



THE CENTRE
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

ETI INSIGHTS



Emerging Circular Supply Chains

Safeguarding Child and Human Rights



Agenda

Time	Session	Lead
10:00- 10:05	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Giles Bolton, Executive Director, ETI
10:05-10:20	SETTING THE SCENE: Key Child Rights and Human Rights Challenges in the Lead Recycling and Post-Industrial Textile Waste Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ines Kaempfer, CEO, The CentreGayang Ho, Director of Research, The Centre
10:20-10:50	FIRESIDE CHAT: Navigating Child Rights in Supply Chains: Practical Steps and Success Stories from the Field	Moderated by Mark Robertson, Senior VP, The Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none">George Williams, ETIGayang Ho, The CentreAndile Dlodla, Mr Price GroupNin Castle, Reverse Resources
10:50-11:00	Q&A and closing remarks	

Housekeeping

- **This session is being recorded**
- **Public webinar: We're not using Chatham House Rules.** Things you say may be quoted!
- **Please use the Q&A function to ask questions and share reflections throughout.** We'll gather your questions and put them to our panellists during the discussion



Introducing ETI

- **Membership organisation founded in 1998**
Owner of the ETI Base Code
- **Leading tripartite human rights organisation**
NGO, trade union and company members
- **Practical advice, guidance and implementation**
Approach aligned with UNGPs and human rights legislation
- **Convening in a safe space**
Brings all key stakeholders to convene to address salient human rights issues in supply chains



Introducing The Centre for Child Rights and Business

Supporting companies to respect and promote the rights of children with the following impacts:



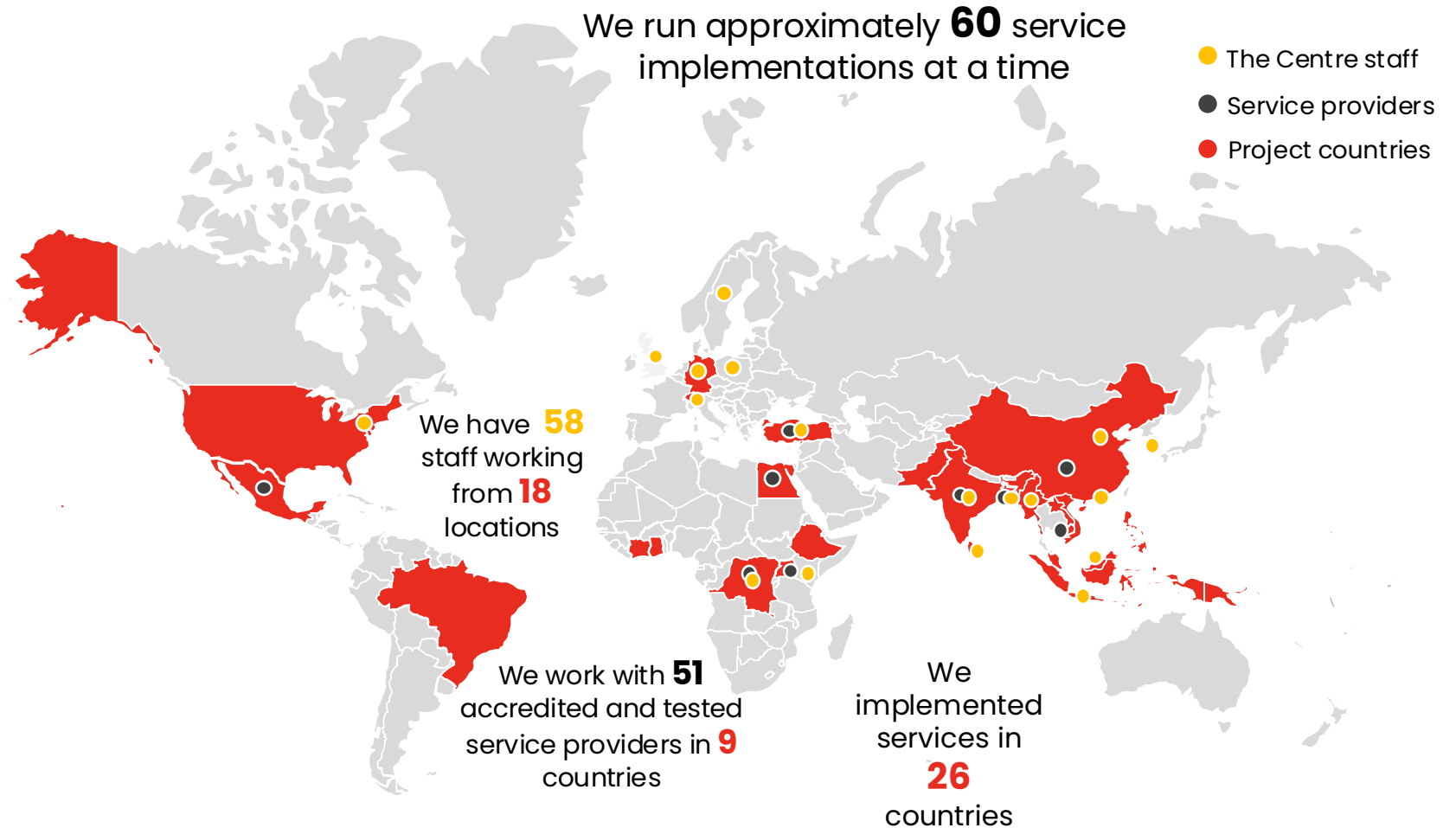
Increase **supply chain transparency**



Improve **corporate practice**



Implement **supply chain solutions**





Setting the Scene:

Child Rights and Human Rights Challenges in the Lead Recycling and Post-Industrial Textile Waste Sectors



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Circular economy is a
"transformative approach
that prioritises the continual
reduction, reuse,
refurbishment, and
recycling of products and
materials."

*Circular Economy – United
Nations Environment Programme
Finance Initiative*







Circularity means
manufacturers ensure parts
and materials within their
control never unintentionally
exit their sphere of influence.

World Economic Forum

There is a demand for circularity

Increasing pressure for brands to adopt circularity, especially in textiles. This is the **second most polluted** industry globally

			
<p>Europe: Launched the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles in 2022</p>	<p>USA: Several states introduced waste bans and extended producer responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• California's SB 707 is to be adopted by 2028 and fully rolled out by 2030	<p>Malaysia: The Circular Economy Blueprint (2025–2035) calls for lifecycle-based waste accountability</p>	<p>Vietnam: Vietnam's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy mandates textile producers to manage product lifecycles, ensuring accountability for waste disposal</p>

Key challenges we observe



Niche

Many companies' circularity efforts are still niche projects rather than standard practices

No circular designs

The majority of products are not designed with circularity in mind

Lack of visibility

Companies lack full visibility into product origins, waste from production and where consumer waste ends up

Intention

The complexity of supply chains often overwhelms companies, who opt to ignore key 'waste moments'

Limitations

The circular economy is created through **add-ons rather than transformation**, and recycling workers risk being left out

Two studies conducted with UNICEF:

**1. Lack of circular production design
(upstream waste)**

**2. Lack of extended producers
responsibility commitments
(downstream waste)**

Textile manufacturers lacks circular production design

Bangladesh's textile sector

Bangladesh is the **second-largest** textile producer globally



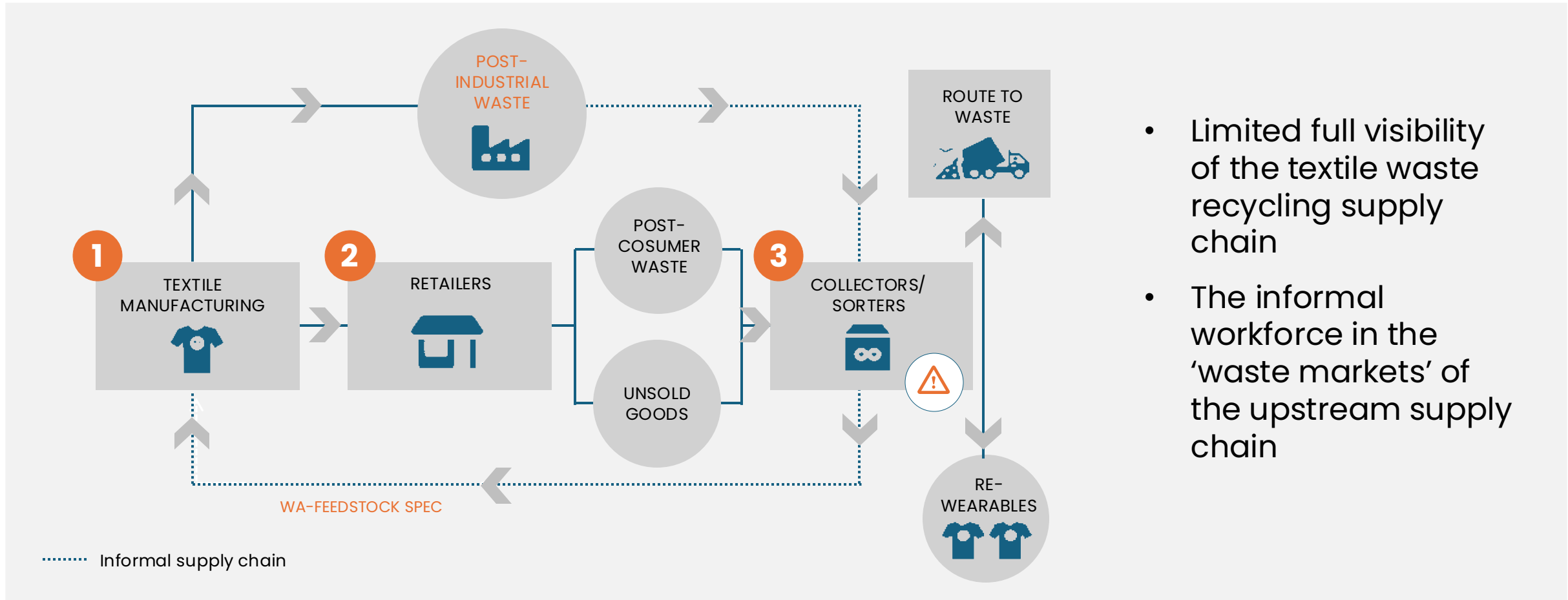
Largest producer of textile waste – produce **400,000** to **577,00** tonnes



Only **5%** is recycled locally into garment manufacturing

Source: Circular Fashion Partnership, 2019; The Business Standard 2023

In Bangladesh, the informal workforce and small businesses drive 'circularity'



But they are working in sub-standard conditions



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Unsafe and unhealthy working conditions



Below minimum wage



Low skilled jobs attracting child labour

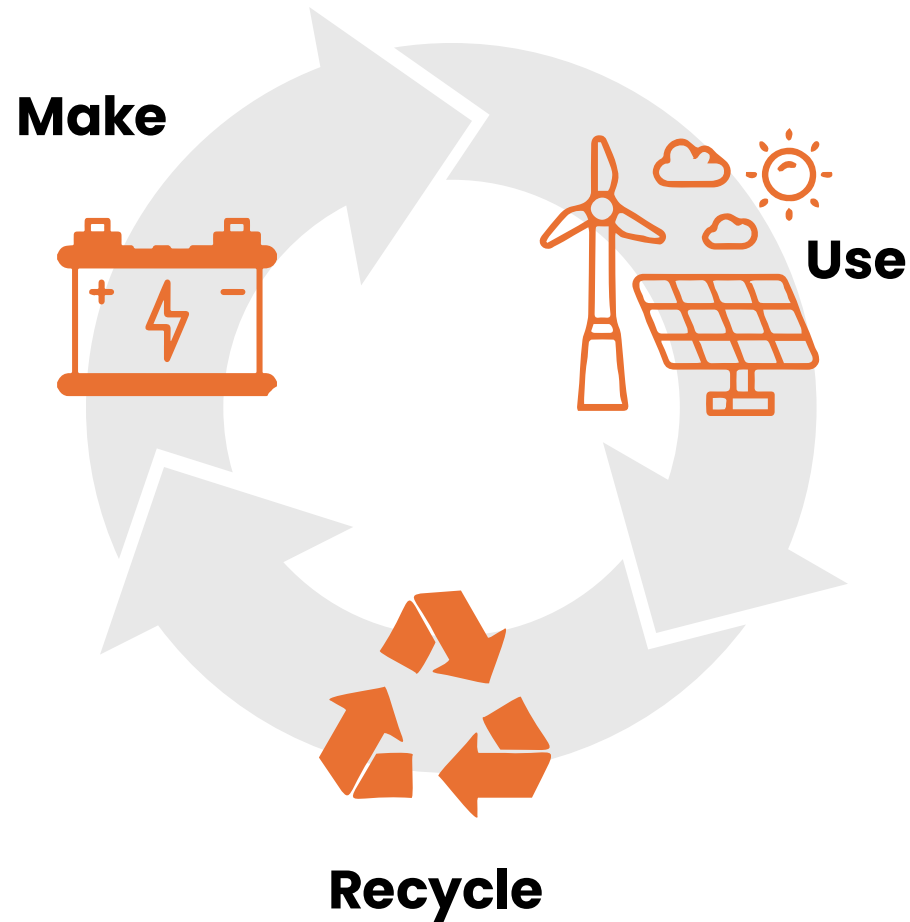


Lack of social protection due to informal employment arrangement



Lack of access to decent work

Lead-acid battery



Extended producer responsibility commitments are crucial in the circular supply chain

Lead acid battery (ULAB) is one of the highly circular supply chains with a 99% recycling rate

Reality:

Stark difference in recycling practices between the global north and the global south

Circularity requires supportive regulatory and economic environment to enforce ERP



Bangladesh's annual ULAB generation is approximately 118,000 metric tons



The demand for ULABs is rising with the shift towards green energy

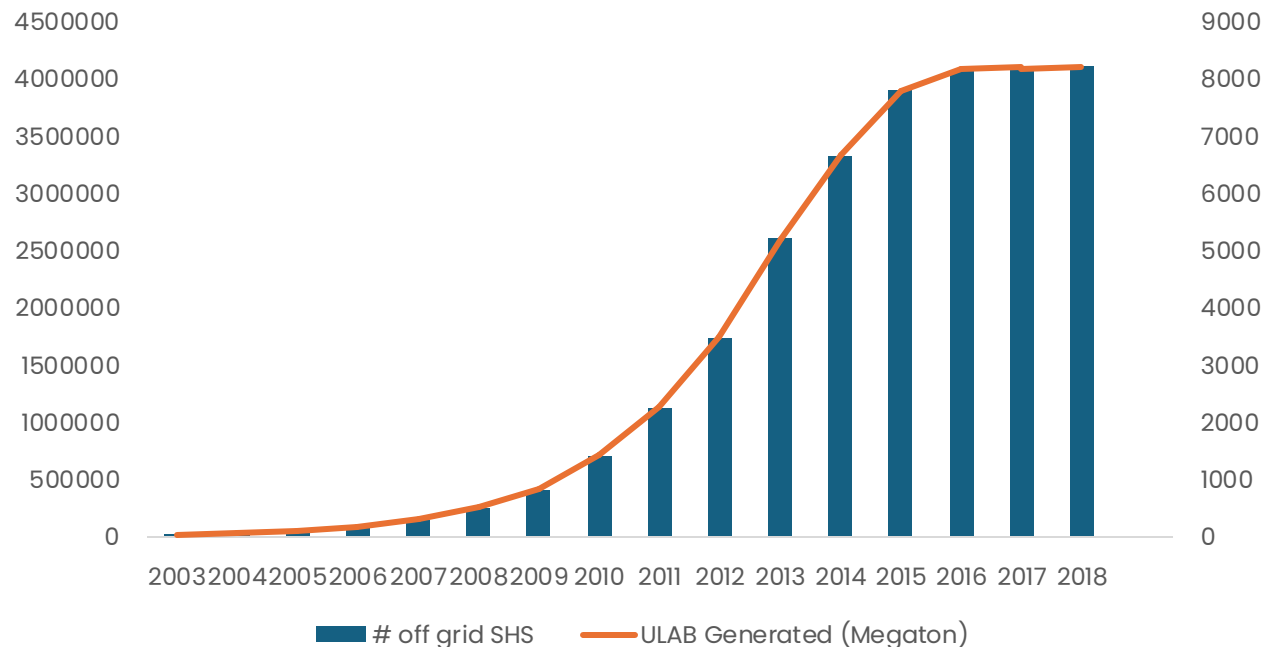


Illegal recycling, which handles about 80% of ULABs, faces challenges due to limited regulations, workforce and infrastructure

What happens when green energy ignores human rights?

This 15-year World Bank-funded programme by IDCOL installed 4.1 million solar units for 20 million people. It focused on production but only had three formal recycling services for over 200,000 homes and 22,119 tons of waste.

Estimation of ULABs generated, based on the # of off-grid SHS (adapted from ILA 2020)



Growth of informal recycling – children exposed to a hazardous environment with lead contamination



Use of child labourers in informal workshops for battery breaking



Soil pollution allows lead to leech into food sources



Vulnerable groups are the most affected



More than 35 million children exhibit dangerously high levels of lead in their blood (>5 micrograms per decilitre)



Pregnant women are at risk when lead is present in the bloodstream, as it can lead to miscarriages, stillbirths, premature births, and low birth weight



Every year, 31,000 lives are lost in Bangladesh (3.6% of national deaths) that are linked to lead exposure

Leave no one behind

Over 60% of the workforce in the global south is employed informally; they operate within circular supply chains, especially in recycling and waste management, because:



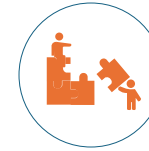
Cheap
labour



Bypass
red tape







Lack of formal
recycling
capabilities
(technology
know-how
and
infrastructure)



Lack of
oversight
and
motivations
on ERP

Waste recycling can be an opportunity for the informal workforce... but only if the supply chain:

-  Recognise the gaps that the informal workforce fills
-  Identify opportunities to improve their working conditions
-  Encourage better integration of the informal workforce so there is oversight of their working conditions and their rights
-  Look for solutions that are beyond strictly making recycling formalised

Fireside Chat

Lessons and Gaps in Circular Supply Chains

Moderator:

*Mark Robertson,
Senior Vice President,
The Centre*

Meet the Speakers



Mark Robertson,
Senior Vice
President,
The Centre



**Nin Castle, Co-
Founder, Reverse
Resources**



George Williams
Just Transitions Advisor,
ETI



Andile Dludla
Environmental
Specialist,
Mr. Price Group



Gayang Ho
Director of Research,
The Centre



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Initiative

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Q&A

Got any questions or comments?



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Thanks for participating!

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