

BHUTAN

Child Protection (Gender) Thematic Report

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BMIS Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey
BNCA Bhutan Narcotic Control Agency

BNF Bhutan Nuns Foundation
BNLI Bhutan National Legal Institute
C4D Communication for Development

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child CSHD Comprehensive School Health Division

CSO Civil Society Organizations
DYS Department of Youth and Sports

GBV Gender-based Violence

NCWC National Commission for Women and Children

NSB National Statistics Bureau
MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MOE Ministry of Education MOH Ministry of Health

MOHCA Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
MOLHR Ministry of Labour and Human Resources

RBP Royal Bhutan Police

RENEW Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women

RGoB Royal Government of Bhutan SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

UN United Nations

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund VAC Violence against Children VAW Violence against Women

YDF Bhutan Youth Development Fund

Executive Summary

Children consitute 37 per cent of the estimated total population of 757,042 in Bhutan.¹ The rights of children, youth and women are reflected in the 2008 Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which the country has ratified. The Government has codified into law the protection and care that Bhutanese families have always provided for their children in the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA).

Yet simultaneously, the forces of modernization and urbanization are putting increasing pressure on the traditional dynamics of family life. This is posing new threats to the safety and well-being of children and women. UNICEF, through its Child Protection programme is supporting the Royal Government to address protection-related risks and threats, as well as the empowerment of girls and women in a holistic way.

To this end, UNICEF Bhutan received US\$54,552.07 under the country's child protection programme to support Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls and Women. In 2016, the country office was able to achieve key results for children, especially through empowerment of teenage girls, and their protection from violence, abuse and neglect. Some of the key results are outlined below:

- At the policy and enabling environment level, Bhutan initiated significant steps to strengthen protection of children. The first-ever national research on violence against children was completed in 2016. The research provided substantive data on the prevalence of violence, including its location, perpetrators, typology and variance. The findings will guide the development of a National Child Protection Strategy as well as a revised National Plan of Action for Child Protection (NPACP). Towards strengthening and harmonizing legislation to enhance protection for children, the Women, Children and Youth Committee of the Parliament undertook a review of relevant legislations such as the Penal Code, Child Care and Protection Act and the Marriage Act. As a result a number of legislative changes are expected, including the repeal of the existing Marriage Act and drafting of a new, and more genderjust legislation that also addresses child marriage.
- At the services, system and supply level, significant progress was made in institutionalizing capacity among child protection service providers in a more systematic manner to address the limited capacity of partners on child rights and child protection. A comprehensive training programme for police on child and women friendly procedures has been introduced for in-service police personnel. It is also being institutionalized into the curriculum of the Royal Bhutan Police training institute. With the support of a pool of trainers on child rights and child protection, the capacity and knowledge has also been strengthened for child protection partners both in the government and civil society.
- At the demand promotion level, for advocacy and awareness raising on improving child protection and empowerment, there have been numerous activities on enhancing teenage girls' civic participation and leadership, strengthening skills of women and girls to protect themselves and promoting positive attitudes of adults towards violence against girls.

Bhutan OA6 (Child Protection - focused on Gender/Girls' Empowerment) Jan-Dec 2016

¹ Population Projections 2005 – 2030, NSB, 2005

Strategic Context of 2016

The enactment of the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) in 2011 laid the foundations of a national child protection system in Bhutan. The focus now is on strengthening methods and capacities for identifying, preventing and responding to protection risks.

Up to now, the Government, with the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and its partners including UNICEF, have established and strengthened programmes to follow a 'vertical' process for dealing with specific issues such as: corporal punishment, child labour, child/early marriage, trafficking, and children in conflict with the law. The child (and women) protection systems are now being strengthened to address risks and threats in a holistic way to support comprehensive prevention and response.

UNICEF's Country Programme Document (CPD) 2014 – 2018, is closely aligned with the Royal Government of Bhutan's national planning cycle and has been based on robust analysis and evidence. The work followed a bottleneck analysis process focusing on barriers across three dimensions: i) Policy and enabling environment; ii) Services, system and supply; and iii) Demand promotion. The result is a more relevant and evidence-informed balance between upstream policy engagement, strengthening service delivery, and community level empowerment. Thus, UNICEF Bhutan's Child Protection programme contributes through the One UN Programme (2014 – 2018) to the following outcomes and outputs:

Outcome 2: By 2018, increased and equitable access, utilization, and quality of inclusive essential social services for all with a focus on sustaining the MDGs and addressing emerging challenges.

Output 2.7: In-school and out of school youth have increased access to and utilize youth friendly services.

Outcome 3: By 2018, communities and institutions strengthened at all levels to achieve enhanced gender equality, empowerment, and protection of women and children.

- **Output 3.1:** Strengthened legal and policy environment to advance the rights and protection of women and children.
- **Output 3.3:** Boys, men, girls, and women have increased awareness of and positive attitudes towards preventing and eliminating gender-based violence.
- **Output 3.4:** Institutions, communities, families, children in minimum four districts have the knowledge, skills, resources, mechanism to prevent, respond to violence against children.
- **Outcome 4:** By 2018, governance institutions and communities exercise the principles of democratic governance at the national and local levels with a focus on inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision making.
 - **Output 4.3:** Women and youth have increased opportunities to participate in leadership as well as in policy making, planning and implementation of development plans.

The key specific areas of focus under Child Protection are:

- Strengthen legal and policy environment to advance the rights and protection of women and children and mainstream gender in key ministries, autonomous bodies and non-governmental organizations.
- Develop the capacities of children and youth to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV), violence against women and children (VAW/C) and domestic violence through delivery of multisectoral services.
- Building strong foundations towards participation and engagement of Bhutan's youth in civic life and governance by providing opportunities for teenage girls to come together and initiate collective actions that will stimulate girls to be their own champions of change.
- Strengthen engagement of civil society and religious organizations to promote empowerment of women and girls and advocate for implementation of existing laws, policies and programmes that engage men, boys and youth.

The Child Protection Programme contributed to the 2030 Development Agenda. The focus of the programme is especially on the following goals and indicators:

	5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
	5.4 Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable	16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

The programme contributes to **Outcome 6** of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2014 – 2017): Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children. It also contributes to **target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals**: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.

Implementing partners for the Child Protection Programme are: National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) under the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Commission for Monastic Affairs (*Dratshang Lhengtshog*), Royal Bhutan Police (RBP), and non-government organizations like Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW), Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF) and Bhutan Nuns Foundation (BNF).

Results in the Outcome Area

Output 3.1: Strengthened legal and policy environment to advance the rights and protection of women and children.

- The National research on violence against children and the research on online sexual exploitation of children in five countries in South Asia including Bhutan was completed in 2016;
- Towards strengthening and harmonizing legislation to enhance protection for children, UNICEF
 engaged with, and provided technical assistance to the Women, Children and Youth Committee of the
 Parliament to review relevant legislations such as the Penal Code, Child Care and Protection Act and
 the Marriage Act.
- UNICEF supported NCWC in developing guidelines for shelter management to ensure safe homes for children in difficult circumstances in line with the Child Care and Protection Act.

Output 3.3: Boys, men, girls, and women have increased awareness of and positive attitudes towards preventing and eliminating gender-based violence.

- To increase awareness and promote positive attitudes for prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, 335 young nuns from ten nunneries in six districts were trained on child protection, and were informed about the services available to victims of violence and children in difficult circumstances.
- With 11 of the 20 districts having a Women and Child Protection Desk/Unit, a review of the Desks/Units
 was initiated in November 2016. The review will directly contribute towards improving the delivery of
 services in the existing desks, and incorporate the recommendations before extending such facilities
 to the remaining nine districts.

Output 3.4: Institutions, communities, families, children in minimum four districts have the knowledge, skills, resources, mechanism to prevent, respond to violence against children.

- UNICEF worked with the Ability Bhutan Society to strengthen protection of children with disabilities.
 More than 800 teachers and 335 professionals working in the field of disability were trained to enhance their knowledge about vulnerabilities and ways of protecting children with disabilities.
- At the annual education conference, 75 school guidance counsellors and officers, National Commission for Women and Children, and UNICEF discussed the findings of the research on violence against children in Bhutan. Among other child protection issues, the conference deliberated on corporal punishment and positive disciplining, and identified strategies to address these concerns within schools.
- A two-day consultative workshop on social work education was conducted jointly by the Royal University of Bhutan and UNICEF, attended by 30 participants from the Government, civil society and UN agencies. A study tour to three premier social work institutions in India resulted in a concept paper outlining steps towards initiating social work programmes in Bhutan. A Bachelors' programme and a tailored programme for existing untrained social workers will be designed and rolled out over the next two years.

Output 4.3: Women and youth have increased opportunities to participate in leadership as well as in policy making, planning and implementation of development plans.

- Based on a systematic needs assessment carried out in 2015, UNICEF worked closely with the Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) under the Ministry of Education to roll out a comprehensive training package for out-of-school adolescents and youth.
- UNICEF supported Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) to conduct multimedia production and photography trainings for 69 out-of-school adolescents and youth (Girls: 26; Boys: 43) in Paro and Thimphu districts.
- UNICEF supported the local NGO "Respect Educate Nurture and Empower Women" (RENEW) in expanding the Druk Adolescents' Initiative for Sexual Awareness Network (DAISAN) to 15 districts.

Youth groups in five districts (Dagana, Gasa, Tsirang, Sarpang and Trongsa) reached at least 400 adolescents and youth.

- UNICEF supported the local NGO Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF) to develop a manual on resilience building of vulnerable adolescents and youth. It is aimed at increasing emotional resilience and decreasing risky and self-harm behaviour among adolescents and youth. The curriculum was piloted in two districts (Thimphu and Samste) for over 60 out-of-school adolescents and youth.
- Specifically from this grant: UNICEF supported the DYS and YDF to promote direct engagement of teenage girls by training them in leadership skills. The training, organized in three districts (Pemagatshel, Gelephu under Sarpang and Paro) for over 100 teenage girls helped bolster their confidence, increased the chance of girls participating in diverse programmes and thereby encouraged them to take up innovative community-based interventions.

UNICEF Bhutan together with partners, was able to provide an opportunity for marginalized and atrisk teenage girls to share their experiences of abuse, sexual exploitation, body image and violence as well as their strengths and daily lived realities in a safe and non-threatening environment. It also helped in nurturing and reinforcing femininity as a positive identity. Such pilot training for teenage girls helped to demonstrate their confidence, compete for the leadership of existing and new youth groups and increased level of participation in the decision making process both in their school and communities.

Challenges

While key legislations have been put into place, implementation is a continual challenge as the capacity of key partners are limited.

Financial Analysis

With the support provided through the thematic funds, UNICEF Bhutan has been able to achieve the results towards protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse and empowering women and girls. The tables below provide the financial analysis of the contributions.

Table 1: Planned Budget by Outcome Area
Outcome Area 06: Child Protection
Bhutan
Planned and Funded for the Country Programme 2016 (in US Dollars)

Intermediate Results	Funding Type	Planned Budget
Unknown	RR	164,570.00
Unknown	ORR	703,185.00
Total Budget		867,755.00

Table 2: Country-level thematic contributions to outcome area received in 2016
Outcome Area 06: Child Protection
Bhutan

Thematic Contribution received for Focus Area 08 (Gender Equality) in 2016 (in US Dollars)

Donors	Grant Number	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Norwegian Committee for UNICEF	SC1499080002	54,552.07	51,954.35
Total		54,552.07	51,954.35

Table 3: Expenditures in the Outcome Area
Outcome Area 06: Child Protection
Bhutan
2016 Expenditures by Key-Results Areas (in US Dollars)

	xpenditure Amount		
Organizational Targets	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources	All Programme Accounts
06-02 Child Protection systems	32,529.00	75,725.00	108,254.00
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	61,497.00	54,965.00	116,462.00
06-04 Justice for Children	2,757.00	65,718.00	68,475.00
06-07 Child Protection - strengthen families and communities	315.00	11,105.00	11,420.00
06-08 Child Protection - General	133,167.00	103,772.00	236,939.00
Grand Total	230,265.00	311,285.00	541,550.00

Table 4: Thematic expenses by programme area

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area Hierarchy	Bhutan - 0490
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection
Donor Class Level2	Thematic
Row Labels	Expense
Other Resources - Regular	170,017
06-02 Child Protection systems	27,232
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	17,536
06-04 Justice for children	3
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	1
06-08 Child Protection # General	125,245
Grand Total	170,017

Table 5: Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Bhutan - 0490
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection
Row Labels	Expense
06-02-01 Child Protection systems strengthening	77,020
06-03-01 Violence against children (general)	90,871
06-03-03 Prevent and address gender based violence, sexual	4,615
abuse and sexual exploitation 06-03-06 Prevent and address child labour	957
06-04-01 Access to justice (for all children)	47,482
06-07-03 Child Protection focused on care and support for children	,
with disabilities	7,879
06-08-01 Child Protection # general	198,160
08-01-06 Planning # General	34,719
08-02-06 Secondary analysis of data	2,499
08-02-08 Monitoring # General	2,949
08-03-01 Cross-sectoral Communication for Development	11,921
08-04-03 Early Childhood Development # General	203
08-06-02 Building global/regional/national stakeholder evaluation capacity	779
08-07-01 Adolescent development # General	47,928
08-09-06 Other # non-classifiable cross-sectoral activities	1,984
09-02-05 CO Programme coordination	2,984
09-02-06 CO Advocacy and communication	6,870
5012 Support to Dev Info and other databases	21
5903 Support to C4D interventions for multiple OTs within FA5	238
7921 Operations # financial and administration	1,471
Grand Total	541,550

Table 6: Planned budget for 2017
Outcome Area 6: Child Protection
Bhutan
Planned Budget and Available Resources for 2017

Output	Funding Type	Planned Budget	Funded Budget	Shortfall
0.7 Vandh Erian dla Osmica	RR	33,156.00	60,000.00	-26,844.00
2.7 Youth Friendly Services	OR	170,117.00	3,841.00	166,276.00
3.1 Right/Protection of Children	RR	29,230.00	14,996.00	14,234.00
3.1 Right/Protection of Children	OR	131,680.00	32,683.00	98,997.00
3.3 Positive Attitude - GBV	RR	23,384.00	41,700.00	-18,316.00
	OR	108,270.00	82,300.00	25,970.00
3.4 Establishing CP System	RR	141,187.00	53,289.00	87,898.00
	OR	594,915.00	429,878.00	165,037.00
4.3 Women & Youth Led Group	RR	19,255.00	40,000.00	-20,745.00
	OR	146,801.00	70,677.00	76,124.00
Sub-total Regular Resources		246,212.00	209,985.00	36,227.00
Sub-total Other Resources- Regular		1,151,783.00	619,379.00	532,404.00
Total for 2017		1,397,995.00	829,364.00	568,631.00

Future Work Plan

In line with the priorities of the One Programme and the UNICEF Strategic Plan, the Child Protection programme will support the following key interventions in 2017:

Outcome 3: By 2018, communities and institutions strengthened at all levels to achieve enhanced gender equality, empowerment, and protection of women and children.

Output 3.4: Institutions, communities, families, children in minimum four districts have the knowledge, skills, resources, mechanism to prevent, respond to violence against children

- UNICEF will continue to strengthen the capacities of agencies who work for teenage girls, so that their acquired knowledge and skills will enhance protection services for women and girls.
- In partnership with Royal Bhutan Police, UNICEF will work on sensitizing police on gender-based violence to strengthen their knowledge and skills of dealing with women and teenage girls and further advocate on implementing the curriculum for child and women friendly policing.

Outcome 4: By 2018, governance institutions and communities exercise the principles of democratic governance at the national and local levels with a focus on inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision making.

Output 4.3: Women and youth have increased opportunities to participate in leadership as well as in policy making, planning and implementation of development plans.

- UNICEF will partner with local NGOs such as RENEW to work towards reaching out to and engaging with girls who attend schools (including nunneries) as well as those who have dropped out-of-school.
- In partnership with NGOs, UNICEF will offer an opportunity for teenage girls to put their new acquired skills into practice through the expansion of an already existing grant programme meant to encourage young people to take up innovative community-based interventions.
- To enhance participation and empower women and girls, UNICEF will support Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education to strengthen services and facilities in youth centres and further encourage to initiate activities that interest adolescent mother and teenage girls.
- UNICEF through its partners, will also strive to reach marginalized and at-risk teenage girls to provide them opportunities to explore their potential in a safe and non-threatening environment.

Programme approach

Building on the gains made so far, the child protection programme in the current programme period (2014 – 2018) will work on institutionalizing strong systems to keep children safe with a high priority on demand promotion for child protection among communities, families and children. To this end, UNICEF will:

- i. Facilitate monitoring and reporting on National Plan of Action for Child Protection and implementation of the concluding observations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child; advocate for increased commitment to child protection and child rights as social policy priority; support enhanced evidence base for child protection and its incorporation into child protection policy and legislative reform.
- ii. Promote and engage children and youth as agents of change to eliminate gender-based violence; empower children and youth to explore and address gender-based violence including by strengthening peer-support mechanisms such as youth-led groups. Develop a diversified partnership framework for addressing violence.
- iii. Model a comprehensive child protection system at the district level with all elements operational and functioning in synergy including establishment of services; conduct equity analysis to

understand and track determinants and bottlenecks to successful operation of child protection systems at the district level. Support analysis and research to identify norms and practices that hinder essential protection practices and support development of communication for development strategies for behaviour change. Train children to know and claim their rights through training and create space for open discussion of protection rights, including through youth-led interventions.

Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Bhutan expresses gratitude for the generous thematic contribution from the Norwegian Committee for UNICEF. The continued support through thematic contributions for the child protection programme specifically focused on gender equality and girls' empowerment has effectively increased protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and empowered women and girls in Bhutan. UNICEF, on behalf of all the women and children in Bhutan, thank the donors for their support.

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Annexes

Annex I: Human Interest Story - Being Fair to the Fairer Sex

By itself, a training on empowering young girls in rural Pemagatshel is a farfetched event. It sows the first seeds of what may germinate in to something of powerful social consequence.

While Bhutanese women enjoy equal opportunities and rights as men, gender gaps exist in all spheres. Women lag behind in terms of access and meaningful participation in all fronts, including politics. The six women in parliament make up only 14 per cent of a 72-member parliament. The gap is even wider at the local level with less than 1 per cent compared to 99.5 per cent male participation. Women are profoundly underrepresented in governance both at the local and national levels.

Against this backdrop, a UNICEF initiative called 'Leadership Skills Training for Teenage Girls, and Teenage Girls – Bhutan's Champions of Change' is seeking to educate and empower young girls and in turn entire communities at large. As part of the initiative, a three-day Leadership Skills Training for Teenage Girls was held in Pemagatshel Middle Secondary School (PMSS) from October 27-29 in 2016. The training aimed to reach out to teenage girls with specially targeted outreach activities.



25 girls participating in the Leadership Skills Training for Teenage Girls held in Pemagatshel Middle Secondary School in October 2016. "The training aims to reach out to teenage girls with specially targeted outreach activities that can help build their leadership skills" says UNICEF's Sonam Wangchuk one of the trainers at the workshop.

The 25 participants were educated on topics ranging from stress management, solving problems, effective communication, dealing with criticism to gender roles and stereotypes, making personal connections with their communities and skills for personal growth. Partnering with community-based organizations, UNICEF is helping teenage girls gain confidence and acquire competence to compete for the leadership of existing and new youth groups and their activities such as democracy clubs at schools and the Children's Parliament.

"Such initiatives are important because they prepare young girls for leadership roles early on in life," says Pema Norbu, the Vice Principal of PMSS, where the first-of-its-kind training was conducted. "These trainings should be carried out all across the country by UNICEF because the schools are not in a position to do so on their own." As for the young girls, the training is visibly altering the way they see themselves and boosting their confidence.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to college. But, now, I want to study further and make a name for myself and a difference in my community," says Sonam Choden, a Class IX student at PMSS.

Sonam's comment underlines a marked difference from popular attitudes towards women in recent years, says Roma Pradhan of the Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF).



The girls at the leadership training workshop took part in group work to discuss on the competence that are needed to compete for the leadership of existing and new youth groups.

"In 2008, after Bhutan's transition to democracy and during the build-up to the first general election, not a single person in Bhutan even considered the possibility of seeing a woman Prime Minister," she says. "Respondents, women included, felt that women were unsuited and incapable of taking up such decision-making roles."

Roma explains that there were many reasons why such a mentality persisted. As examples, she cited the lower literacy rate of women and the fact that the arena of political or public service had always been a male-dominated preserve.

With the 2013 elections when Bhutan elected its first woman minister, the Bhutanese mind-set clearly appears to have changed. As opposed to the 2008 elections, where there were only 10 registered women candidates, the 2013 elections attracted a total of 30 women candidates including two women party leaders.

"This change in attitude and reality makes the timing of the Leadership Skills Training for Teenage Girls especially pertinent," says Roma Pradhan.

Jamyang Cheki, 16, a Class XI student of Nangkor Central School who underwent the training, says such trainings discuss subjects that aren't usually broached in the classroom.

"Issues like domestic violence and abuse, teenage pregnancy and changes in the female body are rarely discussed in school. It is educative and very helpful when we are taught about all these things," she says. Jamyang believes that such trainings need to be taken to girls all over Bhutan so as to reverse the misconception that leadership is a masculine activity.

Such misconceptions are widely seen as the main hurdles obstructing women from taking up leadership positions not just in Bhutan but throughout Southeast Asia. Illiteracy or lower literacy, women's extra work burden, social and cultural prejudices, stereotypical attitude, financial dependence on men, limited exposure and access to information continue to impair their effective political participation. It is generally believed that this is compounded by gender-neutral laws and policies that have not created an enabling environment for political empowerment of women.

With programmes such as the recent training in Pemagatshel, agencies like UNICEF are now spearheading a rising tide that empowers young girls to be their own champions of change. It is a tide that recognizes that men and women have different needs, interests and priorities and so advocates the need for female political participation. It is a tide that is slowly but surely bringing about a change for a more positive and progressive society.

Mitra Raj Dhital ©UNICEF Bhutan/2016

Annex II: Donor Feedback Form

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