

what better time than now?

rish Bangladesk



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Foreword

It has been only nine months since a small group of volunteers with a special place in their heart for Bangladesh got together. They wanted to help Bangladesh deal with the pandemic, the aftermath of cyclone Amphan, and the destruction left behind by one of the worst cases of flooding in decades. The need was urgent. Today, we are a registered charity, fundraising for 14 rigorously vetted NGOs and grassroot volunteer groups. So far we have funded approximately half a million meals through dry food and cash transfers to 25,000 individuals in 24 districts of Bangladesh. Whether it be flood-affected households in Satkhira, Covid patients in Severe Acute Respiratory Infection - Isolation and Treatment Centres, slum dwellers of Dhaka, Rohingya refugees in the camps of Cox's Bazar, transgender individuals in Sirajganj, sex-workers in the brothels of Bagerhat, poor children attending school, disabled individuals in Rajshahi, or the low-income households in Kurigram, thanks to our implementing partners and donors, Nourish Bangladesh has provided support to a very diverse group of economically deprived communities throughout Bangladesh.

Our primary strengths remain our rigorous vetting process, transparent internal protocols, no operating costs, commitment to diversity, and the incredible drive of our team members to do good, efficiently. We consider it our deep responsibility to make the most out of every penny. Consequently, we are very careful about choosing our implementing partners and monitoring the work we fund. Nourish Bangladeshvetted NGOs and volunteer groups are indeed very special; they are not only doing some tremendous work in the field during these very difficult times, but passing our vetting process and continuing to deliver on their promises.

No organization can be successful without the dedication of its worker bees, and it is no different for us. Our advisors are the best. They are creative, dedicated, and, most importantly, not afraid to share their constructive insights while patiently listening to the ideas of others. Because we applied for federal tax-exempt status in the US (501(c)(3) status), we were required to form a Board. However, all important Nourish Bangladesh decisions are made democratically by roughly three dozen advisors from the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and Bangladesh through a consensual decisionmaking model. In late May, we will be launching a drive to invite additional members to join our organization.

We are thankful to each and every donor, supporter, and advisor (current and past), as well as our implementing partners in the field, and our sponsor. A special thanks to Kamran Ahmed, Melissa Scholz, and Ashley Toombs (BRAC USA) for your guidance, advice, and letting us tap into your network. We are very grateful to Edina Realty (Northfield, MN, USA), Cape Sands Inn (Cape Cod, MA, USA), AaBea Bangladeshi Engineers & Architects (NE, USA), NEBAC (NE, USA), and Rotary Club of Northfield

(MN, USA) for being our sponsors. Special thanks to Bengalis of New York (NY, USA), Thrive (MI, USA), the Northfield News (MN, USA), Dana Asia (Sydney, Australia), and Carleton College (MN, USA) for helping us with logistical support, ideas, and promoting our work.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors Nourish Bangladesh



Muhammad Faress Bhuiyan (President)



Laura Kiernan (Vice President)



Jesse Steed (Treasurer)



Ethan Ellis (Vice Treasurer)

a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step



Nourish Bangladesh

Nourish Bangladesh is a multinational charity operating in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and Bangladesh. The two main goals of Nourish Bangladesh are to (i) research and vet non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and volunteer groups that help economically disadvantaged communities in Bangladesh, and (ii) fundraise and disburse donations to these vetted NGOs and volunteers.



Formed in June 2020, Nourish Bangladesh is led by a diverse group of roughly three dozen volunteering advisors and board members composed of academics, students, IT professionals, bankers, and others. Nourish Bangladesh is currently registered in Minnesota, USA, and is expected to receive tax-exempt status in the US shortly. To date, Nourish Bangladesh has provided food relief and cash transfers to a diverse group of low-income Bangladeshi households via fourteen carefully vetted implementing partners including NGOs and volunteer groups.



Key Figures

The Nourish Bangladesh team is composed of 26 advisors and 4 board members. Together we make all important decisions through a democratic and consensual decision-making model during our weekly Sunday meetings. The primary task of the board is to (a) draft relevant internal codes of conduct (e.g. articles of incorporation, by-laws, etc.), (b) work towards registering the charity with the government, and (c) ensure Nourish Bangladesh stays compliant with its internal protocols and relevant government regulations that apply to us.



Every few months Nourish Bangladesh disburses portfolio funds to its implementing partners. The portfolio, Nourish Bangladesh's flagship fundraising effort, is a pool of funds donated through GoFundMe, Facebook, and direct transfers that our donors have trusted us with allocating to a mix of NGOs and grassroots volunteers. As you can see in Figure 1, we disburse between Tk. 5,50,000 and Tk. 9,00,000 each cycle. On the right you can see that we have raised over Tk. 13,50,000 in earmarked funds--donations that have been directed towards a specific NGO and are not disbursed in the same cyclical pattern as the portfolio funds.



Amount disbursed each funding cycling (in BDT)



Action AH	[.] 1,35,392	
Al-Zahoor WF	[.] 2,17,040	
BDesh		
Bidyanondo	⊎ 9,43,220	
BRAC	ખ 2,26,571	
HADA	[.] 2,13,463	
Jaago	[.] 5,78,167	
MJF	[.] 5,59,612	
Thrive	<mark>⊎ 1,28,236</mark>	



Azdani	[.] 3,50,000	
Mithun	 4,70,000	
Salim	^મ 6,00,000	
Zisan	⊎ 1,75,000	

	Exchange Rate (BDT)		
USA (USD)	UK (GBP)	Canada (CAD)	Australia (AUD)
84.79	116.85	67.79	65.58

Amount disbursed to vetted NGO's & volunteer group (in BDT)



Location of Nourish Bangladesh Beneficiaries overlayed with Poverty Incidence



b 50,57,296 Funds Disbursed 6,372 Households Served **27** Districts



Thakurgaon

Groups: HADA Number of Households: 40

Nilphamari 2

Groups: Zisan Number of Households: 214



Dinajpur Groups: Jaago Number of Households: 225

Rangpur Groups: Jaago, MJF Number of Households: 167

Gaibandha Groups: Jaago Number of Households: 132

Kurigram 6

5

8)

Groups: Bidyanondo, HADA, Salim Number of Households: 1438

Jamalpur Groups: HADA Number of Households: 80

Rajshahi

Groups: Bidyanondo, Mithun Number of Households: 528

Sirajganj 9

Groups: MJF Number of Households: 52

10

Mymensingh

Groups: Bidyanondo Number of Households: 415

Gazipur

Groups: HADA Number of Households: 58

(12)





Barisal Groups: BDesh, Bidyanondo, Mithun Number of Households: 815

Satkhira



(15)

Groups: AZWF, BDesh, Jaago Number of Households: 470

Bagerhat Groups: MJF Number of Households: 133



Cox's Bazaar Groups: AAH, BDesh Number of Households: 142



Groups: Bidaynondo Number of Households: 42

Sherpur (18)



Khulna Groups: MJF

(19)

Number of Households: 10 Pirojpur Groups: Jaago

Number of Households: 66



(21)

(22)

Pabna Groups: MJF Number of Households: 3



Number of Households: 5

Jessore



Groups: MJF Number of Households: 8



Manikgonj Groups: MJF Number of Households: 5



Chittagong Groups: Bidyanondo Number of Households: 214



Groups: Bidyanondo Number of Households: 200



Netrokona Groups: Mithun

Number of Households: 120













Working with JAAGO Foundation Swarupa Haque

JAAGO is a Dhaka based NGO with the mission of creating Bangladesh free of exploitation, discrimination and violence. They intend to help Bangladesh reach its full socioeconomic potential through advancing human capital and youth development. Additionally their education project supports roughly 3,500 students, JAAGO also runs Volunteer for Bangladesh, which provides a platform to 35,000 Bangladeshi youth for volunteering. We recently chatted with JAAGO's Communication Manager (Founder Office), Swarupa Haque.



Can you tell us about your role at JAAGO and what you like the most Tabout working for JAAGO?

I have been working as a Communication Manager at JAAGO Foundation for the last five years. I contribute to both external and internal communication.

On the external front, I work as a bridge to align the beneficiaries' needs with the sponsors' predisposition to help deprived communities. I also design fundraisers in collaboration with different organizations and universities.

Internally, I facilitate inter-departmental communications. I work with interns and volunteers all year round. The best part about working with JAAGO is the support and space for growth. JAAGO let its employees practice leadership and encourage them to develop personal skills. I have learned a lot over the past 5 years.

What misconceptions do you think the beneficiaries and/or benefactors have in general about the current situation?

Unfortunately, there are a lot of misconceptions regarding COVID-19. In rural areas it is believed widespread that the whole COVID-19 situation is a fake story made by city dwellers. Many believe that COVID-19 only affects followers of a particular religion, and it can be prevented by praying to God for mercy.

Tell us a few interesting things about you.

I am a graphic designer. It was JAAGO's mission and vision that attracted me to the development sector. Before joining JAAGO as an official, I used to teach in a JAAGO school as a drawing teacher. I love to paint and can paint for hours. I am very proud of my decision to be a development worker and continue to enjoy this incredible journey.

Tell us some interesting things about JAAGO.

In 2011, JAAGO became the first organization in Bangladesh to adopt the Digital School concept before it became the new normal. During the pandemic, we provided our students with electronic tablets to ensure continuity of their education. JAAGO believes in youth empowerment. Compared to most We can bring about an enormous positive change to society in the next ten years by building more scope for the growth and development of our youth.

Bangladeshi development organizations the average age of JAAGO employees is on the average 10 years younger. Our youth wing, Volunteer for Bangladesh, is active in all 64 districts of Bangladesh. JAAGO is also a women-friendly organization. Seventy percent of our employees are female. The student male-to-female ratio in our schools is 48:52.

What are the most difficult challenges facing Bangladesh today? Do you see them getting better or worse in ten years from now?

The biggest challenge facing the country right now is the so-called demographic dividend. The difference between the non-working and the working age population has both negative and positive impacts on the economy. In order to turn this substantial non-working youth force (sometimes referred to as the demographic gift) into a skillful power hub, the younger population must have access to quality education, adequate nutrition and health.

It is not impossible. The government is taking steps towards the development of Bangladesh's youth and has introduced a number of skills development programs. However, these steps will not be enough if the opportunities are not made more accessible and properly communicated to everyone. It is the responsibility for NGOs like us to step forward and work alongside the government to create a skilled generation. We can bring about an enormous positive change to society in the next ten years by building more scope for the growth and development of our youth.

Do you have anything to say to the Nourish Bangladesh team, our donors, and supporters?

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Nourish Bangladesh. Thanks to the hard work of the Nourish Bangladesh team, we could make sure that hundreds of families had food in times of critical need. Without you, this would not have been possible. A special thanks to all the sponsors and donors for their kind gesture: your support has been incredible.



Did You Know

Did you know the Australian Chapter of Nourish Bangladesh has partnered with Dana Asia (a charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), holding the status of a Public Benevolent Institution) to mobilize tax deductible donations for one of our vetted organizations Bidyanondo. This tripartite partnership allows current and prospective donors to access tax deductions for their donations made to Dana Asia for funding initiatives driven by Bidyanondo under Nourish Bangladesh's supervision.

Dana Asia's decade long experience of working to fight poverty, improve food security and promote education in south and southeast Asia, Bidyanondo's operational excellence in serving those in need and Nourish Bangladesh's relentless efforts in bringing to light the plight of those who are suffering the most in the on-going COVID-19 crisis, exemplifies the impact of our contribution.



Some info about Nourish Bangladesh

Our team consists of a variety of professionals and persons of varying skills and interests. From an airline pilot to a Realtor, from Peace Corps volunteers to academics.

NB is a node that binds together the hearts and brains of dozens. NB was originally only an ad hoc Covid 19 response group that has morphed into a registered organization providing local solutions to global problems.

At NB we have zero overhead costs, our board members and advisors all happily dedicate their time and efforts for free of cost.

NB has grown from a professor and 6 students in the US to a collective of 33 dedicated souls across the globe.







Statistics about Bangladesh

The low elevation of the Ganges Delta, periodic cyclones and the riverine nature of Bengal leads to 18% of the country being flooded each year.

The epicentre of NB's aid efforts - Kurigram district, has a poverty rate of more than 70%.

Aside from city-states, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country on the face of this planet with over 1250 inhabitants per square km.

Tips and Tricks for Running an NGO

Trying to organise international events? You can schedule your events using the Event Time Announcer on timeanddate. com.

Don't have a premium/educational Zoom account and are limited to only 40 minutes? Google Meet now allows you to use its services for free without any restrictions on the duration of your meetings.

Lacking the time/musical spark to create your own tracks? You can download free music from Audio Network.





Conversation with Muhtasim Abshad Zisan



Muhtasim Abshad Zisan is an active grassroots volunteer, and founded an volunteer organization called Cholo Swapno Chui ("Let's Touch Dreams") which undertaken a variety of initiatives responding to the Covid-19 pandemic since March this year. Zisan's work allows Nourish Bangladesh to distribute relief in rural Rangpur, one of the most remote and underprivileged areas of Bangladesh. His group has extensive local knowledge and previous experience, and they have worked on behalf of some of the most trusted and efficient NGOs in the country including Bidyanondo. We sat with him to learn a bit more about him and the incredible work he is doing.

Who is Zisan? Please tell us a bit about the team of volunteers who worked on projects funded by Nourish Bangladesh.

Assalamualaikum—peace be upon you all. I'm a freshman at Khulna University, pursuing a bachelors in Environmental Sciences. I have been actively volunteering since 2012. In addition to leading a Nourish Bangladesh vetted group of grasroots volunteers, I am the founder of an organization called Cholo Swpno Chui (which translates to "Let's Touch Our Dreams"). I am currently the President of Dhrubatara Youth Development Foundation (Rangpur) and International Youth Change Maker (Rangpur), Coordinator of Access to Human Rights International (Rangpur), and a Network Development and Outreach Officer of Youth for the Climate Action Project.

For the Nourish Bangladesh project, I put together a youth group of 10 active volunteers and 5 reserve volunteers. All of the members of our fantastic team are high school or college students! The ten active members are Tasin (completed high school in 2020), Redwan (completed high school in 2020), Mahin (grade 11), Arnob (class 9), Sowrove (class 9), Ovi (class 10), Murad (diploma third year), Aziz (grade 10), Jems (class 9), and Sajjad (grade 12). Thanks to their hard work and the trust of Nourish Bangladesh, we have been able to reach some extremely poor households living in the char areas.

What are the main reasons you volunteer?

Every human being has a desire in life, and my desire is to do something for the people. I started that journey in 2012 with the Red Crescent Society. The goal of my volunteer work is to put a smile on the faces of helpless and disadvantaged people and help them get back on their feet.

Tell us some interesting things about yourself.

When I have time, I like listening to music, reading newspapers, and doing some freelance writing for online outlets. I am a bigger fan of soccer, rather than cricket! My favorite team is Argentina. My only sibling, my younger brother Arnab, is one of the volunteers helping us with the Nourish Bangladesh project. I see all my volunteers as my family members. For the first time in my life, I spent two consecutive Eids away from my family this past year while traveling for volunteer work. But I have no

regrets about this, since I could spread the joy of Eid among the people we helped..

What are some different projects you have volunteered for until now? What was your role in these projects?

In addition to working with Nourish Bangladesh, I have been working as a volunteer for Cholo Swapno Chui since 2018. We help the economically vulnerable mothers and sisters of the village become self-sufficient by providing them incomegenerating assets such as sewing machines, or poultry they can raise. I am leading

For the first time in my life, I spent two consecutive Eids away from my family this past year while traveling for volunteer work...

...but I have no regrets about this, since I could spread the joy of Eid among the people we helped.

this project, called Swapnopuron (which translates to "Realizing Dreams"), and so far we have been able to make more than 60 families financially independent. As part of another project named Oporijita, we educate the underprivileged women in local villages about the use of sanitary napkins. We give free sanitary napkins and encourage their use in the poor char areas. We have also extended support to the orphans of different Hafizia Madrasas multiple times.

Tell us a story from your on field experiences with regards to Nourish Bangladesh funded food distribution.

I have been funded twice by Nourish Bangladesh to distribute dry food to poor households. Both times I went to the people of Nilphamari, living in river-eroded char areas. There I heard from many of our relief recipients that in the midst of the pandemic, they had not had anything to eat or drink except water for 3-4 days at a time, with no income and stuck at home. There is no food, the whole family has not eaten for days, and the local administration has not cooperated with them. All in all, the condition of these people is really dire, and there are many more areas in North Bengal who need help urgently. Even for me it was eye opening. I did not think the situation could be this bad.

Do you have anything to say to the Nourish Bangladesh team, our donors, and supporters?

Thank you to all the donors of Nourish Bangladesh for helping us reach the extremely poor households in the remote char areas of Bangladesh. We earnestly request that you continue contributing. Many people are waiting for the relief your donations provide. It would be nice to get funded during Ramadan and before Eid, since the renewed lockdown will now stop the day laborers from working.



How can You Help

We at Nourish Bangladesh are always open to assistance, so in turn, we can lend a helping hand to those in need. There are a number of ways you can do this:



Take part in donation schemes!

If you'd like to do some quick, easy fundraising, donate your birthday. Simply sign up and follow the steps to help raise money on social media using donate your birthday. Or if you're looking for a perfect gift, send someone a NBD gift card with a certificate of a donation under their name.



Contribute to our special funds.

At Nourish Bangladesh we organise a number of funds for certain events, at this current time there is a Rohingya Refugee Emergency fund, 100% of which will go to that specific cause, in the past we've had a matching fund during Thanksgiving, where every donation is matched, and upcoming is the Zakat fund.







Come to our events!

We host a number of events throughout the year, from trivia nights to DJ events, with an Acoustic Night coming up soon, all of which are plenty of fun and a great way to raise money to fight the hunger crisis.



Donate!

Any amount is greatly appreciated and goes a long way in feeding the hungry, only \$10 USD could feed a family of 4 for a whole week! Head on over to your country's relevant website and click on the donate button, and read about the NGOs and the work they do.

Why not join us?

Nourish Bangladesh is constantly looking to grow and volunteers are welcome. alongside fundraising, within the organisation we always have little projects and ideas going on, with teams of volunteers working on them where they can.



So please reach out, spread the word, and get in touch if you'd like to know more or get involved, thanks for all your help!

Advisor Spotlight: Kevin Smith



Meet Kevin Smith, one of our earliest Nourish Bangladesh advisors. He is an integral part of our communications team working primarily on multimedia projects. He has produced, edited, and recorded several of our informational and promotional videos. A lot of our promotional flyers and photo banners on the web and social media are designed by him. In addition to volunteering for Nourish Bangladesh, Kevin likes to spend time with his family, mess around with computer & DIY projects, play guitar, and bike. Recently, we had a chance to catch up with him:

Why is it so important for you to volunteer? And why Nourish?

I always try to spend some of my time doing volunteer work. I have been lucky in life, and it is important to give back. I got involved with Nourish Bangladesh because I am friends with Faress. I met Faress serendipitously one day at the playground in my neighborhood when our sons began playing together and we became friends at the same time our sons did!

What is your role on the team?

I mainly work on audio/visual projects. I used to be in a band, and I do IT work, so I have some skills in that area.

How would you describe the people at Nourish?

Compassionate, intelligent, fun, and dedicated. I am constantly amazed by the group's ability to come together and focus on accomplishing their goals.

In your opinion, is it better to volunteer one's time? Donate money? Or both?

Both are important. Without money, volunteers

can't do anything; without volunteers, we can't work towards the goal of feeding people in need.

In terms of diversity, inclusiveness, and flexibility how do you see Nourish?

Nourish is the most diverse and inclusive group I have ever been a part of. Because of this, we are able to be dynamic and flexible. I also feel like very few things "fall through the cracks," since there are people approaching issues from almost every possible race, religion, gender, profession etc. Nourish is a great example of the saying "diversity is strength."

When quarantine is over assuming there's no risk for anything, what it's the first thing you'd do?

Go out for a nice burger and fries.

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reaching the unreached

চলো স্বর্গুই

Volunteering from Afar

It can be hard, at times, to truly visualise the calamity of need and the joy of our successes from so far away. My home in Minneapolis, MN, for example, is about 24-hours worth of travel away from Bangladesh. Nevertheless, I am reminded time and time again why our fight for hunger relief is so important.

At our last team meeting, one of our advisors, Tasnim, shared a story from her sister living

"These are just scraps for the dogs!" she said. As tears ran down his face, the man replied, "I will eat anything I can get." in Dhaka. Her sister would often distribute food scraps--chicken bones, potato peels--to the stray dogs living on the streets. One day as she was feeding the dogs, an older, skinny man approached her and asked her to share her food. "These are just scraps for the dogs!" she said. As tears ran down his face, the man replied, "I will eat anything I can get." This short story really moved me, and it is just one example of many that continue to push me to stay in the fight. In a world of abundance, nobody should ever go hungry.

Of course, my inspiration to keep fighting for hunger relief in Bangladesh comes not only from my desire to fight poverty, but also from our successes in the field. I helped found Nourish Bangladesh with my professor and classmates, a group with whom I had traveled



to Bangladesh the winter before and studied the microeconomics of development. From what I thought would be a short-term project to provide emergency food relief, it turned into a multi-national organisation which I am so proud to be a part of. I will never forget the moment when I viewed the first pictures from our partners on the ground, distributing food packages on which they had printed a Nourish Bangladesh logo. I had helped design that logo! I had helped fundraise for that food! Seeing the smiling faces of the people receiving those packages in Bangladesh, all the way in Minnesota, was the best feeling.



Hi! I'm a very recent graduate from Carleton College living in Madison, WI. As a Religion & French major, I am particularly interested in studying issues of inequity and injustice. I feel empowered by my recent class trip to Bangladesh to pursue this project, and I hope that we are collectively able to make an impact. Outside of these interests, I love playing soccer, frisbee, and jamming on my guitar.



Laura Kiernan

Bangladesh Goes into a Second Lockdown

As of Monday, April 5th Bangladesh has returned to a state of lockdown for seven days. The government announced its plans to undertake various Public Health measures to facilitate social distance, to curb the sudden surge of Covid-19 cases.

Bangladesh faces a new reality owing to an almost astronomical rise in Covid-19 cases, hospitals getting overwhelmed and hiccups in the vaccine supply. The expectations for economic recovery have to be revisited as the longing for a return to normalcy for Bangladesh has been delayed by at least a few months.

Needless to low-income say, households are worried about their livelihoods due to the lockdown. Small business owners and daily wage earners such as day labourers and rickshaw-pullers, who constitute a large percentage of Bangladesh's population, earn somewhere between \$5 to \$10 USD per day. It is yet not clear whether the lockdown will end after seven days or will be extended, about bringing an atmosphere of uncertainty all over the country.

Any cursory glance over recent economic projections make it clear that the country is at a high risk of facing an economic downturn. While the middle faces the possibility of job cuts, millions of marginalized households are left without any cash flow as more and more people are faced with the possibility of extreme poverty.

Bangladesh's manufacturing sector has taken significant blows, especially the RMG sector as exports have dwindled. Thousands of migrant workers have either returned or are on their way back due to the fall in demand for labour in global markets.

While the middle faces the possibility of job cuts, millions of marginalized households are left without any cash flow as more and more people are faced with the possibility of extreme poverty.

Given the current situation, millions of Bangladeshis are at risk of potential starvation and they need our support more than ever. Grassroots organizations and initiatives like NB, can play a significant role in poverty alleviation and hunger eradication with your kind support. If you want to help out a family surviving on bread alone for the past week, please please donate to Nourish Bangladesh.





Hi! it's Marufa. I am a Nourish Bangladesh advisor from Toronto and a talent acquisition professional working at a Bank. I love horror and thriller movies!



Marufa Tabassum

(27

Nourish Bangladesh Movement



Ashrafun N. Moutoshi Ethan Ellis Rebecca Chen Leah Johnson Zumee Hasan



Jack Yu Jahirul Islam Zaid Osama



Talha Khan Jack Brown Shabbir Ahmed Khan Midad Arif Marufa Tabassum



Shahed Kazi Shadab Khan Ali Tareque



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Volunteers



Muhtasim Abshad Zisan



Mithun Das



A J Salim



Azdani N Bari

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D

Hourish

Banglad

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