HELVETAS
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Partnerships for People. Progress for Nepal.

HELVETAS Chautari



The Rasuwa-Bhotekoshi Floods

One person in the frame. A community behind her. And, a team learning, responding and moving forward together.

Issue 4 | October 2026

The Pralaya and What Comes After

The Pralaya is an old Sanskrit word. It describes a great dissolution, a moment when what we know and recognise is disrupted, broken down, or brought to an end. In Nepali, we often use the word to describe a devastation of a scale that is difficult to comprehend.

The floods in Rasuwa-Bhotekoshi brought that word close to home.

For many families, ordinary life changed in a matter of hours. Roads disappeared, homes and livelihoods were damaged, and places that had been familiar for generations were transformed by water, debris and destruction as the disaster, *the Pralaya,* entered the most ordinary parts of everyday life.

But *after the Pralaya* comes *the Sahakarma* - the spirit of people coming together. That spirit of coming together runs through this issue of our newsletter.

The past five months have been full of work, learning, partnerships and progress. In these pages, you will find stories from our programs and the events that brought people together. You will see how we are working with the private sector to support enterprise development and contribute to more sustainable economic growth. You will also find stories from the field that remind us that development is ultimately about people, their ideas, their aspirations and the systems that can help those aspirations take root.

And then there is the story of how we responded when crisis came.

How the response to the Rasuwa-Bhotekoshi floods brought us together as an organisation in a different way. Colleagues stepped forward, partners reached out, resources were mobilised, and support came from places. In the middle of uncertainty, we did not feel alone.

For that, we are grateful.

We are grateful to our donors, our partners and fellow organisations who offered support, to the individuals and institutions who contributed their time and resources, and to our colleagues who came together when they were needed most. We are grateful for the help we have received, and for the help that continues to come.

Perhaps that is what *the Pralaya* can teach us too. Destruction may leave us with a landscape we no longer recognise, but it also leaves us with the feeling that we aren't alone. What follows is shaped by how we come together, what we choose to rebuild, and the relationships we carry with us into what comes next.

As you read this issue, we hope you will see what we have done over these past five months and also the people and partnerships that make this work possible.

Thank you for standing with us.

The Editorial Team



Festive Gratitude and Compassion

The mornings are warmer, the skies are changing, and Dashain is here. But this year, the festive season arrives with heavier hearts, as many families continue to grieve, search for loved ones, or face an uncertain future. As we gather with those we hold dear, may this festive season remind us to cherish their presence, hold space for those who are grieving, and keep in our prayers those whose celebrations look different this year. Wishing you a Dashain, Tihar, and Chhath filled with love, gratitude and compassion.

1 Standing in Solidarity with Flood-Affected Communities



The flash floods in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, and downstream areas caused severe loss of life, displacement, and damage, leaving many families in urgent need. Helvetas Nepal quickly mobilized to assess humanitarian needs and coordinate with local authorities and stakeholders to support relief and recovery efforts.

Counting Changes since April

Provided safe drinking water to around 5,000 people and 2,000 students with construction and rehabilitation of 14 drinking water schemes and 12 school drinking water facilities.

Supported around 600 households in adopting agroecological methods in crop production, promoting sustainable agricultural practices through 383 trainings

Provided technical assistance to build 27 trail bridges in Ethiopia

Working with local partners, volunteers, and government agencies, Helvetas Nepal provided kitchen utensils to 300 households, hygiene kits to 150 households, and clothing sets to 400 individuals in Uttargaya Rural Municipality, Rasuwa.

These efforts complemented wider responses addressing food, shelter, WASH services, and access restoration. Additionally, the Swiss funded Safer Migration (SaMi) Program, in collaboration with provincial and local governments, has been providing psychosocial support to affected communities and migrant families. As of mid-September 2026, nearly 3000 people, including 1,574 women, had received psychological first aid in temporary shelters.

By addressing emotional well-being alongside humanitarian needs, the program is helping individuals and families begin their recovery journey.





Looking beyond immediate relief, Helvetas Nepal has launched the Rasuwa Flood Response and Recovery (REGAIN) Project to support recovery, rebuild livelihoods, and strengthen community resilience against future disasters. One of the signature initiatives of Helvetas will be the construction of two trail bridges in flood affected areas. Working closely with government agencies, the alliance and local partners, and communities, the project aims to address immediate recovery needs while strengthening resilience through a coordinated and community-centered approach.

2 From Monitoring Water Systems to Strengthening Local Leadership: The Power of Hello Dhara Functionality Summits



Under the Hello Dhara initiative, supported by Helvetas Nepal's Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Program, four municipalities in Karnali Province- Dullu, Dungeshwor, Lekbeshi, and Simta- organized Functionality Summits to assess and strengthen the sustainability of local water supply systems. Using digital tools such as Hello Monitoring, smart meters, and dashboards, local governments are tracking system performance, identifying gaps, and improving service delivery. The summits brought together municipal leaders, WASH committees, government agencies, and development partners to review functionality, maintenance, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

Across the program area, 94% of monitored water systems remain functional, and 93% of WASH committees are operational. Improved water services are also reducing the burden of water collection, saving households an average of two hours daily, particularly benefiting women and marginalized groups. The events concluded with recognition of high-performing water user committees and renewed municipal commitments to ensure reliable and sustainable WASH services for communities.

3 Seeds of Resilience: Communities Preserving Heritage Through Seed Exchange



In Barekot Rural Municipality, Jajarkot, 15 members of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) supported by the Agroecology Project, implemented in partnership with Fastenaktion and Helvetas Nepal, are demonstrating the power of community-led seed conservation.

By exchanging and sharing self-produced seeds among themselves, farmers ensure timely access to quality seeds while reducing dependence on costly external sources. This practice not only strengthens local food systems but also helps preserve valuable indigenous seed varieties that are well adapted to local conditions.

Through their collective commitment, the CBOs are fostering community cooperation, enhancing resilience to climate-related challenges, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Their efforts highlight the vital role that native seeds play in safeguarding agricultural heritage and strengthening food security for future generations.

1 Skill Festival 2026 in Koshi Province



The Skill Festival in Koshi Province brought together youth, industries, educational institutions, and government stakeholders to promote skills development and career opportunities. Organized by the Chamber of Industries Morang in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development, Koshi Province, with technical support from the Swiss-funded Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE) Project, the event attracted more than 1,500 students from 25 schools and 260 industry representatives.

The festival provided young people with opportunities to explore career options, assess their interests, and connect directly with employers. Through the Career Tree Zone, over 740 youth mapped their career aspirations, while 35 students with hearing difficulties participated and explored diverse career pathways.

Activities included skills competitions, career guidance, aptitude testing, and motivational sessions, making the event an engaging platform for learning and career exploration. Addressing the festival, Mr. Ram Prasad Mahato, Minister for Social Development, Koshi Province, reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to expanding initiatives that promote skills development and employment opportunities for young people.

Beyond celebrating technical skills, the festival strengthened connections between industry and the TVET sector, while encouraging young people to see skills as a pathway to meaningful careers.

2 From Skills Training to Entrepreneurship: Saurabh's Tea Library Journey



What started with On-the-Job training has now grown into an entrepreneurial journey for Saurabh Shrestha.

Counting Changes since April

1,400 youths enrolled in apprenticeship with career guidance service provided to 30,000 students

The success model of TVET and career guidance adopted by 72 local governments with allocation of the budget

Private sector investment by InElam project leveraged NPR 72 million

153 km trails rehabilitated/constructed along four tourism trails in Koshi province

After completing his Professional Cook training, Saurabh, together with his friends, took a bold step by investing NPR 600,000 to open Tea Library in Panauti, Bagmati Province, a unique space where people can enjoy a cup of tea while spending time with a good book.

Today, Tea Library generates an average daily sale of around NPR 9,000. But for Saurabh, this is just the beginning. He dreams of expanding the business by introducing more items to the menu, attracting more customers, and reaching a wider audience. He is also creatively using social media to promote his business and connect with customers.

What makes his story special is the idea behind Tea Library: bringing together two simple pleasures: a warm cup of tea and a good book.

Saurabh's journey is a reminder that when skills, confidence and an entrepreneurial spirit come together, training can become the first step towards creating a livelihood and turning an idea into reality.

3 New Towns, New Trends: Beauty Parlors Gain Ground in Rural Madhesh

As beauty services become increasingly popular across rural Madhesh, beautician training is helping young women turn skills into income and independence. Through the SheLeads: Skill and Empowerment Project, funded by the Ursula Zindel Hilti Foundation and Helvetas Nepal, women are starting businesses, finding employment, and supporting their families.

Through the project, women are using their new skills in different ways, from providing services in their villages to opening their own beauty parlors and supporting their education.

After completing beautician training, 24-year-old Muna Bishwokarma from Siraha began offering bridal makeup services in her village and earned Rs. 14,000 in her first month.



"I was invited to do makeup for brides in my village," Muna said. "I bought the necessary tools and cosmetics and started working immediately. There were around ten weddings in our area, and I was called to many of them."

Muna Bishwokarma

Megha Kumari opened a beauty parlor in Dhanusha, now earning around Rs. 15,000 monthly while creating employment for another trained woman.

"Our community is quite traditional, many women are not comfortable travelling far for beauty services. Now they can come here instead."

Megha Kumari



In Lahan, Babita Swarnikar runs her own parlor and says the training not only provided skills but also the confidence to earn independently.

For younger women, the impact goes beyond business. Binita Das, a bachelor's student, works part-time at a beauty parlor to help cover her education expenses, while Ramita Mahar, the first CTEVT-certified beautician in her ward, recently opened her own parlor and now earns around Rs. 10,000 per month

These stories reflect a growing change across Madhesh, where skills training is creating new opportunities for women to earn, build confidence, and shape their own futures.

Regional Conference Advances Dialogue on Private Sector Engagement for Inclusive Growth

The Regional Conference on Private Sector Engagement for Inclusive Growth, jointly organized by Helvetas Nepal and the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), brought together business leaders, government representatives, development partners, academia, and regional practitioners to explore how stronger partnerships with the private sector can drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The conference focused on the theme, "Where Business Incentives Meet Development Outcomes," highlighting practical experiences and innovative approaches that align commercial interests with development goals.



Through three thematic sessions on skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, and sustainable economic development, participants discussed successful models of private sector engagement, including industry-led skills training, enterprise development, innovative financing mechanisms, circular economy initiatives, and sustainable tourism. Speakers and panelists from Nepal, Vietnam, Myanmar and Bangladesh shared evidence, lessons, and experiences on fostering job creation, strengthening market systems, and promoting inclusive economic opportunities.



The conference concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration among government, industry, and development actors to scale effective private sector engagement models that generate both business value and positive development impacts.







5 From Developing Entrepreneurs to Financing Their Growth

Access to finance remains a major constraint for entrepreneurs, making financial institutions an important part of a stronger entrepreneurship ecosystem. In August 2026, Helvetas Nepal signed four strategic MoUs with banks and investment partners to create new financing pathways for enterprises. The collaboration was signed with Global IME Bank, Kumari Bank, Acumen Invest, and NIMB Ace Capital, four financial institutions for different purposes.







Global IME Bank will support access to credit for entrepreneurs in the honey value chain, while Kumari Bank will focus on financing opportunities for green and circular enterprises. Acumen Invest and NIMB Ace Capital will support enterprises with potential for higher growth and market expansion. These, along with earlier partnerships with cooperatives in Karnali, mark a shift from supporting individual entrepreneurs to strengthening the wider ecosystem that enables enterprises to access finance and sustain their own growth.

6 Koshi Goes Digital: New Tourism Portal Launched with TTDP Support

Marking World Tourism Day 2026, the Koshi Province Government, with support from the Swiss-funded Trail-based Tourism Development Project (TTDP), launched the Koshi Province Digital Tourism Portal, a new online platform designed to promote the province's diverse tourism experiences. The portal showcases key attractions, including the Mundum, Chiyabari, Laliguras, and Phalgunanda trails, while highlighting Koshi Province as a destination for wellness, spiritual tourism, agritourism, nature, and wildlife experiences.



The launch reflects the province's commitment to leveraging digital innovation to improve the way tourism destinations, services, and experiences are promoted and accessed. Aligned with the 2026 World Tourism Day theme, "Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism," the portal provides visitors with a one-stop gateway to discover tourism products, plan journeys, and access essential travel information.

The launch ceremony brought together provincial leaders, government officials, tourism entrepreneurs, private sector representatives, and young people from diverse fields. Looking ahead, the portal will be further expanded to provide more comprehensive destination information, travel routes, accommodation details, safety guidance, and other practical resources, helping domestic and international visitors enjoy more informed, convenient, and meaningful travel experiences across Koshi Province. Explore the portal, here: https://tourism.koshi.gov.np/









What We've Been Up To In
Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion

1 Mainstreaming GESI in Migration Landscape



Migration affects people differently, women and disadvantaged groups often face greater risks, barriers, and vulnerabilities. Through the Swiss-funded Safer Migration (SaMi) Program, Helvetas continues to integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) across migration governance, service delivery, and community engagement.

A key milestone has been the institutionalization of GESI within local migration policies. During the past year, SaMi supported the development of 13 new GESI-responsive Safer Migration Guidelines, bringing the total to 111 local guidelines nationwide. These measures include targeted provisions such as educational support for children of migrant workers who had deceased, gone missing, trafficked, or become disabled, helping bridge critical gaps in existing support systems.

Recognizing that policies are most effective when backed by informed leadership, SaMi also strengthened the capacity of provincial and local government stakeholders. Across all seven provinces, the program facilitated learning and exchange platforms for GESI focal persons, social development representatives, and local committee members to promote gender-responsive and inclusive migration services.

The program further empowered returnee migrants to advocate for their rights through the formation and strengthening of Returnee Migrant Networks (RMNs). Three provincial networks are now fully registered, while others are in the process of registration and formation. In addition, more than 13,000 returnee migrants, including over 2,500 women, participated in local orientation events, while leadership and capacity-building initiatives encouraged greater participation and representation of women returnees.

Counting Changes since April

Migration information and support services reached 1.14 million people

Strengthened ties between local and provincial government with agreement on establishing four Integrated Emergency Response Centers and two Municipal Waste Management systems in Koshi Province

147 elected representatives strengthened their capacity on integrated inclusive urban development



A journey towards learning, inclusion and hope

Parbati Chaudhary (name changed), a 30-year-old mother of two from Inaruwa Municipality, suffered physical and mental violence from her husband, alongside a heavy debt burden incurred for his employment in Dubai. Suffering from persistent suicidal thoughts, Parbati turned to SaMi's psychosocial counseling. Today, she is healing, and her suicidal thoughts have significantly decreased.

- Psychosocial care & healing: Like Chaudhary, out of 8,540 total individuals receiving individual psychosocial counselling last year, 882 were survivors of domestic violence.
- Challenging social stigma: To specifically raise awareness and reduce the stigma faced by women left behind, SaMi conducted a national social media campaign on International Women's Day. Reaching over 1.5 million people, the campaign promoted positive narratives around family members left behind.
- Reaching the unreached: At the same time, the program actively works to reach underserved populations. SaMi launched targeted safer migration sessions specifically for hard-to-reach groups, including women and girls working in the entertainment and hospitality sectors, as well as the LGBTQI+ community.

2 Building Confidence and Supporting Informed Choices for Returnee Migrants: iLEADER

Returning home after working abroad brings new opportunities and important decisions about what comes next. To support this journey, the Swiss-funded Reintegration of Returnee Migrants (ReMi) project piloted iLeader, an AI-powered coaching application with technical assistance from besage.ai. The application aims to strengthen migrant workers' soft skills, including communication, decision-making, problem-solving and confidence, as they rebuild their livelihoods and reconnect with their communities.

For Prem Humagain of Ramdhuni Municipality, the coach became a source of guidance for his transport business.

"The last important decision I made was to decide on my livelihood, all thanks to advice from iLeader coach. I purchased a tempo (battery-operated local transport) as a way of livelihood and have upgraded it to double Lithium battery that allows me to take tempo to far destinations. These decisions were all based on iLeader's advice," he shared.

For Upendra Sah of Laxminiya, iLEADER also offered a space to express feelings that were difficult to share with others. "Whenever I felt anxious or emotionally low, I turned to the iLEADER app. It gave me a safe space to share the thoughts and problems that I often found difficult to discuss with others. Through the app, I could seek guidance and find ways to cope with what I was going through," he explained.

Although sustained engagement remains a challenge in the pilot, these experiences offer an encouraging glimpse of how digital coaching can complement the support provided through Employment Service Centres. Lessons from the pilot will help ReMi explore how to make such support more accessible, relevant and useful for returnee migrant workers.

3 Building Shared Responsibility for Cleaner Public Spaces and Better Waste Management



Hamro Sahar Project, together with Harion Municipality, is bringing local businesses, banks, cooperatives, the Chamber of Commerce, and community representatives together to support cleaner public spaces and improved waste segregation in the municipality.

As part of this collaboration, private-sector partners have supported the provision of 38 sets of framed dual dustbins for markets and public spaces, enabling biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste to be separated at source.

This ongoing engagement is creating a stronger basis for collective action on waste management, with businesses, communities, waste collectors and the municipality working together to improve practices in public spaces. Rather than being a one-time contribution, the collaboration is intended to support continued coordination and engagement among these actors, building shared responsibility for the use, maintenance and management of waste facilities and cleaner public spaces.

The experience demonstrates how local partnerships can complement municipal efforts to improve everyday urban services, while creating a foundation for continued engagement of businesses and other local actors in waste management.



South South Cooperation



A delegation from Tanzania, comprising representatives from government institutions and Helvetas Tanzania, visited Nepal in May 2026 to learn from the country's internationally recognized Trail Bridge Program.

Similarly, a delegation from Bangladesh, comprising representatives from government agencies, development organizations, and the ILO, visited Nepal in September 2026 to learn from the ReMi Project.



Reflections from within: An invitation for staff to pause, observe, and share reflections from their work.

A Call That Never Reached Home



In this issue, **Madhusudhan Thapa** shares the story of Basuram Nagarkoti and his family, whose lives were forever changed by the devastating floods in Rasuwa.

At around 7:30 on the morning of Bhadra 10, 2083, Basuram Nagarkoti spoke to his wife, Diksha, over the phone. He was in the vehicle queue at Rasuwagadhi, preparing to enter Rasuwa after transporting goods from Kerung, China. It was an ordinary update from a husband on his way home, the routine call that connects a family to someone who spends much of his life on the road.

By 9:15 that morning, everything had changed.

Basuram had been a driver for 20 years. Around a decade ago, he had bought his own vehicle and begun transporting goods along the Kerung–Rasuwagadhi route. His work provided a steady income for his family of five: his wife and their three daughters. Through years of driving, he had built a livelihood of his own and helped his family move forward.

That morning, Diksha was going about her household chores when she went to the local market. There, she heard news of the devastating flood in the Bhotekoshi–Trishuli river system. She immediately tried calling her husband. The phone did not connect.

She tried again. There was no answer.

The man who had spoken to her just hours earlier was suddenly unreachable. Overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty, Diksha collapsed. People nearby carried her home, where the family and the wider community were left to confront the devastating news.

The flood had swept through lives and livelihoods across Rasuwa. People had died, many were missing, and homes, property and sources of income had been destroyed. For Diksha and her daughters, the days that followed were filled with waiting and hope that Basuram would be found. But despite days of searching, there was no news of him.

Eventually, following the advice of relatives and neighbours, Diksha performed the funeral rites for her missing husband. Yet the questions left behind by his disappearance remain, alongside the responsibilities she must now carry alone.

Her immediate concern is her three daughters: how to raise them, continue their education and provide for their needs without the income that once sustained the household. The loss is not only of a husband and father. It is also the loss of a livelihood built over two decades, the security of a regular income and the future the family had been working towards.

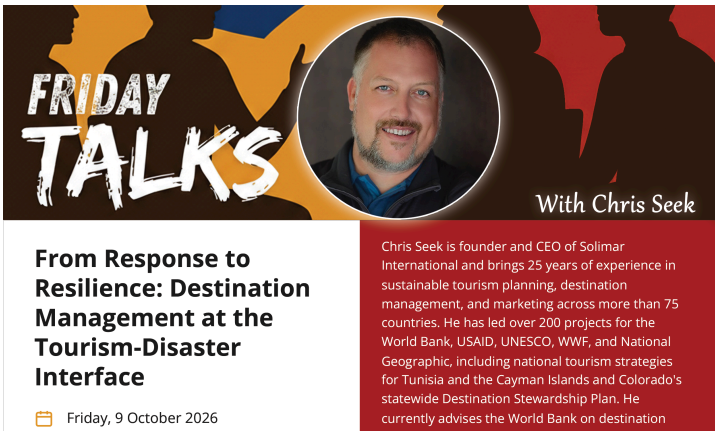
Diksha's story is one among many in Rasuwa. The floods have separated families, taken loved ones, damaged homes and livelihoods, and left survivors facing a future they could never have anticipated. Behind every missing person is a family waiting for answers. Behind every damaged home or lost business is someone trying to understand how to begin again.

In the aftermath, government agencies at all three levels, non-governmental organisations and communities have come together to support search and rescue, provide relief and psychosocial support, and help affected families rebuild their lives. The work of recovery, however, extends far beyond the immediate response. Families like Diksha's will need sustained support to restore their livelihoods, care for their children and regain some measure of stability.

For them, the flood did not end when the waters receded. Its consequences continue in the everyday realities of raising a family, meeting household expenses and trying to imagine a future without someone who was central to it.

Things We Didn't Want to Miss

1 Friday Talks #5: From Response to Resilience: Destination Management at the Tourism-Disaster Interface



From Response to Resilience: Destination Management at the Tourism-Disaster Interface

Friday, 9 October 2026

Chris Seek is founder and CEO of Solimar International and brings 25 years of experience in sustainable tourism planning, destination management, and marketing across more than 75 countries. He has led over 200 projects for the World Bank, USAID, UNESCO, WWF, and National Geographic, including national tourism strategies for Tunisia and the Cayman Islands and Colorado's statewide Destination Stewardship Plan. He currently advises the World Bank on destination

Following the Bhotekoshi floods, our fifth Friday Talks session featured tourism expert Chris Seek, who shared global lessons on building disaster-resilient tourism through stakeholder collaboration, stronger preparedness, and clear communication to help destinations recover and reassure visitors.

2 Swiss Roots and Collaboration



Helvetas Nepal in collaboration with Swisscontact and Nepal Swiss Chamber of Commerce & Industries organized Swiss National Day 2026 celebrations to commemorate 70 years of friendship and partnership between Nepal and Switzerland.

3 Conversation on Green Circular Economy



On 31 July 2026, InElam shared its experiences in promoting green and circular economy enterprises with the Ministry of Forests and Environment, exploring how collaboration between government, the private sector, development organizations and entrepreneurs can turn environmental policies into business opportunities that create jobs and protect natural resources.

4 Bee Keeping Conference



Helvetas Nepal, alongside key partners, joined the International Beekeeping Conference 2026 in Rampur, Chitwan (April 6–10), bringing together over 400 participants from around 13 countries. InElam Project showcased how a Market Systems Development approach strengthens Nepal's beekeeping sector, supports sustainable livelihoods in Madhesh and Karnali, and connects local honey entrepreneurs to wider markets through initiatives such as the Honey Bar.

5 Herbal and Honey-Based Value-Added Product Development

What can you create with herbs, honey and beeswax? Eight aspiring entrepreneurs explored the possibilities during a four-day hands-on training organized by InElam with the Natural Products Research Laboratory, Thapathali, from 24–27 July 2026. From herbal creams and massage oils to honey and beeswax soaps and mosquito repellents, participants learned to turn local resources into value-added products, building skills for future businesses and employment opportunities.



6 The Bio Paint Story and the Way Forward



InElam brought together experts from health, environment, research, government and enterprise to share learnings on Bio Paint, discuss the evidence and explore opportunities for collaboration to scale this green enterprise. Interested? Here's more.



Thank you for being part of Helvetas Chautari!

Thank you for joining us for this issue of Helvetas Chautari.

We hope these stories brought you closer to the people and ideas driving change across Nepal.

If something resonated with you, we'd love to hear your thoughts at newsletter.np@helvetas.org.

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