



## **Intellectual Output 4 - Pilot Reports**

### **MAKING A START: TOWARDS A MORE COLOURFUL HRM POLICY | AMARYLLIS**

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project “Diversity Capacities - Improving the Capacities of Adult Education Institutions to Successful Dealing with Diversity”

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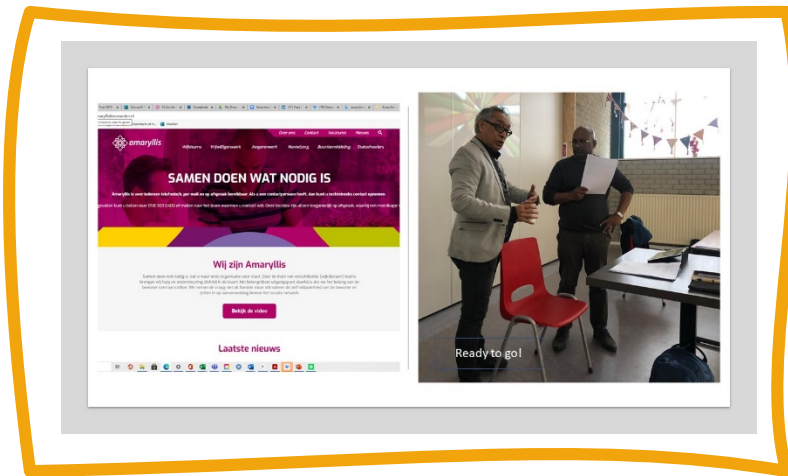
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Human resource  
Management  
towards a Colorful  
and Diverse Future

Illustration 1

## The Organisation

Amaryllis is an urban welfare foundation that focuses on all vulnerable citizens. The organization is based in the city of Leeuwarden. As of January 2020 Leeuwarden, has 123,107 inhabitants (source, [www.fsp.nl](http://www.fsp.nl)). 21,014 citizens (17%) of them have a migrant background.



Illustration 2

# 1. Amaryllis an urban welfare organization for vulnerable citizens

Amaryllis as welfare organization is in January 2019 merged with organizations responsible for youth work, family care, neighborhood mediation, refugees with residence permit. This is because of cuts in the budget by the municipality and the policy to integrate specific policy focus on migrants with general policy. The argument of the municipality is to work on efficiency and exchange and strengthen of knowledge of workers.

The current organization has a total workforce of 180 paid employees working at different levels and departments. 80-90% of the services of different departments are used by citizens with a migrant background. Most of the questions of these groups are focused on welfare, care, housing, labor, finance and education. All vulnerable groups can be supported without referral. This includes, for example, support by staff of the social work unit without referral.

By deploying 8 social district teams (including 2 village teams) in the municipality of Leeuwarden, Amaryllis bring help and support close to home. In addition, Amaryllis have teams that deal explicitly with voluntary work, youth work, volunteer aid, status holders, neighborhood mediation, meeting & participating and community work. The most important principle here is that we put the resident's interests first. Amaryllis do not take the question away from the resident, but stimulate self-reliance and focus on cooperation within the social network. Amaryllis as organization is formed on the basis of what is really needed rather than what someone is entitled to. Amaryllis wants to be an organization that is beyond patronizing. Amaryllis work on the basis of trust and anticipate the needs of the environment. The care workers stimulate the self-reliance of citizens and focus on cooperation within the social network. The support is aimed at a multiple living environment.

## 2. Key findings of the case study: specific versus general Policy

### 2.1 From Specific Policy to General Policy

In the past, Amaryllis had a specific policy for support of migrants. At that time, activities were focused on integration and participation of migrants in Dutch society. People with different cultural backgrounds received special attention and migrant and refugee organizations were coached and guided by social workers. Due to the merger, hardly any attention was paid to problems for specific minorities, refugees, although the organization has a department for status holders (refugees with residence permits) and social district teams that come to neighborhoods and districts where for the most part migrants live.

The organization underwent a considerable culture change due to the merger. Amaryllis as a merged organization does not have an intercultural policy now. Only professionals with a native background work in the department for supporting status holders. The organization's social workers have no experience in guiding this target group and lack culture-specific knowledge. Professional social workers do not pay attention to these problems. Guidance is left to volunteers. There are no professionals with a migrant background among the staff. There were some staff with non-Dutch nationality working for the organization, but unfortunately most of them have left the organization.

*Open versus closed organization*



## 2.2 Loss of Expertise

The knowledge, experience and expertise gained in working with migrants has disappeared partly due to the merger. The organization no longer has free space to reach specific groups with a migrant background. From an open organization, it has become a closed organization. The outreach to migrants and their interest groups has disappeared as a result. This is also the result of the policy of the municipality of Leeuwarden, which is the provider of subsidies to the Amaryllis organization. The organization went from specific policy to general policy because the pressure came from the municipality of Leeuwarden, although 80-90% of the organization's services are used by migrants. There is a high turnover of employees. The employees do not receive training in intercultural work.

“Migrant groups are not reached due to municipal policy”



(PiD facilitator)

## 2.3 Migrants' relationship network and their organizations

There are no longer specific channels and contacts to communicate with migrants. Also, the social workers who were specifically in contact with migrant organizations belong to the past. The current policy of the municipality of Leeuwarden means that there will be no diversity, intercultural policy in the coming years.

Social workers today know nothing about migrant networks due to the policy of the municipality. What happens to this group and what the problems are, is unknown to most social workers. The staff members who are still involved with migrants plead for a renewed colorful personnel policy and attention to the issue of diversity, migration and inclusion also among the current native staff members.



## 2.4 No specific means of communication

Amaryllis makes standard use of communication channels (mails, Facebook, internet, brochures, advertisements, etc.). Specific means of communication are not used to reach migrants. Within the organizations which have standard brochures, there are brochures which are developed nationally by the government. Locally, there are no organizations that translate these into their own language when it comes to facilities. The care workers notice in practice that many migrants are not aware of all kinds of facilities and services on the local level. Migrants lack all kinds of information to which they may be entitled. This demonstrates that poverty among this target group is also increasing. Communication with self-organizations and key figures is lacking. Amaryllis no longer has a direct connection and contact with the migrant organizations. Everything that has been built up has disappeared in recent years. Within the organization there is a social network cards, but unfortunately there are no migrant organizations on it, while there are all kinds of Dutch organizations.



The social network card of Amaryllis is a guideline for vulnerable citizens. When they have questions on the level of care, housing, education, tax, and so on the care workers of Amaryllis will connect them with the organizations who are responsible to support them directly and work on concrete solutions. This is a point of attention and an important action point.

## 2.5 Intercultural competences

Social workers of Amaryllis are not able to identify people with a migrant background in order to do justice to the individual and his situation and wishes. Most of the Dutch social workers do not have enough knowledge and experiences according to the cultural backgrounds of migrants with for instance a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinam, or Syrian background. They are not consciously looking for challenges and are therefore not able to communicate effectively with this group. An important challenge for the social workers is outreach work.

They also lack intercultural competences. Intercultural assistance is becoming increasingly important in this country, due to the migration flow in recent years. According to some staff members, the Netherlands is already familiar with the presence of various migrant groups. Social workers must realise that it is nowadays a necessity in this multicultural society to show a strong sense of empathy in working with migrant groups, having few prejudices and being open to an unfamiliar situation. Also looking for similarities with the other, respecting a client and taking into account his wishes have become more necessary. Amaryllis tries to facilitate the support of all vulnerable citizens, but currently the impression is that some projects do not reach migrant groups in some neighborhoods. In public, the organization presents itself as an open organization for all vulnerable citizens, including migrants. But on the other hand, staff members do not reach migrant groups effectively. It is important that board, management and staff become aware of strengthening the competences and skills of the staff in this area.

The statements of the social workers who contribute in this case study are the most important results. They expressed the view of the knowledge of the Netherlands on immigration history. They emphasize the knowledge built up on specific policy of national and local governments and organizations.

## 2.6 Human Resource Management

Amaryllis does not have a target group policy. A startup of a specific target group supporting the board of directors, management and employees is necessary to work on diversity on all levels within the organization because there is no diversity or intercultural policy. Employees receive no training on working with migrants. Diversity is not taken into account in the application procedures and in the drawing up of vacancies and recruitment of staff. The average age of staff is between 30 and 35 years. Men and migrants are underrepresented among the staff. Within Amaryllis research should be done on what social workers need in order to work interculturally and deal with diversity issues. Additional research into 'clashing work cultures' due to the merger is needed. In order to grow into a fully-fledged work organization that also sees working with migrants as an enrichment.

### 3. Intercultural and diversity competences

#### 3.1 Aims and Approaches

##### 3.1.1 Aims of the Pilot Project

The main objective of the pilot is for the board and management of Amaryllis to concretely facilitate a plan of action to realize diversity and inclusion for the entire organization. Due to the merger as a result of the cutback policy of the municipality of Leeuwarden as provider of subsidies, accumulated expertise and knowledge regarding intercultural work and migration has disappeared. Due to the municipal policy the organization has a general policy. There is no specific policy aimed at migrants because everyone is expected to contribute on the basis of their own ability and decisiveness.

**The organization talks about vulnerable citizens and many of them have a migration background.**



***Intercultural and diversity competences are needed!***

It is essential that the top, the management and the municipality commit to the mission of diversity and inclusion and increase and strengthen the competences and skills of the employees to this end. The angle is that Amaryllis, as a merged welfare organization, will learn to deal with diversity and inclusion. This was the overall aim of the case study. But this is a long-term process. The call for a renewed colorful personnel policy and the strengthening of specific competencies with regard to working with migrants has become stronger among some staff members.

The vision of implementing a concrete change management process is currently very difficult for the organization. The organization is dependent on the policy of the municipality of Leeuwarden for receiving subsidies. Board and management support the policy of the municipality of Leeuwarden. But nevertheless, some steps towards were made during the start with a workshop with social workers

### 3.1.2 Recommendations for measures to reach the aim of an inclusive organization

A broad discussion on how to deal with diversity within the organization could lead to reaching the aim of being more diverse and inclusive. A start can be made with practical workshops for the employees endorsed by the top and management as a first step. Through these practical workshops, the personnel policy of Amaryllis, the required competencies and skills for employees and the approach for change are exchanged.

Practical meetings (workshops, work sessions) need to be organized to map out what knowledge Amaryllis has as a welfare organization when it comes to providing information on diversity policy, promoting skills and training employees in intercultural work. Involving migrant organizations and key figures in change is necessary. Possible attention to vacancies in order to attract more immigrant social workers requires changes in personnel policy. The aim would be to have a vacancy policy in relation to recruitment of staff with knowledge and experience in intercultural work, migration and diversity.

In order to achieve inflow of employees with a migration background and to make products and services of Amaryllis more accessible, the design of flyers and brochures in different languages is necessary and would be helpful also for migrant clients. Furthermore, to increase contacts with migrant organizations is recommended. This is necessary to reach the vulnerable persons within the migrant societies. Individual contacts and a face-to-face approach are important for the support by Amaryllis.

A requirement is ultimately support among the board and management, employees for diversity and inclusion within the entire organization. Through this pilot, as mentioned, a start is made with practical work sessions intended for employees of the social district teams. A second action point is to organize a meeting with the board and management to create support for a plan of approach. Extra attention is paid to the new working culture of Amaryllis as a merged welfare organization. During these workshops, the experiences of the employees should also be shared in this area. Important starting points in this process include:

- **reinforcing the training needs of employees to work with migrants**
- **reinforcing the needs of some social workers to create support among employees who see diversity policy as a challenge.**
- **increasing openness, tolerance, communication and manners within the organization.**



This process is seen by the interviewees in this case study as a benefit for the institution and all the people working and learning there. The supportive atmosphere is very useful for the trainers, but also for the participants.

## 3.2 Diversity Workshops for Social District Team

### 3.2.1 Diversity Workshops

The strategy has been to organize two diversity workshops for the social district teams. However, due to the Corona crisis, it was only possible in March 2021 to organize a small workshop for a part of one social district team. At the time of writing this report, we hope we can go forward with a second workshop with this group and simultaneously develop a strategy to roll out this kind of workshops further in the organization.

The aim of the workshop was:

- ✓ To broaden knowledge and understanding of intercultural care and to discuss the challenges in counselling migrants and status holders
- ✓ Exchange practical skills which are used in Amaryllis and get acquainted with new methodologies
- ✓ Formal/informal contacts with migrants and refugee organisations
- ✓ Intercultural policy from within Amaryllis



The programme of the diversity workshop was as follows:

1. Inventory of specific questions in the work/care of migrants/status holders
2. Own cultural baggage and the cultural baggage of others
3. Deployment of specific methods to successfully guide migrants/status holders
4. Formal and informal networks of persons of foreign heritage/status holders
5. Attention to intercultural policy/diversity framework from Amaryllis



Working methods of the diversity workshop were as follows:

- ❖ Short power point presentations
- ❖ Exchange and discussion
- ❖ Discussion of a practical case of the social workers (depicting practical cases social workers face in their daily work, see the example in the annex.

## Housing group of elderly migrants

### Practical case in the diversity workshop

A number of elderly migrants of Surinamese/Hindu origin have taken the initiative to live in a housing complex with a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 20 elderly people of the same origin. It would be nice if the housing complex had its own meeting place. Ultimately, these are homes for the elderly. These elderly people can no longer fall back on help from acquaintances or family members and therefore want to arrange their own care. These are elderly people who are not registered and in need of nursing care. The initiators are contacting the employees of a community center and an elderly people's work group to help them get started. The employees now have the task of supporting the initiative group in their housing needs.

Adiep Autar insert his working methods in how to reach migrants and migrant organizations. He does this on the basis of guiding in-depth questions.

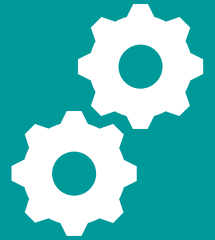
- Do negative feelings have to do with culture? Reflect on your own culture and try to understand other cultures?
  - Definition of culture: what is culture anyway? There may be different views among social workers about "culture". What and when does something fall under culture?
  - An open attitude is essential for learning about new culture. Being open to new culture starts with yourself and making sure clients feel safe without making them feel judged.
    - Using a PowerPoint presentation, he explains what culture as a concept encompasses and he explains these differences by means of a so-called Maslow pyramid, which boils down to 'I (Western culture) - we (non-Western culture)'. Individual development versus loyalty to the family and community to which you belong as a non-Western migrant.
  - • As a professional, you need to have a curious attitude. You also need to show interest in the other person, in his/her cultural backgrounds
  - • Migrant organizations/ key figures: Social workers indicate that they are not in contact with any migrant organizations. Amaryllis has more than 70% of its clients with a migrant background, so it is important for Amaryllis to have contact with migrant organizations and key figures.
  - • More diversity in social workers. Not only native social workers, but also social workers with a migrant background



## Intercultural Work - Intercultural Policy.

The responses to these questions and answer section are outline:

- Empathy is needed
- Show understanding
- Being sincere
- Being able to distinguish between 'us' and 'them'
- The normal, what should be normal in communication becomes narrower
- Acceptance is needed
- Trust is needed
- Building relationships is necessary
- Closing the 'gap' between the urban and the district level is important.



The policymakers expect the residents of the neighborhood to participate. But there is insufficient indication of how this can be achieved. At the district level, the social district teams point out that there is insufficient insight into, for example, how to deal with illiterate people in this process. In addition, social workers are confronted with traumas of refugees that are obstacles to actively participate in Dutch society. This is also understandable and you notice that mental health institutions do not have the knowledge to work with refugees, status holders, for example. Furthermore, barriers in relation to government rules became apparent: Social workers indicate that they are confronted with a certain (government) framework to apply the correct implementation in their work with all vulnerable citizens, including migrants. Nevertheless, according to those present, there are also good examples. We can learn from the past. The time when Amaryllis had networks with migrant organizations, the knowledge of how family systems work was present.

The social workers had a lot of experience in working with migrants who mainly live in the Bilgaard and Vrijheidswijk neighborhoods. It is precisely that knowledge that they had according to reach migrants and that can be used again. The attending staff members have knowledge of how to work in a problem-oriented way. This ultimately leads to solutions.

Adiep Autar reflects on this exchange of staff experiences through the powerpoint presentation which he handed out. He presents some number of methodologies, such as TOPOI model, the dialogue and the Ujamaa method.



## TOPOI MODEL

The TOPOI-model is used for a better analyzing and understanding of intercultural communication and to unsee cultural misunderstandings according to five areas: Language, Order, People, Organization and Effort.

The TOPOI model is developed by Edwin Hoffman.

## DIALOGUE METHOD

(entering into a conversation based on equality)

### Advices

- ✓ Be aware that you are looking at things through your own cultural lens;
- ✓ Know your own values and standards; Recognize that these may differ from those of other people;
- ✓ Have developed a degree of intercultural sensitivity;
- ✓ Have mastered several intercultural competences;
- ✓ Communicate clearly;
- ✓ Have developed tools and skills to overcome any barriers in communication;
- ✓ Be respectful towards your interlocutor;
- ✓ Do not judge but listen actively.



## UJAMA METOD

(involving family, key figures) to reach migrants.

UJAMAA stands for unity and cooperation. The feeling of togetherness and solidarity. Ujamaa has also been given the meaning of 'matters that need to be resolved jointly and for which one joins forces'.

## Questions for the participants

**If you want to strengthen intercultural work, how do you think you can achieve this in your organization?**

**What else should be changed within the organization?**

Summarizing the workshop, in the end, it is all about awareness within the organization.

A workshop like this is necessary. Fortunately, the organization offers that space for their employees to participate in this workshop.

The participants are aware of taking their own fields of expertise open to discussion.

Share the problems in this field with each other is the advice.

More of these awareness-raising activities will have to be organized. It does need to be facilitated by the organization. But as indicated, luckily there is room for it. Again: in the end it is about understanding each other, learning from each other's cultural backgrounds. We can start with a small group and use it locally.

The question from the participants is 'what next' after this.

It is important to organize intercultural and diversity workshop through organizations that are certainly directly involved with migrant communities.

Bringing this to the attention.

Learning from each other is the starting point.

### 3.3 Practical cases as examples for reflection on work of social workers

#### Outline of the situation

Some elderly migrants of Surinamese-Hindu origin have taken the initiative to live in a housing estate with at least 16 to a maximum of 20 elderly people of the same origin. It would be nice if the housing complex had its own meeting place. Ultimately, these are homes for the elderly. These elderly people can no longer fall back on help from acquaintances or family members and therefore want to arrange their own care. These are elderly people who are not indicated for care and in need of nursing care. The initiators are contacting the employees of a community center and an elderly people's work group to help them get started. The employees now have the task of supporting the initiative group in their housing needs.

#### ASSIGNMENT

How do we go about this in a planned way?

#### Focus area

1. Setting goals: What will the employees do? What choices do we make? Does everyone feel involved? Does everyone feel that the organization really cares?
2. Planning: How are we going to do it? This applies to the board, management, staff and volunteers,
3. Staff, employees and volunteers. Executing: How do we ensure that everything happens?
4. Evaluating: How do we learn from what we have achieved? How do we go further?

#### Implementation

Time: 30 - 45 minutes

Reading the case: 5 minutes

Discuss, write down results and present: 40 minutes

Supporting tools: flip charts, pens

## 4. Analysis of the change and learning process and Recommendations

### 4.1 Analysis and Experiences

Amaryllis is a monocultural organization, while its clientele consists of 80-90 % migrants. The board and management follow the policy of the municipality that provides the subsidies.

The organization is not a reflection of the colorful community in the municipality of Leeuwarden. The staff is currently entirely indigenous and consists largely of women in the age group of 30-35 years. The board and management will have to be aware of a colorful personnel policy, intercultural work, diversity and inclusive policy.



#### Managing and coaching HRM policy

Vision and policy development in Human Resource Management (HRM) in this area is required. Steering for diversity and inclusion automatically implies steering for HRM policy. Before the merger, Amaryllis was an accessible welfare organization for migrants since part of the professional staff also had a migrant background. Current staff members of the merger organization can learn from the knowledge and working methods that these employees had. In order to make changes, you need people with knowledge, experience and expertise. Professionals see that they are part of a large organization, but that the organization does not reflect society. In view of changing government policies and what is required of all citizens, including migrants, it is necessary to cooperate as much as possible. Without such cooperation, no intercultural organization can be built, in which sometimes specific approaches but also adjustments from within the organization are needed. Immigrants must be able to recognize themselves and feel safe within an organization. If 80-90% of the clients of Amaryllis belong to the migrant groups and there is no employee anymore who has the knowledge and skills to work with and support the migrant groups, the service activities of Amaryllis cannot reach the migrants

## 4.2 Recommendations change and learning process

The analysis of the experiences of part of the staff of Amaryllis has led to the recommendation to reflect on the vision and work and transparency with regard to diversity policy and change management within the organization by all staff members, starting with awareness among the board and management and the municipality as provider of subsidies.

It is necessary to reformulate the mission of the organization. The concretization of the mission to reach vulnerable groups includes migrants and reflection/evaluation of the communication process on the values of the organization is important. Nowadays, no migrants are reached.

*Reflection on the substantive vision of the work*

*Awareness raising among the board, the management and the municipality*



*An HRM expert is essential and urgent, and an external process facilitator to support all employees of the organisation in addressing the diversity policy as a challenge to their own workload and skills to serve migrant clients*



*Upgrading and continuous development in competencies and skills is necessary.*

## 4.3 Recommendations for staff

### Need for Training and Updating intercultural Skills of Staff

The facilitation of a support package of a mix of activities such as survey/practical research, workshops, training, education focused on diversity policy and intercultural work is needed. The possibility of organizing a workshop on the theme of diversity policy, intercultural work on a small scale in three neighborhood teams is a start.

Social workers need to be able to identify the competences and skills needed to work with migrant/migrant organizations.



*How to deal with cultural differences, knowledge of the world and backgrounds of migrants, strengthening the empathy of staff members, how to deal with other cultures?*

Trainings and workshops are a tool for this.

*What does it mean for the educational process?*

Improvement of the training policy within the organization aimed at diversity and inclusion

## 4.4 Needs of the clients

Learning organization is about daring to make choices and working in a small context. Especially people with a migrant background need a lot of time. People with a migrant background want:

- Be treated equally
- Try to get everybody in a learning organization
- Take into account the way of communication
- Professionals need insight into specific skills and competences.

## 4.5 Possible impact on the organization and the management?

Reflection on the aims of the organization and the need to reflect their own competences in terms of getting better qualified staff and better performance for the benefit of the public and especially improving cooperation with migrant organizations.

*New challenges and being better prepared to deal with the knowledge of diversity policy and skills*



New challenges and being better prepared to deal with the knowledge of diversity policy and skills is an enrichment for the merger organization. Without such cooperation, no intercultural organization can be built. Migrants must experience the feeling of welcome of Amaryllis as a welfare organization also for migrants. Finding people from a similar culture in the organization makes them more familiar with it.

As described above, the organization is still subject to many external influences and it is sometimes difficult to cope with all the changes. Rules and laws certainly play a role, preventing the organization from making choices and initiating changes. These rules and laws are edited by the municipality of Leeuwarden, from which Amaryllis receives subsidies.

*Start with a think tank!*



Starting with a small working group, a think tank would be very useful. From here, movement, action plans and gradual growth can be worked on. Working on an agreement with the board and management for creating the support package of activities is necessary.

## **Building a network relationship with migrant organizations is a must!**

In addition, it is important to think about the importance and necessity of the migrant organizations for the challenges and innovation within the organization. Adaptation of the current means of communication used and alignment with the target group of migrants should be ensured. In the coming period, contact will have to be made with migrant organizations and key figures. The target groups and their self-organizations are the representatives of the Surinamese Hindus, Turks, Moroccans, Syrians, and Somalis communities. Next, you can investigate which specific knowledge the organization can reach and use. Organizing meetings and approaching people personally could also be successful. Organizing meetings in cooperation with the mentioned target groups on how to deal with cultural differences, bridging cultural gaps would be very valuable.

### **4.6 Role of local Authorities**

Adaptation of the current means of communication used and alignment with the target group of migrants should be ensured. In the coming period, contact will have to be made with migrant organizations and key figures. The target groups and their self-organizations are the representatives of the Surinamese Hindus, Turks, Moroccans, Syrians, and Somalis communities. Next, you can investigate which specific knowledge the organization can reach and use. Organizing meetings and approaching people personally could also be successful. Organizing meetings in cooperation with the mentioned target groups on how to deal with cultural differences, bridging cultural gaps would be very valuable.

*Revaluing social networks, a social map with migrant organizations is urgent for innovation within the organization to serve clients with a migrant background.*





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