

INCLUSIVE CITY PROGRAMME IN TUNIS RAPID LEARNING APPRAISAL







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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Cities are often planned and managed with limited consideration for the differences in lifestyles, urban experiences, and uses of public space between men and women. Tunisian cities are not an exception in that regard, as municipal plans and programmes rarely account for women's specific needs and preferences. This undifferentiated approach to urban planning limits the potential of public spaces providing avenues for women to equally participate in the social, economic, cultural, and political transformation of their communities and countries.

The Femmedina Inclusive City **Programme** in Tunis, implemented by Cities Alliance in cooperation with the Municipality of Tunis and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), aimed to create safer public spaces that respond to the needs of women in the city of Tunis, in order to enhance their economic, political, social and cultural participation in the public life of the city and, in particular, in the districts of Medina Centrale, Bab Souika, Bab Bhar, and Sidi Bechir. In addition to rehabilitating urban spaces and enhancing their gender responsiveness, the project also aspired to institutionalize a participatory, gendersensitive approach to urban policy-making and planning not only in the Medina of Tunis, but also in other cities in the country. The project, which spanned a period of 20 months from December 2020 to June 2022. was implemented in 3 phases:

- 1. An assessment women's participation in the Medina, which included a survey of the 4 districts' residents, stakeholder interviews with municipal representatives and community leaders, and an analysis workshop with stakeholders. researchers. and Medina residents. The assessment phase produced an assessment report on women's participation within the urban space including policy, programmatic. and spatial recommendations, as well as gender-based community maps spatially representing various dimensions women's participation.
- 2. A co-creation process of inclusive public space projects, which included 4 co-design workshops with Medina residents from various districts and age groups, a process of space selection in coordination with the municipality, and a procurement and implementation stage to reconfigure and design available public spaces to better adapt them to meet women's identified needs. Additionally, this phase included a component on building the capacities of municipal stakeholders gender-sensitive budgeting participatory planning to prepare them for sustaining the spatial interventions and managing them in a way that maintains their appeal to women.
- 3. A city-to-city exchange, including the production and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned with various stakeholders across different cities.





Femmedina is a project by women for women. The project's participatory approach is crucial to us at the municipality, as we want the Medina's women, who know its ins and outs, to suggest interventions that will improve their own participation in the urban space.

Souad Abdel Rahim, Mayor of Tunis

The following chart details the main project activities across the three phases.

PHASE 1

PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MEDINA



Desk review

of reports, publications, and existing policies



Survey of a 100 women and 20 men residing in the Medina



Stakeholder interviews

with municipal stakeholders and community leaders



CREATION OF INCLUSIVE **PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS**



Co-creation workshops

with women to co-design urban interventions



Space selection

in coordination with the municipality



Procurement and implementation of urban

PHASE 3 CITY-TO-CITY EXCHANGE



Content production and dissemination

on the project process and outcomes



Peer-to-peer exchange be-

tween cities on best practices in gender-sensitive planning



Analysis workshop on women's participation in the

Medina



Spatial mapping of women's participation in the Medina



Capacity building

of municipal stakeholders on gender-sensitive budgeting and participatory planning



RAPID LEARNING APPRAISAL

This report presents the results of a rapid learning appraisal for Femmedina conducted by the project team to highlight its outcomes, learning from the process and to identify its results. The report aims to inform the next steps following the Femmedina project to enhance women's participation in Tunis, and to document learning and best practices to be replicated in similar projects promoting women's engagement within their urban environments.

METHODOLOGY

The appraisal process relied on data from various sources, including the following:



A review of secondary data, including the project's assessment report, the related edition from the Journal de la Medina, narrative reports, and data produced through the project's monitoring and evaluation process.

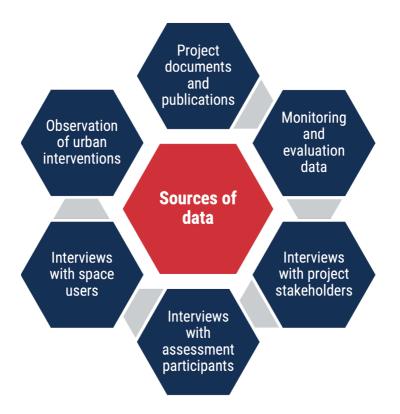


22 key informant interviews with the following stakeholders:

- > Users of the developed interventions
- > Participants in the assessment and co-design processes
- > Elected municipal officials
- Municipal administrators
- > Municipal architects
- > USAID
- > Cities Alliance project team
 - Facilitators of the participatory assessment from Beyond Group and Blue Fish



Observations of urban interventions at various times of the week and the day.



A limitation of this review process is that it was completed a few weeks after the spaces launched and before local NGOs started to manage and activate the spatial interventions, as planned. As such, information about the use of the spaces amongst the Medina's women and residents remains limited. Nonetheless, Cities Alliance has planned to undertake a follow-up monitoring process of the implemented sites to identify further lessons learned and scale-up the programme.

In the following report, data collected from the above sources will be used to illustrate some of the project's immediate outcomes, including the assessment findings, learning, success stories from participants in the research process and stakeholders from the Municipality of Tunis, and the implemented spatial interventions. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations for the next steps.

APPRAISAL FINDINGS

KFY DATA ON THE PROJECT

URBAN OUTCOMES



7 public space interventions to enhance women's participation in the Medina were completed



Around **1500** Women benefited from the project, most of whom are Medina residents

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND SHARING



6 gender-based community maps were developed to spatially represent women's social, economic, and cultural participation in the Medina



9 practical knowledge products, publications, and videos were produced and publicly shared

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Around **800** people attended in person or joined virtually the project's 8 workshops and engagement events



6 Tunisian cities are incorporating lessons learned and approaches to gender-related initiatives from the project



Around **90 local media articles** reporting on the project's interventions and promoting the role of women's leadership in public space development were published

PROJECT PROCESS

Around **150** women were engaged through the assessment, co-design, and implementation process, including public officials and city dwellers

11 city officials and leaders, 9 of whom were women and 2 men, were trained in gender-sensitive budgeting, and participatory project management

17 public sector officials, municipal members, and community leaders, 15 of whom were women and 2 men, participated in an analysis workshop on women's participation in the Medina

87% of participants in workshops and trainings reported high satisfaction with the project activities they participated in

WOMEN-LED PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN



The women-led participatory assessment and design methodology

Women from the Medina contributed to designing the spatial interventions their neighborhood through participatory assessment and design process. They answered a survey on women's participation in the Medina, attended a workshop in the Municipality to analyze survey data with municipal stakeholders and researchers, co-designed spatial interventions responding to their needs in co-creation workshops within their neighborhoods of residence.

The participatory assessment and design process produced a Women's Engagement in the City (WEC) profile, describing various aspects of women's participation in the city's social, economic, cultural, and political life. The WEC profile of the Medina of

Tunis, displayed below, shows that transparency, mobility, safety, and living conditions are the main challenges for the Medina's women. Moreover, the assessment results were also presented in the form of gender-based community maps spatially representing women's social, economic, and cultural participation in the Medina.

The following documents section feedback from the participants in Femmedina project, including residents and community leaders who participated in the assessment phase. data collectors who conducted the survey and contributed to the analysis workshop, and municipal stakeholders participated in the implementation and attended capacity building activities.

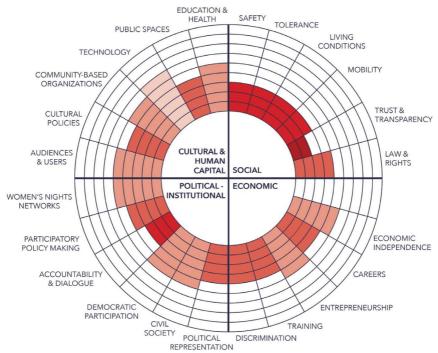




I am thankful for Femmedina because it gave me the opportunity to imagine the Medina as I would like it to be, and share this vision with others.

Salma, University Student and Resident of the Medina

Women's Engagement in Cities

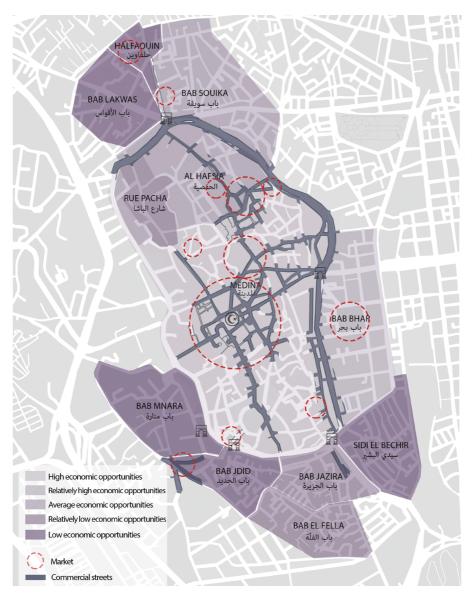




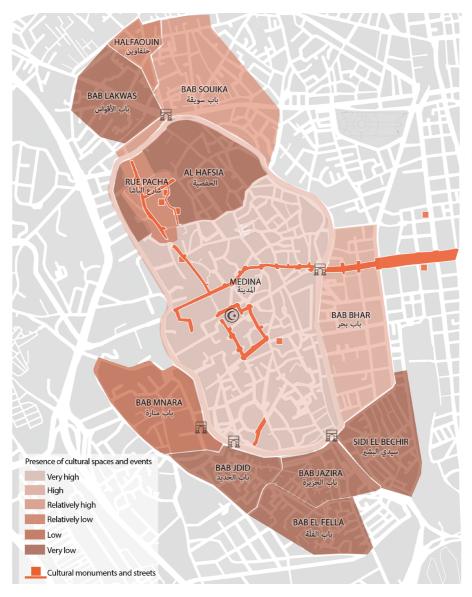
THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE ASSESSMENT

The participatory assessment bolstered women's sense of ownership over engagement in their urban environment. One participant in the cocreation workshop reported that she felt proud for having a say in her city and contributing to making decisions about the neighborhood she lived in. Moreover, while most of the participants in the assessment had lived in the Medina for the majority of their lives, many had rarely been in contact with their local representatives or visited the municipal office. For instance, a Medina resident explained that her participation

in the assessment made her feel for the first time that the municipality listened to women and cared about their needs. After the assessment, she followed the municipality's Facebook page and started learning about projects and activities in the neighborhood. She expressed her happiness for seeing women's voices being amplified, published in a report, and accounted for in decision-making.



Gender-based community map spatially representing women's economic participation in the Medina



Gender-based community map representing women's cultural, religious, and entertainment participation in the Medina



DATA COLLECTORS' STORIES

Young women residing in the Medina led the process of collecting survey data and analyzing the assessment findings in a workshop conducted in the Municipality of Tunis. When sharing their experiences about participating in the process, the data collectors emphasized the skills they learned and the knowledge they acquired. For instance, Zeinab, a data collector mentioned that the process helped her learn how to deal with people from different age groups, areas of residence, socio-economic backgrounds. She also discovered the Medina from a different angle, as she learned about the diversity of its residents, and witnessed how differences manifested themselves

in people's experiences of the shared urban space.

Imen, another data collector, reported that contributing to the assessment process helped her better see the value of the Medina's women and their contributions to the neighborhood's social, economic, and cultural life. She added that contributing to the assessment of women's participation showed her that the Medina implementing gender-neutral policies and programs reinforced the oppression of women. She concluded that public entities should start accounting for women's specific needs in policy-making and programming.





I conducted the survey in my own neighborhood. The women I interviewed told me all about their problems. I met women in the street during the day, and continued the survey with them over WhatsApp at night[...] I heard so many good ideas about what could be done for women in the Medina.

Sonia Ben Saidan, Data Collector



I started interviewing an old lady who has a produce stall and lives alone in a house next to it. The neighborhood women saw me and wanted to talk to me, until I had a big crowd around me in the neighborhood's café. I also talked to school students [...] and I felt that there was a barrier between the Medina's women and the public space.

Imen El Yazidi, Data Collector



INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Femmedina did not only impact individual participants in the process, also worked towards institutional change within Municipality of Tunis to drive the agenda of mainstreaming gender in urban planning and project management. The programme presented a set of policy and programmatic recommendations geared changing the municipality's approach to urban planning and management in a way that enhances women's social, economic, political, and cultural participation. It also delivered two capacity-building workshops on gendersensitive budgeting and participatory project management for municipal members and administrative staff.

Indeed, the project did stimulate institutional change within the municipality, especially given momentum of having the first woman Mayor in office. The head of the women's committee at the municipality reported that the project encouraged elected officials to feel responsible for women's issues within their respective districts. She described how some elected officials who were initially apathetic or even skeptical towards the project changed their attitudes throughout the process and later played an active role in advocating for women's issues within their districts. For instance, she witnessed a head of district take an interest in understanding the challenges her women electorate faced, and lobby for interventions responding to their needs as described in the Femmedina assessment report. Moreover, municipal stakeholders did not only build their capacities through formal trainings, but they also reported acquiring various skills when implementing the project. Indeed, municipal members of the project's steering community reported improving their skills in negotiations, communications, and finding innovative solutions to problems.





The Municipality of Tunis wants to empower women but it has limited resources to advance such a crucial objective. Femmedina has helped us develop interventions for women based on their needs. It has also given us the opportunity to develop our capacities and coordinate with various actors to account for women's perspectives in municipal planning.

Municipal Member, Municipality of Tunis



Women's needs and preferences need to be accounted for in policymaking within the city of Tunis. The municipality should allocate a yearly budget to design and implement programs and interventions aiming to meet those needs.

Municipal Administrator, Municipality of Tunis

PUBLIC SPACE INTERVENTIONS

A main outcome of the Femmedina project was the implementation of interventions in the public space to women's social. enhance cultural. economic, and political participation in urban life. The assessment report and cocreation workshops informed the design of interventions responding to women's aspirations. and Moreover, consultations with the Municipality of Tunis also affected the choice of the locations and interventions to be implemented.





Femmedina's philosophy and approach are great. Such projects are needed for women in the Medina. For example, the implemented interventions in Sidi Bechir and Bab Souika are likely to empower women economically, which is a key issue for women in those areas. I would love to see the project replicated in other needy areas in Tunis, such as Hraira or Zouhour.

Municipal Architect, Municipality of Tunis

The resulting interventions were thus the following:



was implemented in Bab Souika. where wooden kiosks were installed for artisans and entrepreneur women from the neighborhood to sell their products and enhance their access to markets. Playground facilities were also installed to improve mothers' access to the space and encourage them to spend time in it. The Municipality of Tunis will manage this location.



The Green Escape intervention consisting of an open library, with seating areas, and a playground -

was implemented in the Parc du Passage, for women to spend time in a welcoming public space with their friends, and children. The Municipality of Tunis will also manage this location.



The Learning Hub intervention, a capacity building center in Sidi Bechir, was implemented to help

women produce artisanal products and sell their nail treatment services. The formerly unused space was equipped with materials for sewing, crafting, and nail treatment. The capacity building center will be managed by a local association selected through a public tender organized by the Municipality of Tunis.



The Hive intervention - consisting of a shaded seating area with children's playgrounds implemented in Sidi Mfarrej, for the neiahborhood's women to recreational and social activities. The Municipality of Tunis will manage this location.



Haven

The Hidden Park intervention, which is a recreational garden equipped with a sign relaying the story of the Medina's women, was implemented in Torbet el Bey to bolster women's social and cultural engagement. The Municipality of Tunis will also manage this location.



Two training centers were equipped in the municipal buildings of Bab Souika and Bab Bhar, for women and local associations to use for capacity building activities, workshops, and seminars. These spaces will be managed by their

respective municipal districts.

Femmedina did not merely physically equip spaces within the Medina of Tunis, but the project also worked towards preparing the Municipality of Tunis to activate the spaces and sustain them to make sure that they remain welcoming to women. As such, the designed interventions included recommendations to enable the spaces. The project also included a capacity-building component on gender-sensitive budgeting and project management which was delivered to 11 city officials and leaders, 9 of whom

were women. The designed spaces will be managed by the municipality's cultural committee, in coordination with local associations in a few cases, to maintain their contribution to enhancing women's participation in the Medina.

Two of the intervention spaces - the Green Escape in the Parc du Passage, and Women's Safe Haven in Bab Souika - are explored in depth in the following section.













THE GREEN ESCAPE IN PARC DU PASSAGE IN BAB BHAR

Parc du Passage is one of the rare green spaces in the Medina of Tunis, acting as a sanctuary amidst a dense city. Its central location, next to a major communications hub, and close to both commercial and residential areas makes it an ideal location for recreation, especially since residents of the Medina often expressed the need for open spaces, away from the narrow alleyways where they spend the majority of their days. Despite the municipality's renovation efforts and the consistent presence of a police patrol, the park remained dominated by men with limited women's presence.



Women participating in the assessment thought that the park had a reputation for being dangerous, and was thus unwelcoming to them.





Femmedina introduced an open space library to enable the Parc du Passage to host women, and thus change residents' perception of the space. The urban intervention thus consisted of a public library including



of different genres and languages,



playground, public benches, umbrellas, and bins. The open library aims to introduce functions encouraging women to spend time in the park, by equipping areas catering

to their needs of relaxing, socializing, and spending time with friends and family in public space. The intervention enhances women's social and cultural participation in the Medina's life.











A middle-aged woman using the space reported bringing her nephews to play in the park, while she spent time sitting on the public benches. She also sometimes met with her friends there and thought that the rehabilitation made the park more comfortable and welcoming. A Medina resident in her mid-thirties described the space as clean, well-equipped, and aesthetically pleasing. She argued that the crowd present in the park affected her decision about spending time there. While she sometimes hung out with friends in the public space, at other times she felt stressed because of socially stigmatized behaviors in the park, and thus hurried through it to go to safer spaces such as private coffee shops. She nonetheless argued that increased safety measures taraeted entertainment cultural activities for women within the park would encourage her to spend more time there.

While perceptions about the park have been slowly shifting after the project, public space's management the remains crucial for women to feel safe and welcome in it. Given that the location will be managed by the municipality's cultural committee. events activating the space are likely to contribute to changing perceptions about the park, and making it, in the long-term, a key space for the Medina's women to socialize and participate in cultural activities.

WOMEN'S SAFE HAVEN IN BAB SOUIKA

In Bab Souika, a neighborhood primarily hosting families who have migrated from various parts of Tunis, women have limited opportunities to participate in the district's vibrant economic life. Even though Bab Souika hosts several commercial areas that welcome shoppers from all around the capital, only about a third of the neighborhood's women are economically active, knowing that the rate of economic activity for men is almost double that of women¹. Moreover, the neighborhood's women reported rarely meeting and spending time in the neighborhood's streets, as few spaces catered to their needs.

Femmedina introduced an exhibition space, along with playground facilities for children in the neighborhood to enhance women's economic, social, and cultural participation in urban life. The outdoor market area is dedicated to displaying the products of women artisans and entrepreneurs in 10 wooden kiosks. A playground and a sitting area facilitate the use of the space for women, particularly for mothers.

Shortly after the inauguration of the spaces,



0-12 women

started selling their products, including artisanal clothes, accessories, handmade bags and shoes, and beauty products. The number of women selling in the kiosks fluctuates during the days, with around 5 women using the space on a regular basis.

¹ TUNIS: A travers le Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014. (2014). Retrieved from: http://www.ins.tn/sites/default/files/1_TUNIS-1_0.pdf

The artisans and entrepreneurs argued that the intervention was crucial to their economic participation, as they had no other avenues to directly sell their products to clients. The space had thus given them the opportunity to work and provide for themselves and their families. They also described the space as wellequipped, comfortable, clean, safe, and pleasant. Nonetheless, the women selling their products argued that the exhibition space needed better advertising so that more potential clients would visit it, as

few people were currently aware of it. Moreover, creating specific training programs and advertising to connect the Learning Hub intervention in Sidi Bechir to the exhibition space would also help newly trained women to exhibit their products and start their own businesses. Given that the location will be managed by the Municipality of Tunis, and that a sustainability plan will be developed for it, it has a high potential to contribute to creating livelihood opportunities for the Medina's women.





NEXT STEPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Femmedina project implemented spatial interventions in the Medina of Tunis, transformed individuals' skills, attitudes, and behaviors around women's participation in urban life, and enhanced the institutional capacities of the Municipality of Tunis to better integrate gender within its urban planning and programming activities. Nonetheless, providing Tunisian women with equal opportunities and avenues to participate in the cultural, social, political, and economic transformation of their community and country still requires extensive effort. Some next steps to achieve this goal include:



NEXT STEPS AT THE LEVEL OF THE MEDINA OF TUNIS

- Amplify the developed interventions cultural. economic programs and activities that encourage women to participate in public spaces, and engage the community, including both men and women, with the aim of promoting the importance of public spaces for
- Collect, on a regular basis, data on women's use and perceptions of the developed interventions and adapt the equipment, space management model, and activities and programs needs.
- Sustain the developed interventions through a dedicated municipal budget, further develop the municipality's capacities institutionalize mechanisms engaging

NEXT STEPS AT THE LEVEL OF TUNISIA

- Replicate the project in various cities in Tunisia while adapting the process based on the below lessons learned from the project's implementation in the Medina of Tunis to scale the impact and create the necessary momentum to change dynamics related to women's use of public
- Develop municipal capacities to budgeting, urban planning, and project management,
- Share success stories and lessons learned between various cities, and with the general public.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR REPLICATING **FEMMEDINA IN OTHER CITIES**

In order to replicate Femmedina in other cities, the following key actions should be considered:

- Develop a stakeholder map and engagement plan at the beginning of the project process to clarify the roles and expectations of various municipal and community stakeholders.
- Develop a communications plan for the project specifically targeting the Medina's inhabitants to maintain their engagement throughout the project.
- Integrate within the project plan steps for elected officials to communicate project updates and lead the process of co-designing interventions with their electorate to encourage them to develop two-way communications channels with their constituency. particularly the Medina's women.
- Develop a policy dialogue within the municipality around women's participation and recommendations promoting that participation to shift municipal stakeholders' attitudes about women's engagement in the urban space, and advocate for the implementation of the project's recommendations.
- Engage the municipality's elected officials and architects at the start of the process to pre-define intervention areas as this targeted approach would allow for a deeper analysis of gender-based urban dynamics and for the integration of current space uses in the co-creation process with women.





AT THE LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION **DESIGN:**



AT THE LEVEL OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING OF MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Design a capacity-building program that coincides with the whole project process to train select municipal stakeholders as champions of women's participation in the urban space. Transfer through this program the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to equip participants with the adequate capabilities to assess women's needs, co-design interventions with them, and develop gender-sensitive programs and budgets.
- AT THE LEVEL OF SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING:
- Develop a management and sustainability model for each designed intervention as part of the co-design process. Engage the community and local associations in these conversations to increase their ownership and engagement.
- Explore community-led means of managing and sustaining the interventions, develop a shared commons management model, and build the community's capacities in managing and activating public spaces to increase the potential of the local community sustaining the urban interventions.



POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the next steps specific to Femmedina, the following key policy and programmatic recommendations, which resulted from the participatory assessment in the Medina, remain crucial to women's social, political, economic, and cultural participation both in the Medina of Tunis, and in Tunisia as a whole:



Adopt a quota for womenled projects in public procurement.



Strengthen the role of cultural centers to better provide cultural opportunities for women through introducing new programs responding to their needs and preferences.



Review social assistance schemes to decenter the nuclear family as the basis for assistance.



Offer adequate support services to women entrepreneurs, such as coaching, feasibility studies, and market linkages.



Extend opening hours of cultural centers and public libraries for women to use them in the afternoon and on weekends.



Mainstream municipal kindergartens offering reduced rates and onsite childcare services for employees.



Enhance and equip public spaces to become safer for women and more enabling for their social engagement and participation.



Establish a legal facility and support services for women to identify, document, and report discrimination in employment and workplace harassment, and to receive the necessary psychological support.



Establish professional committees for women across different professions.



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