

INTERSEX ASIA ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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Message from IA Board

As we present our first annual report, we are filled with nostalgia for our early years of activism and hope for the future. Establishing Intersex Asia (IA) has been a journey full of invaluable lessons, relationships, people and dreams for all of us. Right from its inception in 2018, the mission of IA has been to serve as a support system for intersex people in Asia. We are committed to strengthening the intersex human rights movement, contribute to national, regional and global lawmaking on intersex issues, generating educational material and strive to play a key role in integrating research and policy on intersex issues.

Intersex Asia was established to create a regional network of intersex organisations in the Asian region so as to bring into public focus the need for protecting and promoting the rights of intersex persons. The mission of IA is to develop multi-disciplinary scholarship in human rights law and policy in collaboration with the widest number of stakeholders.

In the past one decade, the focus on intersex human rights has increased globally. However, there are a number of challenges on the ground in Asia owing to poor enforcement of law, entrenched attitudes among people who lead relevant agencies and organisations towards intersex people, in addition to lack of awareness. Even within the medical community, there is an acute dearth of quality teaching, research and training specifically with respect to the health needs of intersex persons.

Working within this context, we hope that the IA's work will give visibility to intersex human rights movement in the Asian region and also contribute in the development of an international protection framework for intersex people.

We hope that this annual report is a useful guide to the important work that IA is engaged in, and helps us deepen our engagement with stakeholders including intersex organisations and intersex individuals, civil society organisations, international organisations and donors, both in Asia and around the world.

IA Board

Hiker Chiu, OII Chinese, Taiwan
Esan Regmi, Campaign for Change, Nepal
Gopi Shankar Madurai, Srishti Madurai, India
Jeff Cagandahan, Intersex Philippines
Jonalyn Villar Bulado, Intersex Philippines

Executive Summary

Organisational Development

As a newly formed organisation, it was essential that Intersex Asia devoted significant resources towards organisational development. By the end of the year, we had managed to establish our basic organisational structure, constitution and strategic plan, as well as hiring our first staff person. Two consultation meetings were held in December 2018 & May 2019 respectively, to complete this process. The second consultation meeting, which took place in May 2019, further reviewed Intersex Asia's organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, strategic framework, constitution, and developed a code of conduct and 2-year work plan (2019-2020). A total of six intersex representatives from the region participated in the consultation meeting, including four board members and two founding members, representing Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Philippines, and Taiwan. The event led to the further revision and affirmation of the outputs made from the first consultation meeting with the support of two facilitators and our ally from ILGA Asia. One day was dedicated to a team-building session, which resulted in a more structured team, with all members feeling more committed to the larger vision and work of Intersex Asia.

Development and Promotion of the Intersex Asia's Website

Intersex Asia built its website and strengthened its profile on social media platforms to reach out to more people. On the website <http://intersexasia.org> and other platforms, we provide information and knowledge sharing on intersex issues in Asia.

Intersex Asia has also strengthened its presence on social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. The number of followers on our Facebook has increased from 404 to 675. Our Twitter handle has also engaged 387 followers so far. Regarding the mainstream media and other media organizations, our work has facilitated a total of 19 pieces of media coverage on intersex-related issues at the local, national level and regional level.

UNFE Intersex Fact Sheet Translated into 11 Asian languages

In 2019, Intersex Asia coordinated the translation of the United Nations Intersex Factsheet into 11 languages. The fact sheet is now available for download from Intersex Asia's website in Bengali, Filipino, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Malay, Nepali, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Vietnamese, as well as the original UN translations in 6 official languages.

The UNFE Intersex Fact Sheet was originally released in 2015, in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. This was the first time that an international body recognised the specific human rights of intersex people and was welcomed by the global intersex community.

Key to the development of the UN Fact sheet in the original six languages was that each translation was reviewed and edited by an intersex person who was a native speaker of that language. Intersex Asia continued with this model and was able to get each of the 11 translations checked and edited by intersex activists of that language group.

Intersex Asia worked closely with a network of LGBTI activists in Asia for the translations, and appreciates their role as allies to the intersex movement. Intersex people are very much a minority and depend on allies to help them to raise their voices.

First Asian Intersex Statement

In 2019, Intersex Asia also worked with our partners to translate the First Asian Intersex Statement into 12 Asian languages (Bengali, Filipino, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Malay, Nepali, Tamil, Telugu, Traditional Chinese, Urdu and Vietnamese). This is now available for download on our website.

This statement was the first ever statement on intersex rights to come out of Asia. It was originally developed in 2018 and was reaffirmed by intersex activists at the 2nd Asian Intersex Forum in 2019.

Strengthened Network and Solidarity of Asian Intersex Community

In August 2019, Intersex Asia co-organized the 2nd Asia Intersex Forum with intersex activists from the region, ILGA-Asia and the International Intersex Fund in Seoul, Korea. The forum brought together 10 Asian intersex activists and individuals with the aim of building a stronger intersex human rights movement in the region of Asia. The event empowered the local intersex activists, particularly some intersex activists from India, Korea and Nepal who had never before attended an intersex-led activity, to become more committed in intersex rights activism and community building in their own communities, societies and/or countries. Moreover, during the forum, the participants recalled and re-affirmed the first Asian Intersex Statement delivered in 2018, and further contributed to the adoption of a draft action plan 2019-2020 for Intersex Asia. Intersex Asia conveys its gratitude to Yookyeong Im and Billy Choo for their support as volunteer interpreter and notetaker. IA also acknowledges and records special appreciation for Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights (KLPH), South Korea.





2nd Asian Intersex Forum in Seoul, South Korea (Aug, 2019)



Introducing Intersex Asia to ILGA LGBTI+ community and Global Intersex Community

In April 2020, five Intersex Asia members including three board members were sponsored by ILGA, RFSL, and Astraea to participate in the 40th ILGA World Conference at Wellington, New Zealand. It was the first time when Intersex Asia presented the Asian regional network at the ILGA World Conference. Intersex Asia presented its first session titled- "Intersex 101, Reality and Challenges of Intersex Human rights in Asia". The aim of the session was to introduce intersex issues and activism in Asia. A documentary named- "GOPI" focussed on Gopi Shankar- a member of IA board was screened during the conference. A series of advocacy postcards designed by an IA member was published and shared with all participants, introducing Intersex Asia and the intersex movement in Asia to the international LGBTI+ community. It was a historical meeting where Intersex Asia members got to meet global intersex activists and connect with the global intersex and LGBTI movement. Later in September, IA co-chair Hiker Chiu was invited to join the OII Europe Community Event in Zagreb Croatia, introduced IA and intersex movement in Asia to the intersex community in Europe first time.

Intersex Asia members meet with Global intersex activists during the ILGA World 2019.



Intersex Asia board members are reading the Resolution of the ILGA Asia Intersex pre-conference and the First Asian Intersex Statement (Photo 1).

In August 2019, all Intersex Asia board members were supported by ILGA Asia to join the ILGA Asia conference in Seoul, South Korea. Intersex Asia hosted the Intersex Pre-Conference and conducted the first session, "Intersex Movement in Asia and Intersex Asia," during the ILGA Asia conference. It was also the first time that Intersex Asia gave a presentation as a regional network in the ILGA Asia conference. During the conference, IA board members were invited to speak in various panels and sessions where they raised the need to spread awareness on intersex issues in the Asian LGBTI+ movement and community. Intersex Asia board member Gopi Shankar M was selected to continue their position as the intersex representative in ILGA Asia Board. At the end of the conference, ILGA Asia agreed to adopt the Intersex Pre-Conference Resolution and the First Asian Intersex Statement which were read by IA board members.



IA co-chair Hiker Chiu is presenting Intersex Asia's first session in the ILGA Asia 2019.



Intersex Asia board members are reading the Resolution of the ILGA Asia Intersex pre-conference and the First Asian Intersex Statement (Photo 2).



Intersex Asia Post Cards and Stickers in Seoul, South Korea (Aug, 2019)

More outreach in Asia countries

In 2019, Hiker Chiu- IA co-chair was invited to participate in two Pride events to introduce Intersex Asia and intersex issues. The first one is the Yangon Pride - &PROUD in Myanmar. Later in June is the Shanghai Pride in Shanghai, China. IA was introduced the first time to both countries officially. Hiker was interviewed by a local LGBT group to help them understand intersex people and issues more. The intersex issue is still very rarely heard in Myanmar. It's the first time that an intersex person spoke publicly in Myanmar. In June 2019, Hiker participated in the Shanghai Pride, the biggest LGBTQ Pride event in China where s/he got to meet key LGBT groups from all over China. Hiker was also invited to introduce Intersex Asia on the Pride

day and share their life story with the participants to raise intersex awareness in a positive perspective. It has paved the way for positive space for intersex people within the LGBT community in China.

Meeting civil society members of Asian Human Rights Court Simulation

In September 2019, a workshop on Strategy of Human Rights in APEC was held in Taipei, Taiwan. IA co-chair Hiker Chiu joined the workshop and took the opportunity to introduce intersex human rights issues and Intersex Asia to the participants, raising intersex human rights awareness in the field of Asian human rights mechanism advocates.



Intersex Asia's first contact with LGBTQ groups from all over China in the ShanghaiPride.

Intersex 101 was first time introduced to people in Myanmar by Intersex Asia co-chair Hiker Chiu during the Yangon Pride - &PROUD 2019.



Inspirational peer-learning between member organisations facilitated by Intersex Asia

Intersex Asia arranged for Board members to attend events organised by our member organisations. Intersex Asia was able to support an Intersex Asia board member from the Philippines to attend the intersex forum in Nepal and our board member from Nepal to travel to India and the Philippines. These exposure trips were inspirational, and deepened Intersex Asia’s understanding of the peculiar challenges that each national intersex movement faces. The stakeholder meeting in India, has inspired our Nepal board member to conduct a similar initiative in Nepal in 2020.

2nd Consultation Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand (May, 2019)





*1st National Intersex
Forum in Quezon City,
Philippines (Nov, 2019)*

Support to Member Organisations

From the 29th to 30th November, Intersex Philippines organized the first National Intersex Forum in Quezon City with support from Intersex Asia. There were 12 participants, including two members of the Intersex Asia Board. During the forum, the participants shared their stories with each other. There was a section looking into the data on Intersex people in the world and in the Philippines and a discussion on the different ways that people can be intersex. Students from the Arts and Communication department of University of Santo Tomas attended the forum and documented the deliberations. Now, they are in the process of making a short film on Intersex people in the Philippines.

From 14th to 16th November 2019, Campaign for Change (CfC) organized the 3rd National Intersex Workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal. 15 intersex people from Nepal came together. Presentations on the rights of intersex people in Nepal, as well as in the global movement were shared. Participants were also given time to share their own personal experiences and at the end of the meeting participants developed a statement on Intersex people in Nepal, which was later shared publicly and also covered by the media in both English and Nepali.



3rd National Intersex Workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal (Nov, 2019)

In 2019, CfC co-organised Nepal's first pride march in association with LGBTI organisations based in Nepal. During the course of the year, CfC organised several awareness workshops with various stakeholders on intersex human rights and also created audio-visual content on intersex issues.



*Nepal's first pride march
in Nepal (June, 2019)*

In April 2019, the Madras High Court Madurai Bench in India delivered a historic verdict which banned sex-selective surgeries on Intersex infants and children in the Tamil Nadu State of India and directed the Tamil Nadu government to pass a 'Government Order' (G.O.) to ensure the prohibition of such surgeries. In August 2019, the government of Tamil Nadu issued a G.O. protecting intersex infants and children from unnecessary medical interventions, except in the case of life-threatening situations. The State of Tamil Nadu has adopted positive policies for protecting intersex infants and children from unwanted and unnecessary sex selective surgeries, however the health care of intersex people has not yet been properly addressed, even though we've been lobbying the relevant stakeholders for the past months.



Policy Briefing Meeting in Tamil Nadu, India (April, 2019)

After the landmark verdict, Intersex Asia continued to support and worked together with Gopi Shankar Madurai, and his organization, Srishti Madurai, to organize a policy briefing meeting in Chennai. In the policy briefing meeting, the Tamil Nadu state health ministry representatives, medical professionals, legal experts were invited, with a total of 15 people, in the discussion and lobbying for the implementation of the court's verdict and the improvement, the healthcare for intersex people in Tamil Nadu. The co-chair of Intersex Asia, Esan Regmi attended and delivered a speech in the meeting advocating for comprehensive G.O (Government Order). In the same month, an online public statement was published and a physical letter from Intersex Asia and Human Rights Watch was sent to the Government of Tamil Nadu including the Chief Minister and the Health Minister of the State to support and lobby for Srishti Madurai. The active support and collective efforts and the regional and/or international concerns and advocacy contributed to the enactment of the G.O. in August 2019.

In the month of September, Srishti Madurai, in collaboration with NNID Netherlands, presented a joint submission on 'Rights of Intersex Children in India' before the UN Committee of Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In its concluding observations, the Committee called the Indian government to "adopt measures to prevent sex assignment or "sex normalizing" surgeries, bullying and stigmatization against intersex children, ensuring their rights to preserve their physical and mental integrity".



1st National Intersex Human Rights Conference in New Delhi, India (Dec, 2019)

In December, with support from Intersex Asia, Srishti Madurai organised India's first National Stakeholder Meeting on Intersex Human Rights. The conference was a landmark event in India, being the first national-level stakeholders' conference on intersex issues. At the end of the conference, a resolution was adopted to advocate for a ban on non necessary surgeries on Intersex infants and children. Also a plan for engagement with statutory bodies and government at the central and state level in India was developed. The conference received wide media coverage, with articles in the Hindu, One World South Asia and the Times of India. The first-ever toolkit on intersex human rights in India was also launched at the event.

2019 Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

In 2019, Intersex Asia, developed their strategic plan and included in that were 8 short term objectives for 2019 and 2020, here we share our progress to achieving those objectives:

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
1. TO REGISTER AND FORMALIZE INTERSEX ASIA	<p>During 2019, we conducted research and analysis into the strengths and weaknesses of our registration options in Asia. We looked specifically at 3 countries. As a result of this research, in 2020, we plan to carry out the registration process in Taiwan. Until that is done, ILGA Asia has been acting as our fiscal sponsor and also providing invaluable advice on financial processes.</p> <p>At the same time, Intersex Asia completed its constitution, code of conduct and formalized its organizational structure. These were completed in May 2019 and we have been implementing these since that time. In 2020, we are working on developing organizational policy and procedure to further strengthen and formalize our organization.</p>
2. TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF INTERSEX ASIA MEMBERS.	<p>Completed training in team-building for all of our board members. In 2020, Intersex Asia will conduct further capacity building in finance, leadership, project management and advocacy.</p>
3. TO INCREASE THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ON INTERSEX PEOPLE IN ASIA	<p>Intersex Asia launched its website in 2019, as well as its Facebook page and has successfully managed these to share information about intersex people in Asia, as well as around the world.</p> <p>In addition, we completed translation of the UN Intersex Fact Sheet into 11 Asian languages, and launched these via our FB and website in 2020. We plan to continue this translation work, in recognition of the wide range of languages in Asia.</p>

4. TO LOBBY ON INTERSEX ISSUES AT MORE NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

Our member organizations, Srishti Madurai, has been advocating for intersex rights in India and in 2019, there was a historic judgment delivered by the Madras High Court leading to the banning of unnecessary sex selective surgeries on intersex infants and children. With support from Intersex Asia, they were then able to conduct a policy briefing in Chennai, Tamil Nadu with key stakeholders, followed by the national level stakeholders meeting in Delhi, where they lobbied for a nationwide ban on intersex surgery.

The work of CFC, in Nepal, has ensured that the CRC and CEDAW reports for Nepal include the rights of intersex people and that organizations working in children issues have started to address intersex issues.

5. TO DEVELOP A REGIONAL DATABASE FOR INTERSEX PEOPLE IN ASIA

The first step for Intersex Asia was to organize for the first set of translations of the UN Intersex Fact Sheet as well as the Statement of Intersex Asia into 11 languages. The plan is to use these to begin to get more country specific analysis of situation in terms of human rights for intersex people in Asia. In 2020, we will identify a resource person to work with us on this project.

6. TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO GRASSROOTS NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Intersex Asia, supported the 1st national Intersex Forum in the Philippines and the 3rd national Intersex Workshop in Nepal. Also, Intersex Asia co-organised the first National Intersex Human Rights Conference in India. These forums working with intersex people are one of our main priorities as for many this is the first time that intersex people have a space where they can truly tell their stories with people who truly understand them. This can be a very empowering experience, and for some leads to future activism.

7. TO PROVIDE URGENT FUNDS FOR INTERSEX ASIA MEMBERS

This will be developed in 2020.

8. TO DEVELOP A PEACE-BUILDING AND WELLNESS TRAINING PACKAGE IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES AND A GROUP OF TRAINERS

To be developed in 2020 and 2021.

Key Challenges

Some of the key challenges that Intersex Asia plans to address in the coming year are as follows:

- **Lack of Legal registration and bank account:** Currently due to lack of legal registration, Intersex Asia does not have its own bank account. We rely on ILGA Asia as our fiscal sponsor. Intersex Asia recognizes the inherent challenges that result, in terms of fundraising potential and legitimacy. In 2019, we conducted research into the options for registration in 3 countries and early in 2020, determined to register in Taiwan.
- **Lack of Governance Manual:** Intersex Asia is a new, emerging organization, and until June 2019, had no staff to manage the work, instead depending on the voluntary work of our board. Since hiring a coordinator, we have started work on developing policies on providing financial support to member organisations and plan to focus on setting up more comprehensive operating procedures in 2020.
- **Lack of adequate visibility among various partners in the region:** Intersex people are very marginalized. Too often, the rights of intersex people are confused with LGBT rights, while at the same time the LGBT community is not always the best ally to our movement. It is a struggle to find the right allies and to convey the messages on what is intersex and what needs to be done on upholding the rights of intersex people. Having more information in more intersex languages is a step towards providing tools for our partners in the region to be better able to articulate the rights of intersex people and we will continue to develop our strategies for increasing the visibility of intersex people in Asia.
- **Limited capacity of Intersex Asia executive board and staff members:** Intersex Asia is a new organization made up of grassroots intersex activists, who for the most part have not been involved in a regional network like this. We are learning a lot along the way, in terms of honing our strategies and recognizing the needs in terms of organizational development and capacity building. This is an ongoing process.

Key Learnings

Establishing Intersex Asia has been a major milestone not just for the Asian intersex human rights movement but also for its founding members. We have come a long way since 2013 when our network started with a one-member online community, which gradually grew into a larger community with more than 30 intersex members. It was in early 2018 when we decided to formally start Intersex Asia as a regional network when we came together for the first Asian Intersex Forum. Our journey as intersex activists and the journey of Intersex Asia has been intertwined in a sense and therefore, the learning curve has been sharp both at a personal level as well as an organisation. Today, we are a much stronger network with a formidable organisational structure. This annual report comes as an opportunity to reflect on our experience and draw lessons for the future.

- **Mutual love and respect- as a core value:** Intersex Asia has been a labour of love for all of us. Even before we established IA, we shared a strong personal bond with each other which helped us a great deal in building a professional organisation. Over the years, our personal association has only grown and has been a source of strength. Today, we see the mutual love and respect that we have for each other as an organisational pillar. Doing activism in adverse circumstances can become overwhelming for anyone. We were able to see through the challenges in our initial years because of this understanding and we are certain that these values will hold us in good stead in the future. The foremost lesson has been that we have internalized mutual love and respect as a core value, and it has remained constant even with an expanding base and intra-regional diversity. Finally, we are held up by a growing intersex community we have come to think of as part of Intersex Asia network. We want to acknowledge all of their support, too.
- **Peer-learning- our biggest strength:** Intersex human rights movement in the Asian region has seen few successes in the past decade. We are proud to have contributed collectively as well as in our individual capacity in the growth of the movement. In this endeavour, we have strived to learn and get inspired from each other as we have taken on new challenges in our respective countries as well as given shape to a regional movement. The learning process has been bidirectional and has in turn also contributed immensely in IA's progress. Each of us have been through challenging times which have made us vulnerable. We have realised the importance of peer learning in this process and thus, we have been able to complement each

other's initiatives. A free-flowing exchange of ideas has facilitated the strengthening of the network as well as the movement. This value has played a huge role in organically developing new leadership in the region.

- **Minimising conflict through careful communication:** Conflicts are inevitable when people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds come together. At Intersex Asia, we have been conscious of these challenges and accordingly tailored our day-to-day organisational functioning. We have ensured that everyone gets an equal voice in the decision-making process. Over time, we have also evolved our organisational processes to ensure that there is clarity on the role and responsibility of our members. This has been a crucial lesson for us and has served us well in avoiding and resolving conflicts.
- **Resource mobilization- essential for sustainability of the organisation:** To sustain and grow, an organisation needs both human resources and financial resources. In the initial phase, we could operate on a shoestring budget because most of the work has thus far been done as unpaid, voluntary work from the board members. Also, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to all those who have helped sustain IA with their voluntary labor and financial resources without the expectation of anything in return. We did not have the financial resources to have a full-time staff till very recently. But it is now time to provide IA a stable institutional base, scale up its resources, deepen its work and enhance its outreach with a larger body of well-trained permanent staff. Therefore, it is critical to mobilise resources in alignment with our strategic goals.
- **Institutionalising Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** As a young organisation, we have successfully completed several key tasks focusing on organisational development. While it is too early to speak about the impact that we have had as a network, we are alive to the importance of institutionalising monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of our work. We are in the process of developing structured policies to enable learning and reflection as a constant endeavour. As we are expanding our work into newer areas, we are conscious of the need to devise a comprehensive M&E system.

Intersex Asia Finances

As Intersex Asia is an emerging organisation, we have been operating with ILGA Asia as our fiscal sponsor since we formed. In 2020, we aim to register Intersex Asia, and once that is done we will be able to issue our own financial statements.

For 2019, our grants went through ILGA Asia and another partner Hupo in Taiwan with specific agreements drawn up between our donors, fiscal sponsors and Intersex Asia.

FUNDS AVAILABLE TO INTERSEX ASIA IN 2019 IN THAI BAHT

Balance carried forward from Dec 31st 2018	THB
Astraea 2018-2019	220,028
Mama Cash 2018-2019	666,431
Income 2019	THB
RFSL	817,883
COC Netherlands	498,194
OSF	304,372
Mama Cash 2019-2021	993,600
Astraea 2019-2020	308,540
Astraea (Asian Intersex Forum)	980,522
TOTAL Funds Available in 2019	4,789,570

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY IN 2019

Category	THB	%
National Awareness Raising and Advocacy	653,394	31%
Translation Project	314,958	15%
International Advocacy and Outreach	94,967	4%
IA Media and Publications	63,342	3%
IA Meetings	270,368	13%
Staffing	735,343	34%
Admin	2,037	0%
TOTAL Intersex Asia	2,134,410	
ILGA Asia Costs	202,178	
TOTAL ILGA Asia and Intersex Asia	2,336,588	

Intersex Asia's Board and Staff in 2019



Co-Chairs:

Hiker Chiu, OII Chinese, Taiwan

Esan Regmi, Campaign for Change, Nepal

Board Members:

Gopi Shankar Madurai, Srishti Madurai, India

Jeff Cagandahan, Intersex Philippines

Jonalyn Villar Bulado, Intersex Philippines

Staff

Ripley Wang

Support for 2019

DONORS

Intersex Asia is very grateful to the following organisations for their generous support. As a new network organisation, their support was crucial for the launch of our emerging movement.

Astraea Foundation



Mama Cash



COC Netherlands



Open Society Foundation



RFSL, Sweden



MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Campaign for Change, Nepal



Intersex Phillipines



Srishti Madurai



OII Chinese



ALLIES

ASEAN Sogje Caucus



Shanghai Pride, China



ILGA Asia



Qbukatabu, Indonesia



ICS, Vietnam



&PROUD, Myanmar



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