

# THE 'MUANG JAI DEE' TV PROGRAM: THE USE OF COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING TO PROMOTE UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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## Abstract

The objective of the study was to consider how several communities in Thailand applied Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) to Universal Design (UD) principles to renovate their living spaces to make them more accessible to the disabled and the elderly. Universal Design is the concept of special design of buildings and public spaces for persons with disabilities and the elderly. Originally an American and European approach, it has been expanded to include product design, architecture, and urban design and to systems of media and information technology.

The researcher used qualitative methods to gather information by collecting data from documents, from many episodes of the TV program, and from in-depth interviews with those who played a leading role in the program. The data was then analyzed to cross-check for validity and reliability and to identify examples where UD principles had been successfully applied to renovation projects. First, data was collected from videos. The Muang Jai Dee TV program was first broadcast on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and ended on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013. However, the researcher studied 15 tapes of the program via the internet and YouTube. Those tapes were programs 1-9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17 over the four-month broadcast period. Second, data was collected from electronic sources. Here the researcher obtained additional information from Thai Health and ASA from electronic sources, including [www.thaihealth.co.th](http://www.thaihealth.co.th), [www.asa.or.th](http://www.asa.or.th). Third, data was collected from interviews.

**Keywords:** Universal Design. Community-Based Social Marketing, Inclusive Society

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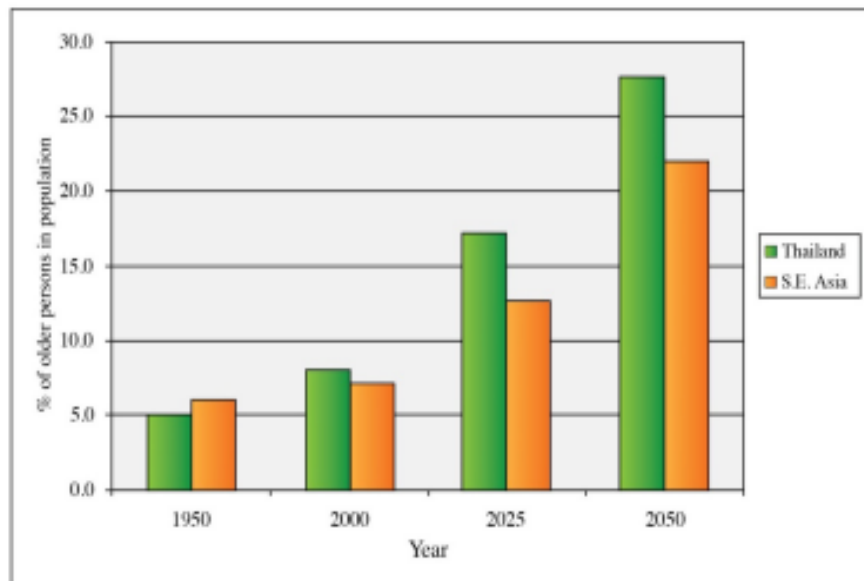
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## INTRODUCTION

Today, one of the most important goals for all countries is to create an inclusive society where we work to improve the standard of living for all people. The world population is changing to become an aging society in regions such as Europe and North America. Thailand too is becoming an aging society. The data from the national statistics office forecasts that in the next 10 years Thailand will become a complete aging society. It is time to address this situation, which not only concerns the income or health of the elderly, but is also about how they can live more comfortably. UD

principles could help them to live better. It can allow them to use facilities safely and aid their participation in their communities.

Data from the Institute for Population and Social Research from the National Statistics Office showed that Thailand is becoming an aging society. An aging society is a society where elderly people over 60 years will represent more than 10% of the total population of the country. The proportion of the elderly in Thailand will increase to 12.9 million in 2025 and exceed 20 million in 2050. Meanwhile, persons with disabilities or users of wheelchairs will rapidly increase too (United Nations Population Fund, 2006).



**Source:** The United Nations Population Fund Thailand (UNFPA), 2006, p. 2.

**Figure 1** Thailand's Population is Rapidly Aging

In Thailand, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Thai Health) is an organization which promotes community based social marketing for campaigns to improve the well-being of Thai citizens. The organization encourages villages, districts and provinces to intensify health promotion by working with non-governmental organizations, companies and the civil society. Thai Health has developed a social marketing plan to deal with many issues involving Thai people, such as alcohol, tobacco, car-bike accidents and physical exercises to neutralize tobacco and alcohol advertising. Thai Health has campaigned to improve the health of all groups of people (children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly). Many plans created by Thai Health deal with social issues such as tobacco consumption control, alcohol consumption, health promotion in the community, children's, youth and family health (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2014).

Consequently, Thai Health sponsored the TV Program 'Muang Jai Dee', a reality show broadcast every Monday between October 2012 and January 2013 from 08.20 p.m. to 09.20 p.m. via the Thai PBS channel, with Mr. Wiwat Wongpattarathiti from Superjeew Company Limited as a producer, who volunteered to promote the principles of UD emphasizing the design for all people in society. This program was created to emphasize on building knowledge, understanding, and inspiration in adapting the built environment to facilitate the needs of disadvantaged people in society. In addition, it was also a quality TV Program, the winner of the Nataraja Award in the Documentary Field, and received the Media Award for Building Dhammacratic Society 2012, "the Fourth Estate Golden Prize" for the Excellent TV Program on June

9<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Although this TV Program has now ended, there is a fan page for Muang Jai Dee published along with programs on Facebook. This fan page still publishes useful news and information as well as video clips of the program. As a result, the program is currently considered a 24-hour program.

### **What is Universal Design?**

As UD is the specific concept of a special design for persons with disabilities; it emphasizes the differences between able and disabled persons. Consequently, the concept is adjusted to provide equality or UD for all people, no matter whether they are persons with disabilities, children, adults, elderly, males, or females, to gain equal benefits from design improvements. This approach to UD links with the concept of building a society that supports all groups of people with equal rights and dignity to become an inclusive society. The main goals of UD were to provide technological facilities, accessibility, and to give importance to aesthetic design. UD can be everywhere, in companies, in daily life or in public accommodation (Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland, 2011). The first use of UD was in the United States by Professor Ron Mace although forms of it were prevalent in Europe well before. For the purpose of this article, UD is defined as 'the design of all products and environments to be usable by people of all ages and abilities to the greatest extent possible (National Disability Authority, Centre for Excellence in Universal Design., n.d.). UD in recent years has assumed growing importance as a new paradigm that aims at a holistic approach ranging in scale from product design to architecture, and urban design on the one hand and systems of media

and information technology on the other (D'souza, 2004, p. 3).

UD refers to the design and composition of an environment or any product, service or building in that environment. Its purpose is to ensure that it meets the needs of as many people as possible, regardless of size, age or ability (Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland, 2011). UD can provide a blueprint for a maximum inclusion of all people. For the environment it is a major concern because it involves important groups of people who are affected by the UD concept. As shown in the national statistics in Y2013, the proportion of Thai people with disabilities who are elderly is more than 50 percent and is expected to increase steadily. There are several requirements to allow persons with disabilities to live a long and active life in order to avoid becoming a burden to their family and society. They should be supported by public policy in terms of managing the environment and a transportation system that encourages people of all ages (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2012b).

### **Community-Based Social Marketing and Universal Design**

Community-based social marketing has some similarly altruistic goals as UD. Social marketing has the goal of changing behavior, and this requires different tools. Social marketing has to focus on consumer orientation, meaning that real importance must be given to individual needs. All parts of the project have to be beneficiaries, the targets as well as the campaigners, by the consideration of all environments, internal and external, good communication, the media use, and creating objectives (Jones, Iverson, Penman, & Tang,

2005). A sponsoring agency examines the change goals in the belief that they will contribute to the individual's or the society's best interest (Kotler & Roberto, 1989). Social marketing uses the same tools as commercial marketing. Moreover, it uses commercial marketing techniques to target a specific category of the population to achieve goals that change society for the better. Social Marketing tries to find what will best work with the target group. There is no the simple way to command the target groups but it has to let them respond on their own terms. A target group has to feel convinced about the benefits if it is to adopt a new behavior. The product or service has to serve the target group's needs, activate its satisfaction and to minimize the cost of a new behavior (California Project Lean, 2004, p. 4).

The most important difference between CBSM and social marketing is that CBSM breaks barriers and at the same time provides other activities which benefit the target. CBSM uses persuasion, commitment and normative tools to provide behavior changes. The big difference is that social marketing provides benefits to the target by demonstrating social advantages (Mckenzie-Mohr, 2000, as cited in Lightman, 2011). Social marketing has been utilized for several decades primarily to promote behavior changes that improve public health and prevent injuries. CBSM borrows from social marketing an emphasis on understanding what impedes and motivates a target audience to act, as well as the importance of piloting programs prior to their wider implementation (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

CBSM initiatives show how and what tools may be implemented to change behavior in the long term. Behavior is complex, contextual and multi-faceted, and there is no

mechanism to analyze behavior. The changes to behavior may succeed in some situations from regulations alone. CBSM aims to eliminate obstacles to occurring behaviors while performing behaviors for selection and/or benefits that may improve the target's interest. Social marketers or campaigners must understand those behaviors considered as obstacles and benefits by the target group. Naturally, people usually pay attention to benefits first but each person perceives obstacles and benefits differently, i.e., something that is beneficial for someone may be useless for another person. As a result, it is necessary to develop strategies by using appropriate tools for each situation with target groups in order to build efficient behavior change.

The primary steps of CBSM are to identify any barriers and then remove them. Concerning environmental issues, the aim is to identify the problem and explore how people can make a difference by doing the right things. With CBSM, the practitioner can select different tools, such as building community norms, making a public commitment, personal contacts like home visits, and also by engaging community block leaders to have more impact. There is also the need for feedback and removing external barriers (Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999). The tools can be divided into two groups. First, reinforcing the intent to perform an already existing behavior by reducing external barriers and bridging gaps using commitment and prompts. The second tool is to motivate sustainable behaviour by using social norms and communication (Lightman, 2011).

The 'Muang Jai Dee' program exemplified the use of community-based social marketing (CBSM) to promote UD principles. CBSM

has targeted behavior change by requiring individuals and businesses to engage in diverse actions, such as reducing waste, increasing water and energy efficiency, stopping smoking etc. It has been proved that more change takes place when campaigns use personal contacts in community to create, communicate and deliver value in order to influence a target behavior, focusing on the long term effects by using the marketing principles and techniques of CBSM (Cheng, Kotler, & Lee, 2009).

## **Results**

The methodology used was in-depth interviews with some of the main promoters of UD in Thailand (POL.LT.COL. Budit Pradabsook, Ph.D. President of The Association of Siamese Architects Under Royal Patronage, Krisana Lalai, Head of Universal Design Ambassador, and Poom (pseudonym), Social Marketing Department of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation) and a qualitative content analysis of the TV program 'Muang Jai Dee', which ran on Thai PBS between October 2012 and January 2013. It showed many renovation projects for houses, temples, provincial health offices and public areas in Bangkok and up country. The program explained how community-based social marketing could encourage residents, architects, developers, and architecture students to apply UD principles to building and public space renovations. In-depth interviews with a semi-structured free format were conducted with representatives of the Social Marketing department of **Thai Health Promotion Foundation**, and the President of The Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage and host of the Muang Jai Dee TV program.

The ‘Muang Jai Dee’ project involved many communities. The main parties were the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA): information provider, social marketing and driving health department for specific groups such as the elderly and persons with disabilities from Thai Health: campaigner/supporter, and Superjeew Company Limited: producer (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2012).

‘Muang Jai Dee’ showed renovations of houses, temples, provincial health offices, and public areas in Bangkok and also up-country. The objectives of the ‘Muang Jai Dee’ TV program were:

1. to increase awareness of UD
2. to enhance knowledge of UD and
3. to give inspiration for environmental adjustment to various types of people in society.

This was a reality TV show presenting the concept of UD with the aim of building knowledge and understanding in the design and construction field to build a better future for Thailand. It began with persons who had problems with buildings, then included architects who could create improvements as well as general people and volunteers who helped improve houses and public areas to become ‘Muang Jai Dee’. The Thai term, ‘Jai Dee’, refers to being a generous person, which is a characteristic of Thai people (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2012a).

The ‘Muang Jai Dee’ program aimed to improve the space of houses and public areas for four main groups:

**Area Owners** were responsible for proposing facts, problems, situations, and space utilization as well as for planning and seeking funds and budgets.

**Local Administrators** were responsible for promoting the project from policy level to implementing policy as well as coordinating the operation.

**Users** were persons who had to use the areas directly. Their responsibility was not only to make demands but also to participate in finding solutions with participants.

**Participants** were divided into four main groups, including designers, specialists, contractors and sponsors.

- Designers were academics providing knowledge, suggestions, solutions, and management in order to obtain the most correct and appropriate designs.
- Design specialists would be consulted during the operation and inspect the correctness of complex works in order to make the designs efficient.
- Health specialists were responsible for inspecting appropriateness for the utilization by persons with physical limitations in order to obtain designs that are not harmful to health.
- Contractors were experts in construction who made drawings for buildings as well as supplied materials and equipment under a defined budget and for a limited duration. Sponsors were persons providing funds for the operation of the project.

Based on the problems of users (including the elderly with illnesses or disabilities), UD aims to build equality to all people enabling them to have various designs for their comfortable living, safety, and happiness. The program’s guidelines were: start from the daily living of persons in the houses with disabilities or the elderly, then develop to occupants or persons participating looking after those with disabilities and the elderly, as a common problem was accidents in the homes.

Referring to the UD concept from the 'Muang Jai Dee' TV program, it started from private houses then went on to public areas by expanding the program to more users (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2013a). The TV program's selection of troubled users mainly consisted of the elderly and those with disabilities. The renovation of places not only served as an opportunity to improve their lives but also increased peoples' understanding of the UD concept. These changes started from an improvement in perception moved on to renovations in houses and ultimately to public places (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2013b).

'Muang Jai Dee' also showed how Pattaya City, a tourist city in Chonburi with 6,000,000 visitors per year, was improved (Program no.17 on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013). The program obtained a sample group from visitors who travelled and stayed in Pattaya, including the elderly, blind students of the School for the Blind in Pattaya, people of different genders, deaf teachers, and persons with disabilities who used wheelchairs. Subsequently, the Jomtien Beach area was improved. This depended on the cooperation from various sectors and on government support. In this regard, Mr. Itthipol Khunpleum, the President of Pattaya City, realized the importance of improving the area. The professional architect on this project was Kritsada Prasertsit, an Instructor in the Department of Landscape Architecture, Kasetsart University (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2013c).

The problems found were: rough surfaces, unusable paths for persons with disabilities and no navigation signs. This renovation was constructed by considering the needs of everyone, including those of persons with

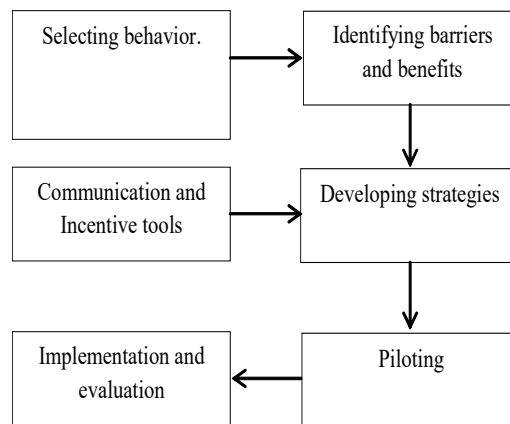
disabilities. For example, wheel chair users require a special pathway, those who are blind require signs in Braille, while those who are deaf require clear visual images. If persons with disabilities can use these designs, people without any disabilities will be able to use them as well. This design marked a step towards constructing a world in which persons with disabilities will have equal opportunities as those without. The outcome was not only to improve the various pathways but also to create opportunities so that everyone could use the places. Furthermore, Pattaya is a prime location for tourists. Hence, these renovations may persuade them to re-visit in the future, thereby generating income to the locals.

Treating each other cooperatively is the important thing for enabling "space and humans" to work together. It is necessary for families, communities, persons in the same occupational fields, or volunteer groups to understand target spaces or communities, and users (including persons with disabilities and the elderly) must always participate in solving problems. The researcher found that the major factor helping UD to be accomplished was learning from users, by exchanging information between parties to help build connections, and by understanding as well as providing opportunities to users to participate in the design processes.

However, there were some important differences among persons responsible for improving houses and public areas. For instance, local administrators had no involvement with the main operation of house improvement, yet local organizations under the supervision of the Thai government play an important role in providing information and coordinating between local people and designers for public area improvements.

A major tool used in CBSM for UD projects was communication. For example, based on the study of 11 cases from 15 episodes of ‘Muang Jai Dee’, users and related persons were interviewed prior to the actual utilization. Architects and experts who were the representatives for improving each area would discuss how UD could improve the living conditions of families and communities. Such discussion helped reduce barriers between users and architects in order to understand actual demands. In addition, a mutual information exchange helped to create new dimensions of learning, while presentations were used for explaining and building understanding with architects and students. These specialists were spokespersons who helped students to better understand UD concepts in practice. The changing agent was the person who was involved with the users’ understanding of the physical environment.

‘Muang Jai Dee’ was a creative program about renovating model houses and public areas to enable audiences to see that UD was able to solve real problems. Consequently, users could gain convenience and safety as well as better accessibility. As a result, it helped to build relationships among family members as well as enabling them to utilize all areas and facilities equally. The principle of ‘Muang Jai Dee’ was that Universal Design must start from one’s attention to adjusting and changing their own family living spaces to become pleasant places for everyone. This diagram is adapted from (Mckenzie-Mohr & Schultz, 2014).



**Figure 2** Five Steps of Community-Based Social Marketing Adapted from Mckenzie-Mohr and Schultz, 2014

The CBSM tools utilized to change behavior were the use of communication and incentives. Communication in CBSM has the same characteristic as promotion in social commercial marketing. The incentives used in CBSM are also the same as in social and commercial marketing based on price. Tools are tactics used to remove barriers in CBSM in areas such as communication, commitment, incentive and norms.

### Communication Tools

The ‘Muang Jai Dee’ team developed effective tools to access target users in order to share knowledge face to face. These included specialists for students in the architecture faculties who were volunteers in the TV program and students in architectural faculties for users. Actually it was not only sharing knowledge with the users, it was also necessary to involve the family members. Another effective tool was modeling. When the UD concept is not fully understood, the

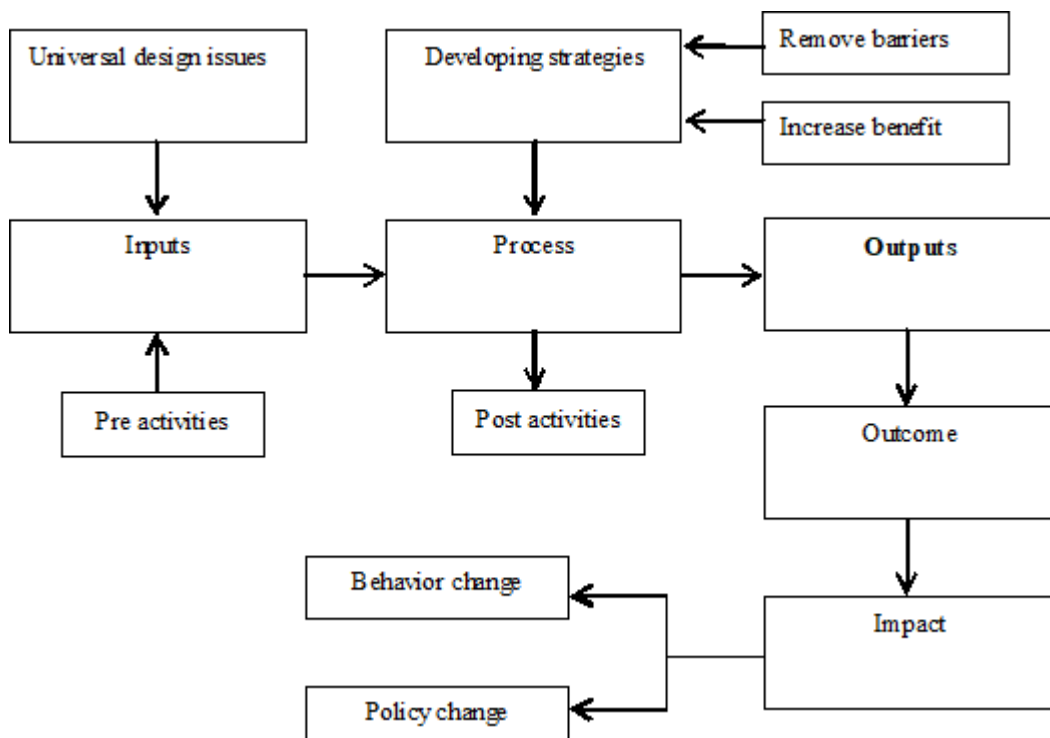


use of visual images could be another solution. The renovation of eight houses shown on this TV program used models to communicate with the users. Even when the architects understand the UD concept they have to understand the users' needs and apply the concept in practice. This will merge the UD concept with actual needs before beginning renovations. Moreover, when the extra cost of renovating for UD seemed to be high, the designer itemized each change to show the expense was reasonable. A maximum of 50,000 baht would cover the cost of renovations under the UD concept, as shown in the TV program. The technique that 'Muang Jai Dee' used to motivate people to undertake renovations was to offer the design, technical requirements for installation and specialists for improving the area to match the users'

requirements. After they provided the knowledge and demonstrated the advantages for each site (housing and public areas) this helped users and those living in the area to welcome UD improvements. Each 'Muang Jai Dee' renovation project could also be a model for another future project.

**Outcome of Community-Based Social Marketing**

This TV program aimed to impact on the stage of behavior change. It did not include policy change because the project was limited in terms of the size of the audience, community and change agents. It would be better if policy makers were involved, such as the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.



**Figure 3** Impact Process of Universal Design

## **CONCLUSION**

‘Muang Jai Dee’ was a project that represented three communities, including students in architectural faculties, family communities, and the neighborhood community. This project created a chance for students who were architectural faculty volunteers to design and develop drawings and also to participate in construction. They had to work with the family community and understand the type of house that would make users comfortable and convince them to change their daily behavior. They also needed to understand how to apply UD concepts to a single house, townhouse and traditional houses. The neighboring community were people who used the facility or lived in the same area. ‘Muang Jai Dee’ used public parks, temples, health centers, and Jomtien Beach in Pattaya as examples of how to apply UD in the community. The additional benefit that the community will receive was not only improved living functions but also to enhance the health of their members and to build relationships between family and community.

The main limitation of this study was that formal interviews did not take place with the target groups. Despite this, information gained from those who were interviewed suggested positive outcomes from the program.

From the relatively small sample of interviews with those concerned with the project, it would seem that the TV program may have favorably impacted a behavior change in some cases. However, it would be better if policy makers were involved to ensure the application of UD principles to community renovation projects. Policy makers and government agencies, such as the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, need

to become part of future projects for UD concepts to have a long-term impact. The researcher considers that community-based social marketing campaigns related to the UD concept can provide benefits to persons with disabilities and the elderly as well as the wider society. This perspective may help Thai authorities to create a more inclusive society. These principles reflect thinking about the needs of other people by providing better ways for living together. This is also a way to build knowledge and understanding for improving construction design to build a better future for all. It must begin with architects who can design user-friendly buildings and spaces for all projects, as well as other relevant persons such as the project owners, users, or related persons. UD principles through community-based social marketing may be able to reduce gaps between people and help them to have a better life. But this issue requires the government, the private sector, education and NGOS to be involved and to link with policy makers to follow up. “Jai Dee” is a characteristic of Thai people that needs to be created everywhere, starting from home to the community, the cities and through the whole country with individual cases expanding in the future.

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