The Hatento Observatory brings together the forces, knowledge and resources of various organizations providing care to homeless persons and for the defence of human rights, in order to generate a reliable knowledge base on hate crimes committed against persons in situations of extreme social exclusion, and to act against them.

¿Who we are?



APDHE

NGO dedicated to human rights: advocacy and promotion, prevention and prosecution of violations, in Spain and elsewhere.



ASSÍS Centre d'Accollida

Voluntary association based in Barcelona, which is dedicated to the comprehensive care of homeless persons, providing shelter, social accompaniment and assistance.



Asociación Bokatas

Non-profit social, secular and independent organisation which aims to end the social exclusion of homeless persons.



Asociación RAIS Euskadi

Non-profit, secular and independent organisation, which aims to achieve the social and professional integration of people at risk of social exclusion in the Basque Country.



RAIS Fundación

Coordinating entity of the Hatento Observatory, working to improve the quality of life of homeless people.



UNIJEPOL

The National Union of Heads and Managers of the Local Police (Unijepol) is a national association that gathers commanders and officers of the local police, as well as other professionals, managers and technicians who work or have professional competencies relating to Local Security.

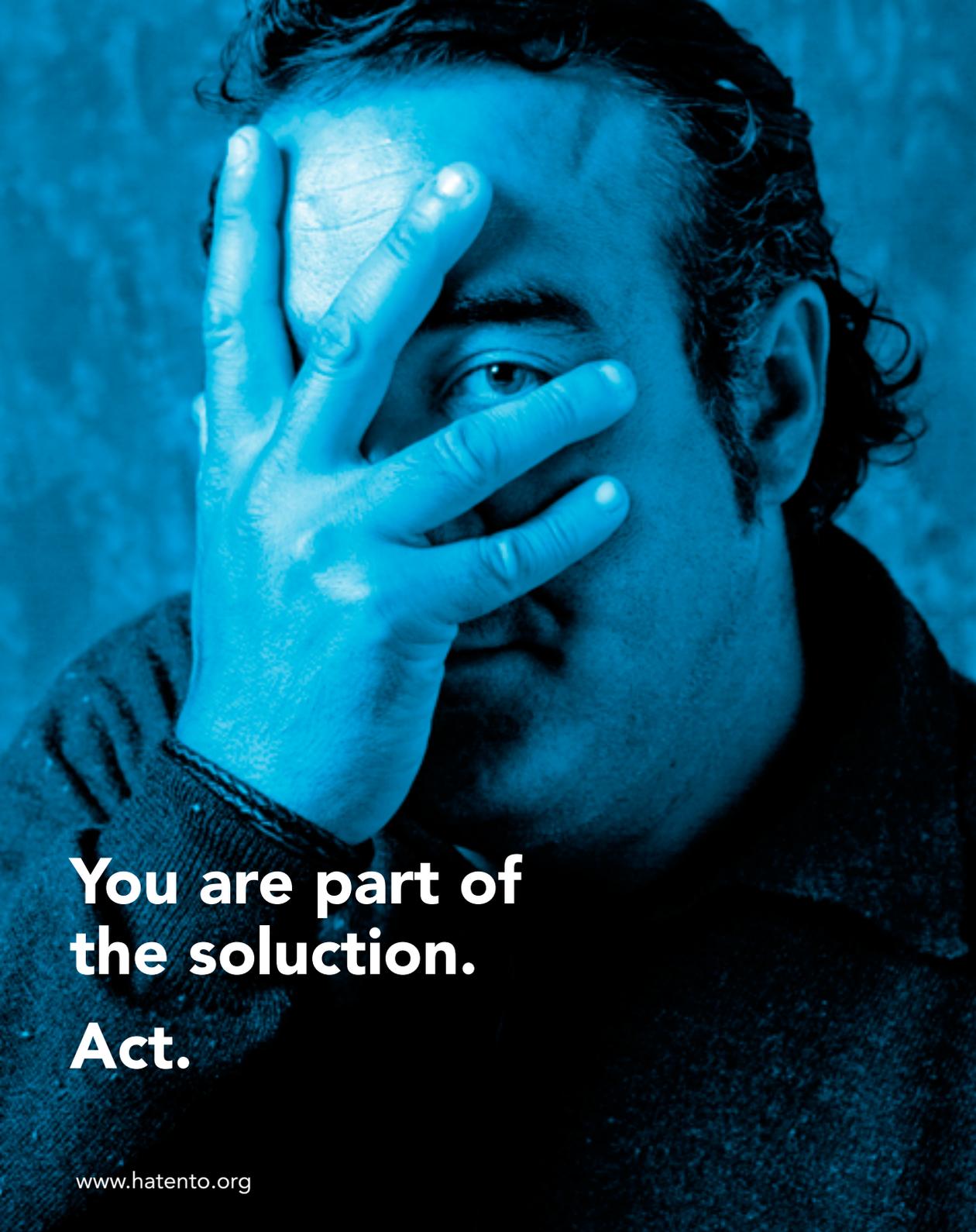


Asociación Zubietxe

The Association Zubietxe's mission is to facilitate the social integration of persons at risk of exclusion, providing opportunities and individual accompaniment in each process towards full citizenship and improving the quality of life.







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the solution.
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