



Building Safer Communities in South Asia



This logo was designed for the Building Safer Communities initiative in South Asia. It represents the eight countries in the region – Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, The Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka which are covered in the programme. The logo shows that even amidst diversity, communities in the South Asia region are working hand-in-hand with one common objective – Disaster Risk Reduction.



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

*Cover: Students attending their classes at a primary school functioning from the Khajura Cyclone Centre.
The Cyclone Centre in Kalapara, Patuakhali, Bangladesh, is also used as a school building as a part of alternative use
The cyclone preparedness programme, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society*

Building Safer Communities in South Asia



Pakistan Red Crescent Society
انجمن صلال احمر پاکستان



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



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Building Safer Communities

Supported by:

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Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

Afghanistan Red Crescent Society, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Indian Red Cross Society, Nepal Red Cross Society, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society.

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Message

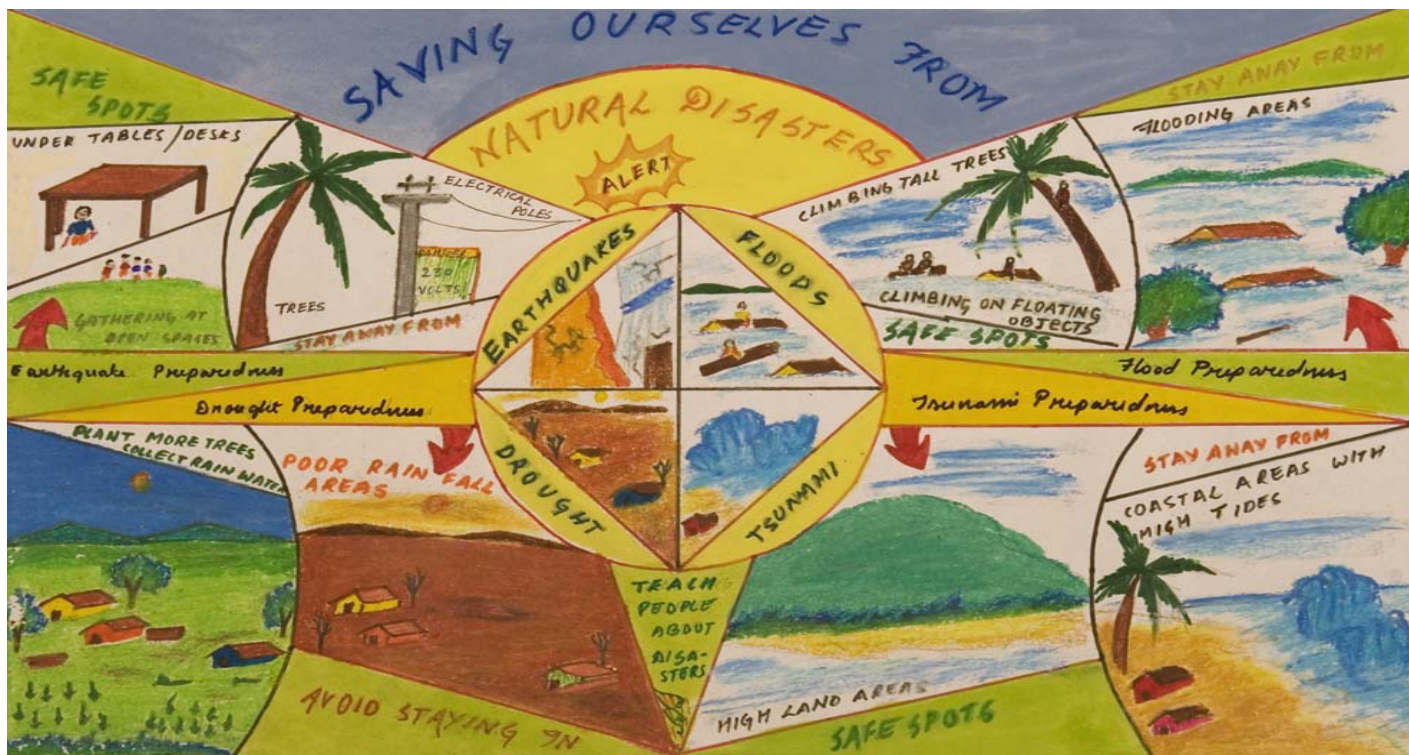
The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka along with the soon to be formed Red Crescent Society in The Maldives, are supported by the International Federation's South Asia Regional Delegation in carrying out a wide range of innovative disaster risk reduction activities. Guided by the Hyogo Framework for Action and the International Federation's Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in South Asia have embarked on a programme to build safer and more resilient communities in some of the most disaster prone areas in the world.

Partnering with national and local governments and increasingly working with United Nations agencies and nongovernment organizations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are reaching areas not yet served. With many years of experience in working within their own communities, local Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers are bringing new skills, knowledge and commitment to their own villages and towns. They are focused on helping communities discover the disaster risk reduction activities that work best and help them prepare for and respond to the next disaster.

From constructing cyclone shelters and educating school children about disaster preparedness, to equipping disaster response teams, to providing first aid training and teaching people simple sanitation practices in the villages – the photographs in this booklet illustrate the courage and determination of ordinary people building safer communities in which to live.

AI PANICO

Head of Delegation for South Asia
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



'Saving ourselves from natural disasters,' a poster painted by Jyothi Priya, a student of class VII, Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India.

Care India had organized the workshop "thinking through colours" for school children

Introduction

Background on disaster risk reduction programme in South Asia

In order to support the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent has initiated a regional Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programme since the last six years in South Asia, which account for 24 per cent of the global population. This has helped develop and promote appropriate DRR models, approaches, methodologies and information sharing mechanisms amongst practitioners to work more effectively in their contexts. Building on the experience of these programmes, International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent together with six national societies and key partners from nongovernmental organizations started the regional DRR initiative titled “Building Safer Communities in South Asia”, from 2007.

A regional approach

A regional disaster management approach has been adopted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent in support of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Governments, nongovernmental organizations and the UN system efforts to reduce risk in the region. The primary aim is to build safer, more resilient communities. Adopting an initiative that incorporates advocacy, alliance building, awareness raising and knowledge sharing has helped advance the work in different areas of risk reduction. In each country, some of the most disaster prone communities have been selected for risk reduction and response activities for preparedness, tailored to suit particular local requirements to cope with threats to people’s lives and livelihoods.

Key actions

Throughout the region National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ efforts to reduce risk have adopted three main approaches – strengthening the preparedness capacities of at-risk communities; promoting mitigation and supporting measures that protect the adverse effects of hazards and effectively advocating for risk reduction issues to be integrated with important development projects.

Contributing towards the Hyogo Framework for Action and the International Federation Global Alliance on disaster risk reduction

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, through its continued support of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region, has undertake risk reduction activities that contribute to achieving the five priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The four goals that are laid out in the 2006-2010 International Federation’s Global Alliance – and adopted by all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – strive towards the achievement of these priorities. Over the years joint work to reduce risk by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and partner nongovernmental organizations has benefitted from financial support provided by DIPECHO and Swedish Red Cross, all working together to contribute in building safer communities.



Disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority

The vision of well prepared, resilient communities, working together in the face of natural hazards, is gradually being realized. People are not “helpless victims” but able to recognize and develop their capacities, often through the use of the vulnerability, capacity assessment tool, for example, by national societies and civil society actors across South Asia. After the Indian Ocean tsunami, such assessments have helped in building resilience in affected communities. From such local initiatives, the development of good practice and gradual scaling up, national societies and civil society actors are increasingly advocating for the institutionalization of DRR and its inclusion in their countries’ development policies and plans of the local government and other organizations. There have been examples of success, with governments increasingly accepting this approach and encouraging partnerships with local government and national societies in risk reduction projects.

- ◀ *Shanti Rally through the streets of Dhaka in 2007 “Manobotar, Jonno Oeikkio-Boddho”*
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society



- ▲ *Local governance functionaries and heads of the villages are trained to take better steps for disaster response and actions for integrating risk reduction activities*
Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme, Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India



◀ *Pakistan Red Crescent Society works with school children for disaster preparedness*

Life skill based Youth Peer Education Training with special focus on HIV/AIDS for women ▶
Afghanistan Red Crescent Society





- ◀ *Members of the Community Disaster Response Team (CDRT) of Maruthamunai, in eastern Ampara district, discuss their team plan for response to emergency situations, and DRR activity with the community*

Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) project, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society



- ▲ *Preparing capacities of volunteers through a Regional Disaster Response Team Induction Course*

*International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
South Asia Regional Delegation: Training for Regional Disaster Response Team*



- ◀ *Red Cross Red Crescent values are explained to people in villages of Nepal*
Nepal Red Cross Society



- ▲ *Advocacy drive for preparedness and response through media*
Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India





Local early warning system

International nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and Red Cross and Red Crescent National societies throughout the region play an intrinsic role in local and national early warning systems in their respective countries. Tens of thousands of volunteers in high-risk communities have been trained and are on duty through the seasonal disaster periods. Simple procedures help to ensure that clear, understandable messages are transmitted to at-risk communities. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has an established system of some 34,000 volunteers – trained but often inadequately equipped with megaphones and rattles, travelling on foot or bicycles – who bring early warning messages to millions of people in coastal communities of incoming cyclones. This so-called “last mile” of the warning chain helped to ensure the safe evacuation of an estimated 3 million people and saved thousands of lives prior to Cyclone Sidr in 2007, the worst cyclone to hit the country in 50 years. Without such warnings, United Nations and Red Cross Red Crescent officials estimated, hundreds of thousands of people could have died. Also in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, capacity in early warning has developed as NGOs and national societies fulfil this important and life saving role.

◀ *Strengthening of the Early Warning Systems in two of the remotest islands of Andaman*
Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India



◀ *Women in West Bengal learn about their own vulnerabilities*

Promoting Traditions, Reducing Risks - The UNICEF's project in West Bengal



▲ *Women prepare in-depth vulnerability capacity analysis for their own village action plan*

Promoting Traditions, Reducing Risks - The UNICEF's project in West Bengal



◀ *People of Mushbiganj
participate in the
community historical
visualization exercise*

*Bangladesh Red
Crescent Society*



▲ *Women discuss the Community Contingency Plan to coordinate for disaster response*

*Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*



◀ *Bangladesh Red Crescent* ▶
volunteers disseminate
early warning messages
for cyclone onset among
the villages in Sonagazi,
Bangladesh

The cyclone preparedness
programme, Bangladesh
Red Crescent Society





Knowledge, education to build culture of safety and resilience

“Capacity building, training and awareness raising” is a mantra often used among NGOs and national societies within the region. From helping the fledgling community-based organizations to build capacity after the Indian Ocean tsunami – enabling them to help meet the needs of the local affected communities – to training of staff and volunteers to improve safety and resilience of disaster prone communities, a vast array of tools and methods are employed. Awareness-raising of DRR in different countries in the region has made ingenious use of media – from posters and banners to film, radio shows and street theatre in Nepal and Bangladesh. In schools in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India and Nepal, NGOs and national societies continue to advocate for inclusion of DRR on the formal school curriculum. In addition to this, UNICEF, Save the Children, Care India, Welthungerhilfe and other civil society actors are working to encourage communities to integrate DRR in their development policies and to improve services benefiting vulnerable communities by creating awareness of the importance of adopting safer, more hazard resilient shelter construction.

◀ *Pakistan Red Crescent PSP worker with children at the village near Balakot, NWFP. These centres provide a place for children to socially interact and play sports*

Aftermath of the 8 October 2005 earthquake, Pakistan



▲ *The Cyclone Centre in Kalapara, Patuakhali, Bangladesh, is alternatively used as a primary school*
The cyclone preparedness programme
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society





◀ *Children through paintings express the need to be prepared and better equipped to overcome disaster events*

Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme, Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India



◀ *Local people watching the drama “Jago Manush (Be aware)” in Babugonj Cyclone Centre, Barguna, Bangladesh*

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society



▲ *Magic show to create awareness among people of Shibpur, Sagar Island, West Bengal*

Weltbungerhilfe project Community-based Disaster Risk Management in some of the vulnerable and disaster prone areas in West Bengal and Orissa



◀ *Local people in Balakot are informed to follow better hygiene habits*

Pakistan Red Crescent Society



▲ *Pakistan Red Crescent Society hygiene promotion teams work with women and especially with children who need to be better protected in Balakot, one among the worst affected areas of the 8 October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan*



◀ *Nepal Red Cross volunteers Tek Babadur Bhusal (44) and Robeni Adbikari (40) motivate parents to have their children vaccinated against measles*

The Measles Follow up Campaign done by Nepal Red Cross Society aimed to cover four million children aged nine months to five years old all over Nepal



▲ *Hygiene awareness campaigns to promote healthy practices*

*Water supply programme
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society*



▲ *Murals are painted on school walls depicting the five steps of psychological first aid – meet basic needs, listen, accept survivors' feelings, assist them to move on, and refer for treatment*

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

আমাদের রাস্তা

গ্রামবাসী ও ব্রাহ্মকৃষ্ণ মিশনের যৌথ সহযোগিতায় নির্মিত

UNDER CBDRM PROJECT

SUPPORTED BY:

DIPECHO AND WELTHUNGERHILFE

IMPLEMENTED BY:

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA

NARENDRAPUR

Reducing the underlying risk through small scale risk reduction projects

Throughout the region, UN agencies, NGOs and national societies have worked with communities in high-risk areas undertaking vulnerability and capacity assessments to determine local needs. As a result, a broad range of small-scale DRR activities and measures have been undertaken. Mitigation projects range from the construction of small footbridges and roads – allowing access to safe havens, schools, markets and people's land – to the plantation of trees to protect embankments and raised earth platforms, or kila, in Bangladesh. Mitigation projects in India, particularly in some of the most disaster prone villages of the coastal districts of Orissa, include cyclone shelters providing local protection for tens of thousands of people. Livelihood projects in Pakistan and Sri Lanka have benefited numerous households, particularly those recovering from major disasters. In some high risk areas, community-managed loans and vocational training have enabled vulnerable people to diversify their livelihood options, initiating a range of small businesses and helping people to become better off.

◀ *Building a new approach road in Shibpur, Sagar Island, West Bengal*

Welthungerhilfe project Community-based Disaster Risk Management in some of the vulnerable and disaster prone areas in West Bengal and Orissa



▲ *Kamrunn Nabar of Bashalia village along the banks of Jumna in Bangladesh uses a special portable stove to boil water. The stove made of clay is used by women in emergency situations to cook food for their families*

The cyclone preparedness programme Bangladesh Red Crescent Society



◀ *Tree planting along the new approach road to prevent soil erosion, Shibpur, Sagar Island, West Bengal*

Welthungerhilfe project Community-based Disaster Risk Management in some of the vulnerable and disaster prone areas in West Bengal and Orissa

Khajura Cyclone Centre, Kalapara, Patuakhali, Bangladesh. The Cyclone Centre is also used as a school building as a part of alternative use

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Bamboo foot bridges built by elders of the village for children to reach their schools in Dawabari, Bangladesh

Children's Participation in Disaster Risk Reduction Project, Plan Bangladesh





◀ *Women using sewing machines as part of the psychosocial programme in a village near Balakot Pakistan Red Crescent Society*

Grants were given to groups of women of all ages in Sathbrukkondan village in Batticaloa, eastern Sri Lanka. They came together to choose collectively how to spend the money, after their livelihood that relied on fishing in nearby coastal villages was affected by the tsunami. They decided to be trained in the craft of cane furniture making, and the Red Cross in Sri Lanka found a trainer to take this forward



Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, Spanish Red Cross Society and the Export Agriculture Department of Sri Lanka supported over 300 tsunami affected small-scale cinnamon farmers in Sri Lanka's southern district of Galle. Under this post-tsunami project, cinnamon farmers were provided with seedlings, fertilizer and training on planting, harvesting and peeling of cinnamon. Separately, cinnamon oil distillation plants damaged or destroyed by the tsunami have received assistance to rebuild and modernize their production units





Strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response

An essential component of any disaster management strategy of the national societies in the region is the development of disaster response capacity – a traditional, established role of the Movement. Examples are found throughout the region, where disability-inclusive DRR is possible. Disaster preparedness and several disaster response posts have been established in the major centres of Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. A standardized curriculum – linking to national and regional disaster response teams and field assessment and coordination teams (FACT) – is increasingly being utilized, helping to ensure a consistent and coherent approach throughout the region. In some community-based disaster management committees, there are established task force teams for immediate response to disasters. Even at the community level, local leaders of the village are taking a lead in enabling more rapid responses to local disasters.

◀ *Community task force teams trained for better disaster response*

*Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*

▲ *Sea rescue training for community task force members*

*Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*



▲ *First Aid training given to school children and women*

*Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*



- ▲ *Sri Lanka Red Cross Society water safety team demonstrate their learnings from the water-safety training. The Red Cross volunteers in Negombo and Gampaha districts were trained for advance level water safety skills. Through the training, a network of instructors were formed to organize basic water-safety trainings for the local communities*

*Water Safety Training Programme
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society*



◀ *Giving opportunities to persons with disabilities Prarul Mandal lost her legs when she was nine years old after falling on the railway track while the train was passing by. She is a member of the community task force*

*Handicap International
India-Care India
partnership Community
Based Disaster
Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar
Islands of India*



▲ *Through mock drills, members of the community task force rehearse their actions for being prepared*

*Care India project Community Based Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*



◀ *People use locally available resources to design rescue equipments*

*Care India project Community Based
Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*

*Volunteers of Sri Lanka Red Cross Society ▶
demonstrate water safety and life-saving rescue
techniques in Negambo District, Sri Lanka*

*Water Safety Training Programme
Sri Lanka Red Cross Society*



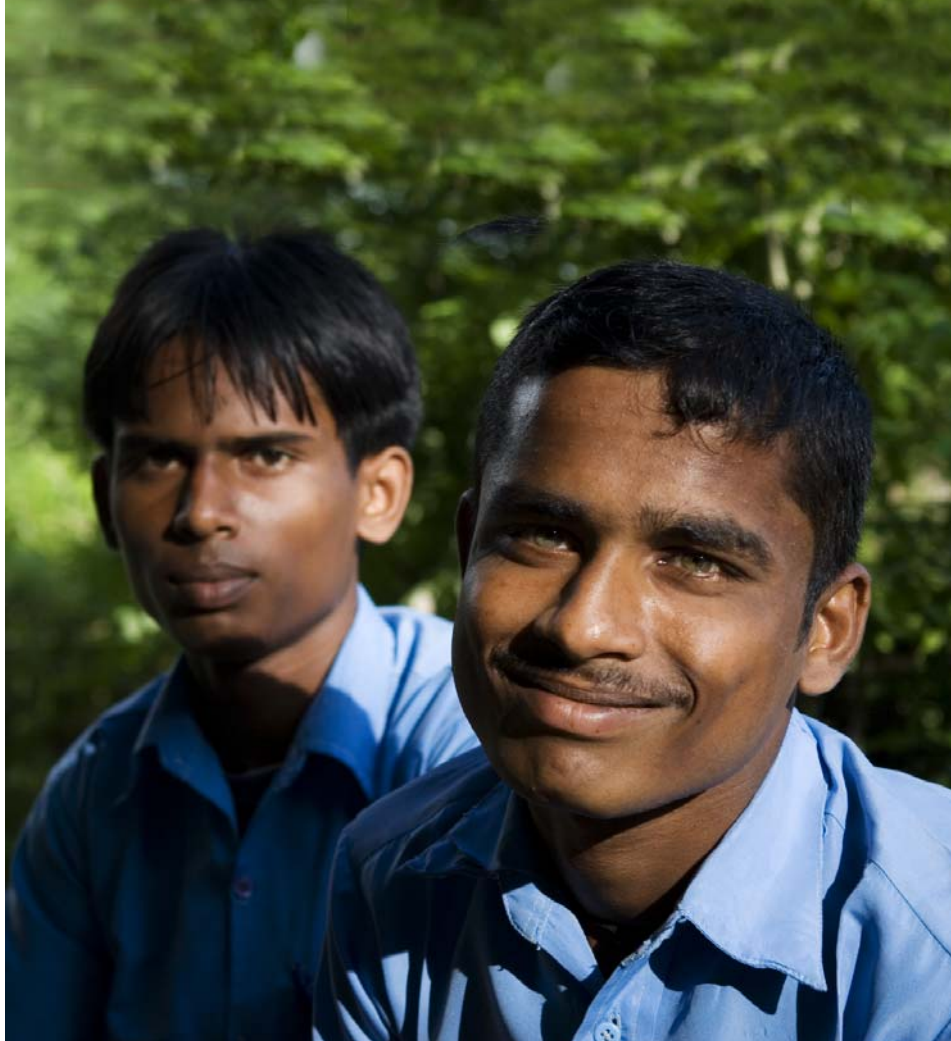


◀ *Practicing safe rescue methods*

*Care India project Community Based
Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*

*Practicing what they have learnt ▶
When Palash Mondal (the boy in the
foreground) with his friend Tapan Haldar
were in the woods, accidentally the knife
Palash was using slipped from his hand
and cut through a vein on his leg. The
bleeding was immense. Immediately Tapan
provided first aid to stop the blood flow
and quickly took Palash to the nearby
village hospital. Recalling this incident, his
friend Tapan, “the first aid training he had
attended actually helped in saving
Palash’s life in time.”*

*Care India project Community Based
Disaster Preparedness Programme
Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India*





◀ *Red Cross and Red Crescent
volunteers assist in
humanitarian relief work*

*South Asia earthquake
8 October 2005*



▲ *Indian Red Cross Society Disaster Response unit in action to restore
services to the affected people*

Gujarat earthquake 2001

Photograph credits

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A child's perception of flood preparedness

Painted by: Tahasin Altaf Taoishi, Bangladesh, South Asia Regional award winner of the school level poster competition



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