

VOICES

SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.



The newsletter
for partners of
Developing
Countries Farm
Radio Network

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HIV/AIDS AND FOOD SECURITY

The impact of HIV and AIDS on food production and rural households in sub-Saharan Africa is undeniable. AIDS generally hits people in their most productive years, between the ages of 15 and 49. People become too sick to farm and feed themselves and their families. Significant losses in food production also result from deaths in families, and time taken to attend funerals and other mourning rituals. For example, a study in Namibia showed that time taken for mourning can contribute up to a 25% loss of production during short, critical periods of food production. Among other factors that contribute to reduced food production are the following:

- Families are forced to sell resources such as livestock and tools to pay for medical expenses.
- Women may lose access to land and other assets.
- Women's workload increases significantly as a result of their double role as farmers and caregivers.
- As members of rural households die, important traditional knowledge about farming and crop varieties is lost.

The impact of AIDS on food security has been well documented. A study carried out in Zimbabwe (Kwaramba, 1997) revealed that agricultural output declined by nearly 50 per cent in AIDS-affected households. Maize production declined by 61 per cent and vegetable production by 49 per cent as a result of illness and deaths from AIDS.

Reduction of output in a household with an AIDS death (Zimbabwe)

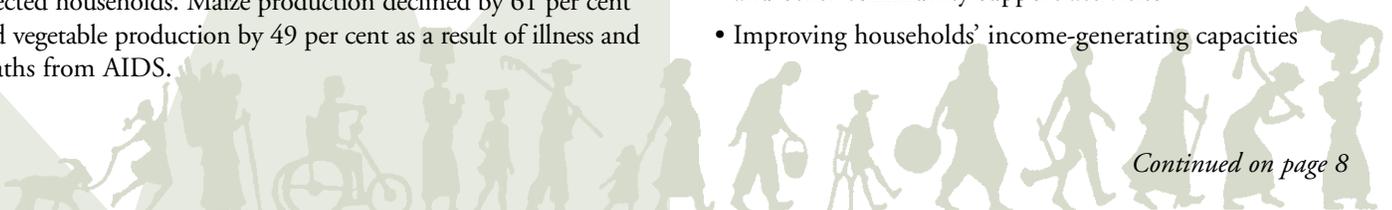
CROP	REDUCTION IN OUTPUT
Maize	61%
Cotton	47%
Vegetables	37%
Cattle	29%

Source: Kwaramba, P., "The socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on communal agricultural production systems in Zimbabwe." (Zimbabwe Farmers' Union and Friederich Ebert Stiftung, Harare, December 1997)

A review of the literature (UNAIDS, 1999) documents common coping strategies used by rural African households, strategies such as: reduced consumption of food; substitution with cheaper food alternatives; increased reliance on wild foods; and income diversification. The report recommends a number of policies to strengthen the ability of rural households to cope with HIV and AIDS, such as:

- Promoting labour- and capital-saving technologies that are already being used locally (natural pest control, less labour-intensive cultivation techniques)
- Developing technologies for low-income households in the smallholder farming sector (selection of appropriate crop varieties, concentration on high-value, drought-resistant food crops)
- Strengthening draught power and labour-sharing clubs, and other community support activities
- Improving households' income-generating capacities

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Tips on HIV AND AIDS PROGRAMMING

In the January 2002 issue of Voices we published '23 steps to success' for AIDS programming. Here we re-visit some of those, and add a few more guidelines for your consideration as you prepare programs about the prevention and impact of HIV and AIDS.

PROGRAM PLANNING

- **Involve people living with HIV/AIDS in your broadcasts.** Encourage them to tell their stories on the radio. Withhold their identity if they prefer to remain anonymous.
- **Remember that media itself can stigmatize people living with HIV/AIDS, and try to avoid such pitfalls.** For example, radio has a responsibility to notify the public that HIV/AIDS is not a punishment for bad behaviour!
- **Work with health professionals when preparing programming about the health aspects of HIV and AIDS.** You need reliable sources in order to disseminate useful broadcasts and to avoid spreading misinformation.
- **Work with NGOs to amplify their work and yours.** In particular, identify and work with traditional theatre groups that know effective ways to reach local people. Dramatizations are most effective when they are followed by a discussion or a call-in show.
- **Get support from upper management.** Explain to supervisors that radio programming can save people's lives, that there has never been a challenge like HIV before, and that no country can afford to ignore it.
- **Be bold in taking risks and pushing limits.** There is a natural shyness when it comes to talking about sexual relations. But it is impossible to deal effectively with HIV/AIDS without discussing sex openly and frankly. You might take a little heat, but remember that what you are doing is saving lives. In too many places a conspiracy of silence has allowed HIV to infect and kill millions, and impact on every aspect of human life.
- **Involve Youth.** Youth is one of the hardest groups to reach. No one can communicate with youth better than youth itself. Give young people basic radio production skills and encourage them to develop their own programming. Their programs will be more interesting and attractive to youth.
- **Involve adults when you develop programs for youth.** Form an advisory committee of parents and community leaders, including religious leaders. This will reduce the chances of strong opposition to the programs. Stress to the committee that the goal of the programs is to protect those who are sexually active and discourage those who are not sexually active from starting.
- **Incorporate messages about HIV/AIDS into programming on other issues.** It is important not to address HIV/AIDS in isolation. In some places it is regarded as a taboo subject or people have become numb to HIV/AIDS messages so they have stopped listening.
- **Add a lighter tone now and again.** HIV and AIDS doesn't have to be full of dread and death. It is possible to communicate about HIV and AIDS in a humorous and attractive way. Sex is generally a topic that attracts attention and can make people laugh. Capturing the laughter and fun in a race to blow up condoms or filling them with water, or getting people to role play a couple on their first date awkwardly discussing the need for protection can associate prevention with fun rather than fear.
- **Invite faith-based organizations to discuss their beliefs in tolerance and acceptance and how it can be applied to People Living with HIV and AIDS.** Religious leaders have a role to play in helping people make the link between their religious beliefs and the stigmatization of People Living With HIV and AIDS. Ask about the teachings that include helping those who are less fortunate.
- **Beware of misinformation about condoms that is purposely circulated by those who oppose condom use.** Broadcasters have a responsibility to correct untruths like condoms don't prevent HIV transmission or they spread HIV. Check with health officials if you are not sure if a rumour is truth or fiction.
- **Appreciate that HIV is not just another health problem.** Think of HIV as a national security challenge. It has the potential to affect every aspect of life in a country. Radio broadcasters have a civic responsibility to ensure that radio is used effectively to reduce HIV infection and diminish its impact.

IMPORTANT MESSAGES

- **Point out that testing positive for HIV is not a death sentence.** After becoming infected a person can live a perfectly normal life showing no symptoms for five to ten years and even longer if they get antiretroviral treatment. The earlier the test is done the easier it will be to keep healthy, avoid getting reinfected and infecting others.
- **Don't waste time and confuse the public by talking about forms of transmission that may be possible but are very rare. Almost all HIV is sexually transmitted.** The second largest transmission mode is from an infected mother to her child and in almost all cases the mother was infected through sexual transmission. In some countries, injection drug users who share needles risk infection. Make sure that sexual transmission gets the attention it should. Most other methods of transmission are possible but are very, very unlikely such as pricks from sharp metal objects. People worry too much about getting infected from very unlikely means like casual contact with body fluids or sharing razors, and not enough about unprotected sexual intercourse.
- **Remind people that it is impossible to tell if a person is infected with HIV by looking at them or by their background.** The vast majority of people who are infected don't know they are and live perfectly normal lives and show no signs. They can be from any walk of life, age and economic group or education level. HIV doesn't discriminate since the great majority of people over 15 years old have sex.

Thanks to Iain McLellan for contributing these tips. Iain is a consultant specializing in communication for changing HIV/AIDS behaviour. He can be reached at mclellan@videotron.ca

ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION GROUP

Broadcasting partners from across Africa have recently taken part in DCFRN's first ever e-mail discussion group:

Broadcasters making connections for poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture in Africa

Topics such as 'Best practices', 'Building local links', 'Listening to women farmers', and 'Fundraising strategies' have been discussed. For more information go to our website, www.farmradio.org and click on 'Broadcaster Discussion Group'. Or go directly to the summary at: www.farmradio.org/eng/bdg.php

New alliance **STRENGTHENS** DCFRN activities



WUSC Executive Director Paul Davidson (left) and DCFRN Founding Director George Atkins.

DCFRN has recently entered into a new alliance with World University Service of Canada (WUSC). Under this arrangement, DCFRN has developed improved ways to execute its program so that its mission of helping broadcasters to help small-scale farmers and their communities will be deepened and expanded.

Established in 1939, WUSC is a non-profit organization with a mission to foster human development and global understanding through education and training. WUSC has field offices throughout sub-Saharan Africa working on rural development. With the help of these field offices, we hope to form partnerships with agricultural organizations, which will in turn help us to better serve our broadcasting partners. To find out more about WUSC, please visit their website at www.wusc.ca

While DCFRN continues to flourish as an independent organization, it now shares office space, human resources and administrative services with WUSC. Our toll-free phone number, and e-mail and website addresses, remain the same, but our new postal address is: 1404 Scott Street, Ottawa, ON K1Y 4M8 Canada

LAST CALL

GEORGE ATKINS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

We're looking for partners who demonstrate excellence and creativity in the production of radio programs for small-scale farmers. Send your nomination to Jennifer Pittet, DCFRN, 1404 Scott Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1Y 4M8 or jpittet@farmradio.org

BEST Practices

Radio distributes beans to farmers

At the beginning of the planting season in April, 2004, Radio Voice of Oku in North West Cameroon distributed seeds of the scarlet runner bean to 25 local farmers. The idea was that these farmers would multiply them for future use. Farmers were advised to stake the beans with tree species such as *Calliandra* and *Acacia*.

The scarlet runner bean is being promoted by Radio Oku as it has many uses and benefits. The advantages of scarlet runner beans include:

1. The beans do not occupy much space.
2. They have many leaves which provide manure for improved soil fertility.
3. They act like a cover crop which can smother weeds on the farm.
4. The beans grow and bear for about two years continuously. Hence farmers can be sure of harvesting beans throughout.
5. They are tasty.

So, with the many advantages elaborated above, farmers are encouraged to cultivate scarlet runner beans in great quantities.

Some of the farmers who were part of the program are already growing the beans, including:

Mrs. Mentan Winifred in the village of Elak
Mrs. Jiay Angelica Feleh in the village of Manchok
Mrs. Elisabeth Yiese Njiakoy in the village of Manchok

Aaron Kah
Radio Voice of Oku, Cameroon

Addressing food security in Zambia

From the time of independence the agricultural sector in Zambia received a lot of subsidies, especially on inputs. Maize being a staple food, the government made a ready market for the crop. But in the early 1990s the government changed its economic policies by liberalizing the market, including the agricultural sector. At this point, subsidies on inputs such as seeds and fertilizer were removed and farmers had to buy these inputs at commercial market prices. Farmers had to find markets for their produce, and the private sector became involved in the trade of staples. Most farmers were forced to reduce their hectareage, resulting in a reduction of staple crops and a reliance on food aid and imports. Farmers also had to change their farming systems; for example they started using organic fertilizer which was more affordable.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives designed radio programs to counter these problems by:

- Producing programs on crop diversification with a view to encourage farmers to grow crops such as cassava, paprika, and legumes to improve the fertility of their fields.
- Working with colleagues from the Agricultural Marketing Information Center (AMIC) who provided weekly data on prices of inputs and crops. This worked so successfully that this data is now being provided at a national level and community radio stations are being encouraged to provide the data to their listeners.

Songolo Akakandelwa
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Zambia

Community participation in programs for AIDS prevention

Over the past few years Cameroon Link has been involved in establishing five Local AIDS Control Committees and six Women Gender AIDS Community Councils. Members of these committees and councils take a short training on organization and management of community teams. These committees serve as a link between local communities and the radio stations of Cameroon Link. When a radio station needs somebody from the community to participate in the programs, a small note is sent to the group leaders who announce the subjects to be treated in the program. Volunteers are registered by the group leaders and communicated to the radio stations organizing the programs.

This participation from the community permits the radio stations and Cameroon Link to record several programs on a particular

subject. After interviewing the community volunteers, Cameroon Link edits the tapes and presents the ideas to the public through programs. In this way everybody learns from each other. We learn about how the community is dealing with difficult situations and they also learn from the experts present in the studio about how to quickly get good responses to their problems.

Cameroon Link also has a suggestions mailbox and people can drop their questions and opinions into the box. The questions are discussed during radio programs when experts in the different fields are interviewed. For more information about setting up a committee, contact James at: camlink2001@yahoo.com

James Achanyi-Fontem
Cameroon Link, Cameroon



Radio Apac works with district hospital

Radio Apac in rural Uganda collaborates with the Apac District Hospital to disseminate messages about HIV/AIDS prevention. The hospital administrator, clinical officers and nurses come to the station at scheduled times to discuss various issues relating to HIV/AIDS. For example, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the HIV virus has been a particularly successful campaign. A moderator from the radio leads the show in a panel discussion, and a call-in and letter reading format follow. The hospital does not have a budget for media information activities, so the station provides the airtime platform for the programs.

Jimmy Okello
Radio Apac, Uganda

Partner PROFILE



WHO: Tenasu Kofi Gbedemah, Executive Director, CORANET

COUNTRY: Ghana

LANGUAGES of Broadcast: Ewe, Twi, English

DCFRN Partner since: June 1997

TENASU KOFI GBEDEMAH is a development educator. Since 1996 he has been active in the civil society sector of Ghana, addressing many causes such as rural poverty and disease. In 1997 he founded the information organization, CORANET. As Executive Director of CORANET he has been a vocal advocate for self-reliant rural development, agriculture, natural resources protection, and human rights. Although CORANET does not have its own radio station, it prepares and produces programs for broadcast on two FM stations in the community. The broadcasts are addressed to rural people who do not have alternative ways of receiving information. CORANET staff people regularly visit rural communities to participate in village meetings; they sometimes show video clips and films on topics such as HIV/AIDS.

Through CORANET Tenasu has been able to get support from non-government and government donors such as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture/Village Infrastructure Project and the Emergency Social Relief Program. With this support he manages different projects such as a microcredit project for women food processors in the Ho, Hohoe and Jasikan districts of the Volta region. All the CORANET projects are supported by relevant radio programming.

You can contact Tenasu at: P.O. Box MA 279, Ho, Ghana or by e-mail at coranet2@yahoo.com

(Note: CORANET will be changing its name to the *Institute for Information and Development* in 2005.)

SCRIPTS

See previous DCFRN scripts that discuss the challenges of HIV and AIDS in rural communities. Go to www.farmradio.org, and click on 'Search Publications'.

HIV/AIDS: Myths and facts

Radio programs can help to dispel myths about HIV and AIDS

Misconceptions and acceptance

A woman urges sympathy for her friend's ill and depressed daughter

Women save time on the farm

Members of a women's group discuss ways to save labour in the field

Successful enterprises bring needed income in times of crisis

Starting small businesses on and off the farm

Quiz show: Questions and answers about HIV/AIDS

A game show tests players' knowledge of AIDS



RESOURCES



AIDS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

TASO Uganda provides counseling, public education, support for families and community-based efforts to address HIV/AIDS. Contact TASO, Old Mulago Complex, P.O. Box 10443, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: +256-41-532580/1
Email: mail@tasouganda.org, www.tasouganda.org

WAMATA means "People who are in the fight against AIDS in Tanzania" in Swahili. WAMATA provides psychosocial and material support for families affected by HIV/AIDS. Services include counseling, testing, support for orphans and a legal aid desk advocating for the rights of widows and orphans. Contact: Georgia Baguma or Theresa Kaijage, P.O. Box 32960 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Tel: 255 270 0282, Email: wmata.dar@twiga.com **Or** WAMATA@ud.co.tz

National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) in Uganda has developed an HIV/AIDS resource guide for agriculture and community extension workers that promotes mitigation responses among rural farming communities. NAADS worked with the Uganda Media Women's Association to implement an HIV/AIDS multi-media communication campaign using community theatre to sensitize local leaders on issues such as property and land rights. NAADS, Plot 39A, Lumumba Avenue, 2nd Floor Mukwasi House, Nakasero. Postal Address: P.O. Box 25235, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: 256-41-3445440, Fax: 256-41-347843, Email: info@naads.org.ug **Or** naads@iwayafrica.com, <http://www.naads.or.ug/index.php>

ORGANIZATIONS THAT WORK WITH LEGAL RIGHTS AND INHERITANCE ISSUES

Women's Voice in Malawi works to foster awareness of women's property and inheritance rights and rule of law. Contact Women's Voice, P.O. Box 231 Blantyre, Malawi. Physical address: Nuambadwe NY6331S, Near Magalasi Bus Stage, Old Chileka Airport Road. Email: womens-voice@sdpn.org.mw
Web: www.womens-voice.org.mw

Namibia Development Trust works to educate and empower rural women to challenge discriminatory traditional and customary practices. Provides training on advocacy and lobbying skills for women. Contact: P.O. Box 8226 Bachbrecht Windhoek, 57 Pasteur St., Namibia. Tel: (61) 238002/3, Email: ndtwhk@iway.na

TRAINING

Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) Nigeria holds training workshops for journalists. Operates a media resource center with information and training services, an AIDS News Service monthly bulletin for the media, and an electronic discussion group. Contact: Media Resource Centre on HIV/AIDS & Reproductive Health, 44B Ijaye Road, Ogba, Lagos, Nigeria. Postal address: PO Box 56282, Falomo, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel: 234 1 7731457, 8128565, Email: resourcecentre@nigeria-aids.org **Or** jaidsng@nigeria-aids.org, www.nigeria-aids.org

COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Linking Agricultural Research for Rural Radio in Africa (LARRRA) works to strengthen partnerships, among and between agriculturalists and rural radio broadcasters, to address information gaps on food security and agricultural issues, using radio stations that serve resource-poor farmers. <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~boyd/>

The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) is a Pan-African network which seeks to promote African women's development, equality and other human rights through advocacy, training and communication. <http://www.femnet.or.ke>



RESOURCES

Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) provides up-to-date web postings on vulnerability, land and food security issues in Southern Africa. www.sarpn.org.za

INTERNET AND RADIO RESOURCES

One World AIDS Radio is an internet community of producers and broadcasters using radio to help fight HIV/AIDS. It facilitates an audio exchange, provides training resources and lists upcoming events, and provides ideas for content on AIDS programming. www.aidsradio.oneworld.net/

FAO Rural Radio hosts a website that provides a list of publications, news and events, and audio resources. www.fao.org/sd/ruralradio/en/index.html

Media & HIV/AIDS in East and Southern Africa: A resource book
www.unesco.org/webworld/publications/media_aids/

ON LINE PAPERS

Study of practices implemented to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS at farm household level in six African countries (Mike Connolly, FAO). Includes information about pit farming, a farmer-initiated response from Zambia and community-based food banks. www.sarpn.org/za/mitigation_of_HIV_AIDS/m0019/index.php

The impact of HIV/AIDS on farmers' knowledge of seed: Case study of Chokwe District, Gaza Province, Mozambique
www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000973/index.php

Energy and HIV/AIDS

Some thoughts on the link between biomass and HIV/AIDS
www.hedon.info/goto.php/EnergyAndHIV-AIDS



African Radio Drama Association (ARDA)

is a production and training center for interactive and participatory programs. The group produces and syndicates entertainment and educational radio programs on radio stations throughout Nigeria. Program topics cover democracy and good governance, maternal health, sexual responsibility, women's rights and child survival. ARDA works with several community radio listeners' clubs and has also trained and supported several women's groups and farming associations to produce and broadcast their own programs under the award winning Development through Radio (DTR) project called "*Village Meeting*".

Contact:

Dr. (Mrs.) Data Phido, Program Director
(Dphido@ardabroadcasting.org)

Or

Ekaete Dolor, Project Admin Assistant
(Edolor@ardabroadcasting.org), The African Radio Drama Association (ARDA)

Plot 211, Muri Okunola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel.: (234) 1 4705390, Fax: (234) 1 2621930, Email: info@ardabroadcasting.org
<http://ardaradio.com/ardahomepage.shtml>



Continued from front page

Focus on local approaches and technologies

All of these topics and more can be explored through radio programs. Identify and focus on coping strategies that are being tried by different households and communities. Explore the most successful ones. Engage in discussions on and off the air about what is or isn't working and why, taking into consideration the social, economic and cultural factors that affect local people.

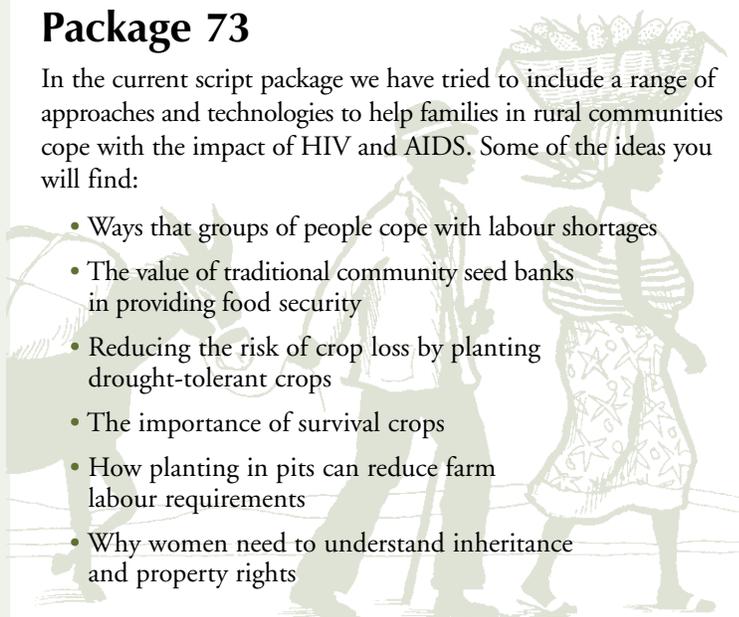
Local community action

Examine ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the most promising practices, with input from your audience. Often the most successful strategies for mitigation at the community level are integrated and holistic in nature; they take into account the many factors at play including the community-driven dimensions of the problems, the need for self-reliance in food production and interdependence between communities.

Package 73

In the current script package we have tried to include a range of approaches and technologies to help families in rural communities cope with the impact of HIV and AIDS. Some of the ideas you will find:

- Ways that groups of people cope with labour shortages
- The value of traditional community seed banks in providing food security
- Reducing the risk of crop loss by planting drought-tolerant crops
- The importance of survival crops
- How planting in pits can reduce farm labour requirements
- Why women need to understand inheritance and property rights



The estimated loss of the labour force between 1985 and 2000 due to AIDS ranged from 2.3 percent in Mozambique to 12.8 per cent in Uganda. In 2020 the loss of labour is projected to be as high as 25 per cent in some countries. (FAO, 2001)

OCTOBER 2004

The SYMPOSIUM ON CELEBRATING COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

was hosted by the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, the Ontario Agriculture College, the Don Snowden Program and The Developing Countries Farm Radio Network. The goal of the Symposium was to strengthen communication for social and environmental change, both as a field of development practice and academic research. Included among the objectives were:

- raising awareness of the potential for radio and video for participatory, community-level research and action and
- sharing experiences and research findings on the role of new ICTs for rural community empowerment, both in Canada and in other countries.

Several African radio broadcasters addressed the symposium about their work in community radio. For more information about the symposium, please see:
<http://www2.uoguelph.ca/snowden/projects.htm>



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*Supporting broadcasters in developing countries to
strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities.*

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