Community Governance Action

A Tilitonse Foundation Newsletter: Issue 2, July 2021

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This is the second edition of the Community Governance Action newsletter by the Tilitonse Foundation. It covers the period April – June, 2021 and it focuses on Health Governance, specifically on interventions on Drug Pilferage. The Foundation is supporting projects on Drug Pilferage through the CBO Call Window I, and this work falls under the Active Citizenship, and Gender and Social Inclusion Result Areas of the 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan. The edition also provides highlights of the support the Foundation is providing to CBOs to monitor the Affordable Input Programme (AIP)

Various studies conducted in the past 5 years in the health sector have identified inefficiencies in the sector; these inefficiencies take various forms including theft of drugs and medical supplies. In the period January 2021 to January 2022 the Tilitonse Foundation has provided grants to a total of 10 projects to address Drug Pilferage in the districts of Dedza, Lilongwe, Nkhotakota, Chitipa, Karonga, Rumphi, Mzimba, Chikwawa, Zomba and Mangochi. These projects are implemented by Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in selected traditional authorities (T/As) of the districts.

The projects have recorded and continue to record successes and register results in a number of areas. These include engaging the District Health Offices to improve delivery of health services at health facilities level in the districts through effective and efficient delivery and use of drugs and medical supplies; mobilizing communities to monitor the delivery and utilization of drugs and medical supplies at health facilities level; increase accessibility and utilization of primary health services and drugs at community level; and developing capacity of health governance structures at health centre level to monitor management of drugs and medical supplies.

Through this edition of the newsletter, the Tilitonse Foundation wishes to engage you as readers, stakeholders on governance issues and citizens to understand the issues surrounding health governance at community level, and provide information on what is being done and what is expected of Malawians in contributing to improved health governance. We highlight the actions currently being undertaken and results being registered, but also present the individuals and groups of people actively involved in the actions in order to attach a human face to the stories. We intend to provide a platform where as citizens you will be able to, not only understand the Foundation’s work, but engage and critique the interventions so that together we forge ahead building a Malawi where all citizens especially the poor and marginalized access better health services.

Robert White
Chief Executive Officer
Karonga South, in Traditional Authority (T/A) Wasambo, is one of the areas that have not been spared from Drug Pilferage cases. To address this, Ukhondo Services Foundation (USEF) is implementing a project titled “Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Oversight in Health Facilities in Karonga”. This project aims at increasing vigilantism and awareness on access to primary health care services at community level in T/A Wasambo. To kick start the project, USEF facilitated election for new Health Centre Management Committees in the 7 Health Centres where the Project is being implemented and conducted an orientation on their roles. A visit to Fuliwa Health Centre established improved functionality of the Health Centre Management Committee (HCMC) to the delight of community members as explained by Mr Patrick Mwafulirwa, a member of the HCMC.

“Some of us were in the previous HCMC, we were not trained and did not know our roles. When we got re-elected this time, we were trained and now we know our roles and responsibilities. We have a duty roster in place where we give each other turns to oversee work at the hospital. Members ensure that the hospital is being opened on time, we now have access to the pharmacy, we witness all deliveries of drugs and other hospital supplies. The training included how we can differentiate Malawi Government drugs like LA (Lumefentrine Artemether) from other drugs. I thank USEF that I can support my community at the health centre well and can identify drugs owned by the Malawi government and protect them from pilferages.”

The visit further established that the trainings that USEF conducted enlightened community members of their rights and those of the health workers. This has helped to instill cordial relationships among HCMC, Health workers and the community as evidenced by the quote below from the chairperson of the HCMC.

“Previously we thought that it was only the patients that have rights. We now know the number of hours that Health Workers are supposed to work and we relay the same message to our fellow community members and this has improved the relationship between the communities and the Health workers,” added Lyake Kamendo Chairperson of the HCMC.

It was evident that the benefits of the trainings continue to mushroom as the Fuliwa Health Centre Officer – in - Charge, Mr Lewis Kamwera, observed that the current committee has been supportive in helping the health centre to improve its operations by embracing the innovative ideas that are brought forward to account for resources.

“The three months that HCMC has been in operation, has been handy in managing the health facility. Members are always here to oversee the work and one unique thing they have done is to introduce accountability measures regarding the fines that are collected at the health facility. The HCMC has introduced a receipting system which previously was not there and they do report on funds collected on monthly bases. They produce plans and reports on how the money is utilized. The money is used to address minor problems that the Health Centre encounters”.

The strengthening of the Health Centre Management Committees at Fuliwa Health facility is expected to benefit a population of over 17,895 people from 20 villages, and the project will run for twelve months with a total funding of Euro 25,000.
Face to Face with Game Changers in Health Governance

Tukupina Nyirenda (Capacity Development and Mentorship Officer at the Tilitonse Foundation) caught up with Mr. Ousman Kennedy of Makanjira Development Foundation. She wanted to find out more on the progress of the project which Tilitonse Foundation is supporting.

First of all, tell me about yourself and Makanjira Development Foundation

My name is Ousman Kennedy - the Chairperson of Makanjira Development Foundation. I am a lawyer by profession and I am from Makanjira. Makanjira Development Foundation was established by the people of Makanjira in Mangochi district, and was later incorporated in March, 2019 as a local nonprofit organization under the Laws of Malawi.

The mandate of Makanjira Development Foundation is to spearhead the development of Makanjira community through the participation of its own people. The organization instils the spirit of self-reliance among the community members so that they should be the catalysts of development in the area. The vision of the organization is to make Makanjira a self-reliant community where everyone can afford a decent life and hold the power to create the opportunity for others.

You have a grant agreement with Tilitonse Foundation to implement a project. What problem is the project addressing?

Makanjira is one of the hard to reach areas in Malawi where issues of drug theft are very rampant. With almost 101 kilometers away from Mangochi District Hospital, the area has recorded increased cases of massive theft of drugs in all the 5 health centres that fall within its jurisdiction. These health centres include Makanjira, Maganga, Lukoloma, Lugola and Lulanga. The problem has largely been caused by inadequate oversight roles among the community health governance structures (i.e. Health Centre Management Committees) in monitoring resources for health.

Be that as it may, drug pilferage is a cancer that erodes people's right to access quality health services since the drugs that are meant to assist the communities in these health centres for free end up in shops and private hospitals and pharmacies where the community members are forced to pay for them, which they were supposed to get for free at public health centres.

Drug theft in Makanjira is said to be highly organized with the involvement of health workers and a distribution circuit. This involves eliminating all the evidence of stolen drugs and bribing those in charge of supervision to create reliable sales outlets and other informal market outlets for drugs. Since Makanjira shares a border with Mozambique at Chala, drugs have also been reportedly carried across the border to Mozambique.

What change do you want to see at the end of the project and how will the change happen?

The organization has aligned its project with the Malawi Agenda 2063 philosophy and vision which envision an active and engaged responsible citizenry that participate in the conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of the national development. The Robust Health Management Campaign (RHMC) seeks to provide a direct intervention which will improve the management of health units in Makanjira through the introduction of a rigorous system of control and management of drugs in all the health centres of the area. Thus, the organization expects the community to actively participate in the management of health centres in the area by monitoring the utilization of drugs and medical supplies in all the health centres of Makanjira, and report cases of drug pilferage to relevant authorities for action.

The organization is also desirous to see proactive Health Centre Management Committees in the area that will be able to track drug usage, and monitor health care services through community monitoring mechanism. The HCMCs will also undertake strategic planning, provide fiduciary stewardship, and monitor performance and achievement of targets of health centres in the area in a bid to achieve quality standards.

I understand you are using toll free line to encourage people to report on cases of drug theft from public health facilities. Can you shed more light on how the system works?

Indeed, Makanjira Development Foundation has installed a toll - free number (3054) in a bid to strengthen the community's participation in health care management as the toll - free number will provide a convenient means for reporting cases of continued on page 6
Community Participation Leads to Improved Services at Msese Health Centre

By Chandiwira Chisi

Msese Health Centre lies on the foot of hills in T/A Khosolo, Mzimba District. The place is a few kilometers from Jenda Trading Centre. The earth road leading to this destination winds its way down steep slopes and ascends up the hills making it difficult to travel during the rainy season.

Muumoza Youth Organisation is the implementing organization. The organization is rewarding whistleblowers with cash upon providing key information that leads to the apprehension of culprits involved in drug pilferage in the area. Apart from reporting cases of drug pilferage, the community is also being encouraged to utilize the toll-free line to provide feedback regarding the nature of services which they receive from the health centres operating in Makanjira.

The initiative has already started paying dividends as some people have been arrested for allegedly being found with drugs in their homes without license, after some community members tipped off the organization about the existence of a well-coordinated syndicate of drug theft perpetrators.

What other mechanisms have you put in place to address drug theft?

The organization has also dispatched well-branded suggestion boxes in all the targeted health centres in the area. Through the suggestion boxes, members of the Makanjira community will be able to give feedback pertaining to the operation of the health centres in the area.

Over and above, Makanjira Development Foundation is airing Special Radio Programmes (SRP) on Times Radio which are aimed at raising awareness of the project for the community participation. However, to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the initiative, the organization bought 13 solar powered FM radio gadgets and formulated 13 Community Radio Listening Groups (CRLGs) comprising 20 members per group in all the strategic places of Makanjira.

Any words for government at District Council level and national level on drug theft?

Malawi continues to lose millions of Kwachas due to theft of drugs and medical supplies in its hospitals and health centres across the country. As a result, ordinary people are being denied access to necessary health care due to drug theft in hospitals and health centres. The impact of this loss falls particularly hard on the poorest who cannot afford commercial medicines. It is high time the government took an active role in curbing drug pilferage by empowering the Police to prosecute people involved in drug theft.

As an organization which is striving to combat drug pilferage in Makanjira, our expectation is that both the Police and the Judiciary will complement our efforts by prosecuting and handing out deterrent sentences to perpetrators of drug theft in Makanjira including health workers who are aiding and abetting the vice.
partner for the project titled “Enhancing Governance and Health System Accountability for People-Centred Health Care in Mzimba Rural”. This is a 12 months’ project with a grant amounting to K13,513,272.50. The project aspires to have empowered citizens who are able to enjoy quality health care services in T/A Mabilabo and Khosolo.

The project started in January 2021. One key intervention is to build capacity of the new Health Centre Management Committee which had just been elected and had no capacity. Muumoza organized a training targeting the Committee and this was coupled with development of work plan and schedule for support to Msese Health Centre. Health Centre Management Committee is a decentralized structure comprising elected community members whose core responsibility is to bridge the health facility staff and communities to ensure smooth provision of services. The structure also provides checks and balances to the facility staff to ensure that the facility provides optimal services. This includes protection of drugs from abuse like selling to vendors.

Enestine Nyirongo is a member of HCMC and had this to say;

“We were elected in January this year by the community under the health facility management team. We did not know what our role was. We were not trained but we were told that from February 2021 to February 2022, the community wanted to see change in the way the medical staff handled patients. The community wanted to see reduction in death rates. Muumoza came in with a timely intervention and trained us on our roles. Since then, we have been working. Medical staff are giving it their all. No patient is left unattended to even if they come in the night.”

Rose Msofi, another member of HCMC collaborated what Enestine said;

“We have resolved a number of things since we got trained. We have been able to engage health personnel to act on community concerns regarding quality of services. Medical staff are able to adhere to starting times and knocking off times. In many cases they give in more. We are able to witness receiving of drugs from Central Medical Stores and we access the disbursement register for reconciliation. This has taken away the perception of drug theft and possibly closed any loop holes for drug pilferage which may have been there before.”

The Officer in Charge for the facility, Mr Lumbani Nyirenda had his observations too.

“This team looks promising compared to the team that left. In a very short time, they have changed things already. They know what they are doing. They have set a functional financial system that tracks funds in and out of community contributions towards developments around the facility. They have also done so well in dispute resolutions between the communities and ourselves. This is very commendable and it is my wish that this role should be sustained.”

From the observations, it is very clear that a functional HCMC is very key to quality health service delivery to the communities. Its composition is derived from the community and if it functions per its mandate, communities get empowered to demand the best services from the facilities. The HCMC acts as a bridge or interlocutor with the health facility service providers. In the case of Msese Health Centre and the surrounding community, the structure is working very well and people are getting good services.
As Malawi rolls out the Malawi Vision 2063, the Tilitonse Foundation continues to support the operationalization of this important development framework through direct interventions and engagement, and supporting grant partner projects. A key area of focus for the Foundation is Urban Governance and Management, specifically on Waste Management in urban centres.

On 11 June, 2021 the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) launched a Sustainable Waste Management Campaign for Blantyre City under a Tilitonse Foundation supported project titled ‘My City, My Space’. The launch combined several activities, starting with a clean-up campaign that took place from Nyambadwe Primary School to Nasolo River Bridge at Chinseu in Ndirande, Blantyre. The campaign involved various stakeholders that included traditional and political leaders, civil society organizations and representatives from the Blantyre City Council. The occasion saw members sweeping the streets, collecting plastic materials for recycling and engaging the local people on the importance of waste management and keeping the city clean.

‘It is the responsibility of each resident of Ndirande and people of Blantyre City to keep the city clean and manage waste for better well - being’, Herbert Mwalukomo, Executive Director for CEPA in a brief at the start of the Clean Up Campaign.

The launch of the campaign was spiced up by a Dinner that took place in the evening of the same day at Ryalls Hotel, Blantyre and was attended by the Minister of Forestry and Natural Resources, Hon. Nancy Tembo (MP) who was also the Guest of Honor. At the function, the Minister also officially launched the National Waste Management Strategy for 2019 – 2023. The function was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources, Department for Environmental Affairs, Deputy Mayor for the City of Blantyre, Councillor Joseph Makwinja, academicians, representatives of civil society organizations working on environmental issues, representatives of the Youth and the media. In her remarks, the Honorable Minister expressed appreciation for the support Tilitonse Foundation is providing in Waste Management through the Urban Governance and Management projects, and the role CEPA is playing in environmental management, and waste management in particular. She expressed her hope that the Sustainable Waste Management Campaign under the ‘My City, My Space’ project will go a long way in supporting Government aspirations to achieve World-class urban centres and tourism hubs across the country with requisite socio-economic amenities for a high-quality life; and an environmentally sustainable economy as espoused in the Malawi Vision 2063.

‘This is an important activity. It may look like the people of Ndirande are not eager to participate in the activities now just because it’s a new initiative. I would encourage you to carry out such activities time and again, and engage us as inhabitants of Ndirande. Overtime, we will own and drive the clean-up campaign’. Quote from a furniture business owner at Chinseu

It is a known fact that uncontrolled and unmanaged amount of waste damages the environment, is a public health concern and a hindrance to economic prosperity in Malawi. A better environmental sustainability and good quality of life of the people of Blantyre City will depend on effective waste management: proper waste collection, garbage disposal, recycling of resources, among others.
Launch of the My City My Space Project and National Waste Management Strategy in Pictures

By Gloria Majiga Kamoto

Honourable Nancy Tembo distributes copies of copies of National Waste Management Strategy

Delegates follow proceedings

Robert White, Tilitonse Foundation CEO

Deputy Mayor for Blantyre City Council, Councillor Joseph Makwinja

Honourable Nancy Tembo, Minister of Forestry and Natural Resources
These are voices from smallholder farmers from Salima and Chitipa Districts where Tilitonse Foundation is supporting projects that are focussing on monitoring of the implementation of Affordable Input Programme (AIP) of the Government of Malawi. The aim of the support to the projects is to generate useful information that is evidence based which Government can use to improve implementation of the Programme. The other aim of the project interventions is to create functional community led monitoring mechanisms that can survive beyond the projects.

**Name of Community Member:** Rute Gabriele 59

**Location:** Vinjati 2 Village TA Mwaza, Salima

**Size of farm:** 0.5 Acre

**AIP support accessed:** Bought 1 Urea and 1 23:21:0 and 1 5kg

**Yield:** 3 oxcarts, 20 50kg Bags

**Household size:** 7

“Delivery of inputs was not good, the first truck only came with 23:21:0. When I went back to buy Urea, the supplier was saying that I had already bought both Urea and 23:21:0. Lucky for me the Extension Worker was there to convince the supplier that I had only bought 23:21:0. I was not given a receipt when I bought the fertiliser. These cases would have been avoided if we were given receipts after purchasing the inputs”.

**Name of Community Member:** Molesi Mkwayi Muombo 1 village TA Mwaza, Salima

**Size of farm:** 2 Acres

**AIP support accessed:**

**Yield:** More than twenty 50kg bags

**Household size:** 7

“I was registered for AIP but during buying time, my name was not on the list of beneficiaries. This affected my plans because I did not plan to buy the extra fertiliser. Instead, I used manure to supplement the bags that I had bought”.

**Random Quotes from Misuku, Chitipa**

“Some of us were only allowed to buy 23:21:0 but we were not allowed to buy UREA, however the same Urea was sold on the prevailing market price”.

“In some villages some Household registered five members whilst in some only one member was registered whilst some households did not have access to the AIP fertiliser”.

“The inputs should be delivered as early as August because after the rains start, it is difficult for vehicles to come to Misuku and the suppliers ask us to buy from Kapoka trading Centre which is costly. This also affects our friends from Nthalire which is very far away from Kapoka”.
“The government should consider increasing the number of selling points because there is only one selling point for the whole TA. This means that people from Chinsasu and Mughona which is more than 36 kilometres away have to buy from Misuku. Travelling can take 5 hours sometimes only to find that it is not their Village's buying day and they spend two or three nights therefore spending more money. This also had an effect on family relationships because of suspicions of promiscuity”.

“The seed that we got was not compatible with the weather”.

“The government should consider engaging ADMARC as one of the suppliers because they have a number of satellite markets and they know the terrain and seed requirements for Chitipa”.

“There was no transparency during the selling of the inputs. The vendor did not involve the local structures as a result there were suspicions on the cards that failed to read because there was no one to verify if the cards really failed to read. We recommend that during the next season, extension workers or local leaders should be oriented on the system so that they take part in verifying such cases”.
Local Solutions to Monitoring Affordable Input Programme Vital

By Chandiwira Chisi

Tiltonse Foundation is working with Salima Governance Network to institute local monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the Agriculture Input Programme (AIP) delivers. This is being done through a 12-month project, Tilondole which started in January 2021 and is being implemented by Salima Governance Network (SAGNET). The project with funding amounting to Euro 25,000 aims at empowering citizens to demand accountability and transparency in accessing the Affordable Input Programme (AIP). AIP is a government of Malawi driven initiative which aims at accessing smallholder farmers with seed and fertilizer at heavily subsidized price. Besides the seed, each farmer selected from a household accesses 2 bags of fertilizer, 50 kg each at 25% of the market price. Government sees this as a strategy for boosting food security in Malawi. The project targets 4 Extension Planning Areas, namely Chipoka, Chinguluwe, Matenje and Chiluwa. The AIP is a successor to Farm Input Fertiliser Subsidy Programme which targeted fewer people and was embroiled in mass logistical hitches and corruption. The expectation was that AIP would take off in 2020/21 having shed off the predecessor challenges.

Mr Mussa Jekisoni is Secretary to Affordable Input Programme Accountability Club for Chiluwa Extension Planning Area. This is what he said on the challenges that beset the roll out of the AIP;

“Some names of people that were registered to benefit from the Programme were missing. In some cases, registration exceeded the number of people in a village. There were massive cases of double registration where a person could register in two villages. This denied a chance for others to access the farm input. In some cases, registered beneficiaries were shocked to go to a supplier and be told that their names showed that they had already bought when in true sense they had not bought the input.”

Essentially, contrary to government directive to register one person with an ID per farming household, extension workers ended up registering anyone with an ID. This also contributed to an inflated number of people expecting to benefit. This was largely driven by greed by household members who never declared that they were coming from same household. As a result, the entire district had 123000 HH that were registered and only 100,000 were allowed to access farm input.

In Chipoka, a supplier removed 500 bags of fertilizer from the system without an explanation. The public perceived this as theft. This was reported to Police and it was only much later into the growing season, too late for the farmers, that the supplier returned the fertilizer. This is one of the many of the challenges on the supply end of AIP.

It is against this background that Salima Governance Network...
Network (SAGNET) saw the need for establishing structures for community participation in the implementation of the Affordable Input Programme to ensure that these ugly and resurfacing challenges are dealt with once and for all. SAGNET facilitated establishment of Affordable Input Programme Accountability Clubs in each of the 4 EPAs where the project is being implemented. Knowing the importance of collaboration, SAGNET established the clubs in such a way that they were as inclusive of key stakeholders as possible. The composition is 20 and the 20 are drawn from Area Stakeholder Panel, CBOs, Community Policing, extension workers and local farmers. This far 4 have been established and oriented in social accountability.

Mr Thomas Mwangupili is the Executive Director for SAGNET and he shed more light on progress made this far;

"Having empowered the AIPACs with monitoring skills, a lot of progress has been registered on the ground. We engaged the Chief Agriculture Officer throughout and her office supported us and gave technical advice. The AIPACs are recognized. During the 2021-22 registration of beneficiaries, AIPACs were part of the team and made sure that they validated identity of those registering to avoid cases of multiple registration. So far the registration went out well. We are looking forward to the cleaned register which will form the basis for those that will benefit from the Programme."

Mussa Jekisoni further echoed the sentiments of Mr Mwangupili;

"We plan to be very vigilant this time around. We will validate the final register. We will ensure that cases of misalignment of IDs and ID numbers don’t happen this time around. We will demand that names and details of suppliers are shared with us. We will ensure that people buy input at government established price and not inflated prices as was the case last year. We will divide ourselves into rosters to provide vigilance at the selling points all the time."

SAGNET is also working with the Media Team which helps in amplifying issues of concern. Regularly, SAGNET engages with District Agriculture Office to brief the Chief Agriculture Officer and her team on issues coming out from the ground and these are addressed there and then. This was verified through a district stakeholders’ meeting which Tilitonse Foundation participated in. Both the Chief Agriculture Officer, Mrs Sellina Malaga and the AIP Desk Officer, Mr Jayka Kipandula collaborated this. This working relationship is very crucial for the success of the AIP in Salima District.

"We work very closely with SAGNET. They have access to our offices where they report issues picked and we attend to them. Most of the bottlenecks experienced in the growing season have been communicated to Ministry and the Minister has assured us that this time around, the programme will start earlier, possibly in August," Ms. Sellina Malaga, Chief Agriculture Officer, Salima.

With community well organized on the ground and equipped with adequate skills, collaboration with the District Agriculture Office and Media team and SAGNET as an interlocutor, chances are high that implementation of AIP for 2021-22 will be a success in Salima District. This arrangement is something that can be emulated and replicated in other parts of the country. Already, there are questions around the massive investments made in AIP, effectiveness, value for money and sustainability. Tilitonse Foundation opines that in the short term with clear exit strategy, AIP remains vital for food security. What will be important is efficient and effective implementation. The community must be part of the whole supply chain to ensure that the Programme attains its intended goals.

It is assuring to hear that Govt plans to roll out the Programme as early as August and that there is commitment to address bottlenecks identified in the 2020/21 Season.
Overview of Tilitonse Foundation Performance

Contributors: Robert White, Tinkhani Khonje and Geoffrey Singini

Grants Portfolio

Total of 11 Projects
- SRHR
- Drug Pilferage
- Extratives
- Local governance service delivery
- Local government revenue generation and utilization
- Restorative Justice
- Access to cervical cancer screening and treatment
- Citizen voice in nutrition investment
- Quality public service delivery
- Civic participation in public procurement

Total of 5 Projects
- Urban Governance and Management
- Active Citizenship in Kauma, Lilongwe
- Sustainable urban development, nationwide
- Active citizenship and stakeholder engagement in Mzuzu
- Urban Governance and Management for improved livelihoods, Zomba
- Institutional collaboration in urban governance, Lilongwe

Total of 5 Projects
- Urban Governance and management
- Waste Management in Blantyre
- Revenue Generation and Management in Mangochi
- Active citizenship and policy engagement, Lilongwe
- Strengthen urban governance, Mzuzu
- Active citizenship and Revenue Generation, Zomba

Total of 20 Projects
- Drug pilferage
- Monitoring AIP
- Monitoring NEEF
- Access to youth friendly SRHR services
- Urban Governance and Management

Contributors: Robert White, Tinkhani Khonje and Geoffrey Singini

Look out for our next edition of the Community Governance Action where the Foundation will share with you developments and results from the Thematic Call II grants on Urban Governance and Management
COVID-19 IS REAL!

Get Vaccinated
Always mask up and keep your distance

Don’t be the weak link!

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