A PATH FOR INCREASING COMPETENCIES

TO LIVE IN A DIVERSE WORLD

MANUAL FOR THE GAME

CULTURE CROSSOVER

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INTRODUCTION

Effective intercultural communication is an essential skill for anyone working across different countries or regions in order to establish harmonious relationships and avoid conflict Intercultural communication is not a new topic, also in the area of youth work. It becomes more important with the intensification of migration and changes the work place and neighbourhoods. Multicultural groups of people are not only the reality of international companies, but also schools, universities and organisations. When two or more people with different cultural backgrounds interact and communicate with each other or one another, we can say that intercultural communication is taking place. So intercultural communication can be defined as the sharing of information on different levels of awareness between people with different cultural backgrounds. Effective intercultural communication is an essential skill for anyone working across different countries or regions in order to establish harmonious relationships and avoid conflict. It is essential to accurately and appropriately transfer information across countries and cultures. One of the barriers of effective intercultural communication is ethnocentrism, which is the assumption that everyone sees the world in the same way, as I do. Many tools and methods of work in the topic of intercultural learning were created to underline the similarities between people and their common needs. The game Culture Crossover was created as an answer to the gap of the educational tools which encourage learners to go beyond their own perspective and develop intercultural sensitivity, which is helpful to shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism.

The game was created by six organisations: IRSE Foundation from Poland, Make it Better and Sugo Design from Portugal, Elios from Italy, KulturLife from Germany and I-Participate from Greece, with the support of Youth Group, which consulted the game on each stage of development. The game was designed as a tool to use by educators and trainers in the formal and non-formal educational situations, but it may be used also by individuals interested in developing their intercultural competences.

This manual is the supporting paper for trainers and educators, who may want to get to know about intercultural learning before using the game with the students.

SUMMARY

The first chapter of the manual briefly describes the understanding of culture and intercultural communication and also presents the theory of intercultural learning, which were the base to create the game: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory and Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

The chapter two presents the competences needed for intercultural learning: the knowledge and skills, attitudes, feelings and behaviours.

In chapter three there are described different approaches and key aspects for facilitators to consider to make intercultural learning processes meaningful.

The fourth chapter presents the game and possibilities of using it during the lessons or training. It includes tips for facilitators, which came from the testing of the game and some inspirations for using it in different contexts and with different groups of learners.

We hope the manual will help you to facilitate intercultural learning and together with the game will give you an inspiration to discover and appreciate the differences.

1. THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

There is a big variety of definitions of culture depending on the background of the scientist, era, when it was created, geographical region and need behind it. For a very long time culture, in intercultural psychology, was defined as norms, values and behaviours characteristic for certain groups of people and recognised by this group (even if some people did not conform to these 'norms'). This approach is inadequate in contexts nowadays in which people often migrate from one place to another, travel both physically and virtually and live in continuous interaction with other people. Moreover, this reductionist view on culture has a limiting effect on human understanding of theories and methodologies that are inadequate for the realities of young people and that promote simplistic analyses and solutions to complex problems.

Culture is defined through interactions among people, it is fluid in its expression and continuously evolving and adapting to the realities experienced by its

In the constructivist view, culture is defined through interactions among people, it is fluid in its expression and continuously evolving and adapting to the realities experienced by its members. Culture evolves and reshapes itself throughout the years; it is influenced by the interaction of its members with members of other cultures, and with their surroundings, by cultural and economic exchanges and by globalisation.

Culture is the way people organise the world around them The way in which we view culture has consequences for the interpretation of cultural reality; it influences our interaction with other people, and the way in which we understand our identity and the identities of others. Culture is the way people organise the world around them. It is a social agreement of how things will be grouped, and what their importance will be. The group agrees on the meaning of each thing and how it is expressed in each group. That leads to the same things being seen differently within different groups of people, their hierarchy may differ and sometimes the same things can have different meanings. Intercultural communication tries to understand and describe those different cultures to make the communication easier.

It is important that the analysis in intercultural communication is done at the group level, which means that it uses generalisation as a way of group description. Based on that, each group can be described according to it's different characteristics. Majority of group members will fit this description and will follow the same path, but of course there will be people, who may think and behave differently.

Intercultural learning promotes the view that no culture is better or worse than the other, and that there isn't a hierarchy of cultures. It leads to an understanding that the definition of groups, of belonging, of in-groups and out-groups, can be superficial and changing. Intercultural learning acknowledges that there are general characteristics of a culture, but there is also a multitude of specificities related to how a culture is lived and that cultures themselves are internally heterogeneous. Therefore, instead of putting people into "boxes of culture", it looks into how people are influenced differently by their dominant culture, how they identify with characteristics of various cultures and how they create their own mosaic of identity. Putting people into boxes because of their passport, their birthplace, their appearance or any other element that enforces the potential of stereotypes, or seeing participants The analysis in intercultural communication is done at the group level, which means that it uses generalisation as a way of group description

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in an international training course as "ambassadors" of their country is a biased way of engaging in intercultural learning. Just because people were born or live in a certain country it does not mean they can speak for the entire population or they can be made accountable for the decisions of their government. Intercultural learning processes support participants in understanding the impact of the cultural background on their identity development and on their interpersonal and intercultural relations.

MODELS AND THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Various theoretical models explain the intercultural relations in our societies, define intercultural competence or describe intercultural learning processes. The theoretical models, applied to historical and social realities, help shape frames of reference. They help develop better ways to address these challenges in educational activities. In the work on the game we based mainly on two: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory and Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

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HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS THEORY

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, developed by Geert Hofstede in 1980, is a framework used to understand the differences in culture across countries and to discern the ways that business is done across different cultures.

Hofstede identified six categories that define culture:

- ♂ Power Distance Index
- 🕑 Collectivism vs. Individualism
- ⊘ Uncertainty Avoidance Index
- ⊘ Femininity vs. Masculinity
- Short-Term vs. Long-Term Orientation
- ⊘ Restraint vs. Indulgence

The cultures were described by these six categories and placed at the scale (0 up to 100). The results of this research and description of the countries is available in COUNTRY COMPARISON. The theory considers that description of each culture is relative, which means that it can only exist in comparison to other cultures. Pure numbers on the scale won't give us a lot of information. Only by adding a second culture, or compared to our own culture can we understand (potential) differences and their meaning in the communication.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

- Power Distance Index describes the attitude of the culture towards inequalities amongst group members. In the High Power Distance cultures people accept the inequalities, which is visible in the strong hierarchy, top-down relations at schools, universities and working places. The decisions are often made by people placed higher in the hierarchy (because of age, gender, education etc). In the Low Power Distance cultures values tend to be more egalitarian: children can discuss with parents, students can openly disagree with teachers and in the work the opinion of each person, no matter of position, has equal value.
- ✓ Collectivism vs. Individualism refers to the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups and how strong are the threads between the group members. Individualistic societies stress personal achievement and individual rights, and focus on personal needs. On the other hand, collectivistic societies put more emphasis on the importance of relationships

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description of each

The degree to which individuals are integrated into groups How the society deals with the fact that the future can never be known

The preference of society for achievement

The extent to which society views its time horizon and loyalty and individuals are considered as a part of the group.

- Uncertainty Avoidance Index refers to the fact, how the society deals with the fact that the future can never be known, how easily do they accept the fate or fortune and how strong their need for control is. A high uncertainty avoidance index indicates a low tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. The unknown is minimized through strict rules, regulations, etc. A low uncertainty avoidance index indicates a high tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. The unknown is more openly accepted, and there are lax rules, regulations, etc.
- Femininity vs. Masculinity considers the preference of society for achievement and attitude towards gender equality. Masculine cultures are driven by competition, achievement and success the aim is to be the best, at school, in the work. Feminine cultures are caring for others and quality of life, which is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable.

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Orientation considers the extent to which society views its time horizon. Long-term orientation shows focus on the future, emphasises persistence, perseverance, and long-term growth. Short-term orientation shows focus on the near future, places a stronger emphasis on the present than the future and emphasises quick results and respect for tradition.

Restraint vs. Indulgence refers to how societies control their impulses and desires. Indulgence indicates that society allows relatively free gratification related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint indicates that society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it through social norms.

Hofstede's theory was created just over 40 years ago based on the research done in the big companies, which doesn't reflect the diversity of the society. Especially nowadays, when people travel a lot and are under the influence of different cultures it may seem to be overdue. Nonetheless, it is still the referral point in many orientation courses, in business, diplomacy and can be the starting point in discovering the cultural differences. Again, it is important to highlight that the theory doesn't consider the judgment and division into 'good' and 'bad' cultures. As we interact with cultures other than our own, we become more aware of aspects of our own culture, which might otherwise be invisible to us, and to the differences and commonalities between our culture and others. This process, considering the dynamic of culture, is described by the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.





DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

The perception of culture may change according to the experience and become more complex The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) developed by Milton J. Bennett is a framework that explains how people experience and handle cultural differences. The assumption of the model is that the perception of culture may change according to the experience and become more complex, which builds the potential to use communication in intercultural learning. By recognizing how cultural difference is being experienced, predictions about the effectiveness of intercultural communication can be made and educational interventions can be tailored to facilitate development along the continuum.

From ethnocentrism, the experience of one's own culture as 'central to reality', to ethnorelativism, the experience of one's own and other cultures as 'relative to context' DMIS describes how people perceive cultural differences and what is the way from ethnocentrism, the experience of one's own culture as 'central to reality', to ethnorelativism, the experience of one's own and other cultures as 'relative to context.' The model is a continuum of six stages of intercultural sensitivity. In the ethnocentric stages, the tendency is to avoid cultural difference, while in ethno-relative stages it is to seek cultural difference.

Ethnocentrism – One's own culture is experienced as central to reality and maintains the assumption that one's world view is superior to others. The stages of ethnocentrism:

- Denial One's own culture is experienced as the only real one. Denial can be based on isolation or separation and assumes that people didn't have the chance to see and experience any other cultures. Nowadays, this situation seems to be almost impossible, but partial isolation is still possible. Sometimes people can intentionally build the barriers to separate from the others, which they want to keep at a distance (for instance ghettos).
- Defence When people notice the cultural differences and recognise their existence the first reaction is to fight against it. Here, cultural difference is perceived as threatening. One's own culture is experienced as the only viable one. The world is organised into "us" and "them" and often people see other cultures as worse and less valuable than their own.
- Minimisation In this stage people don't fight with the cultural differences any more, but minimize its importance in the relations and communication. People see the different elements of their own cultures (like values, norms, behaviours) as universal ones which apply in any cultural context. Often people highlight the fact that "we are all humans" and all our needs may be answered the same way.

Ethnocentric stages			Ethno-relative stages		
Denial	Defence Reversal	Minimisation	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration

Ethnorelativism – Difference is acknowledged and respected; is no longer perceived as a threat, but as something that needs to be sought in order to progress. One's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. he stages of ethnorelativism:

- Acceptance In this stage people recognise the cultural differences, accept different behaviours and can understand the values behind them. It doesn't mean that people agree with other cultures, but the differences are not judged based on ethnocentric and hierarchical world views. People accept that their world view is one of many, not better and not worse.
- Adaptation In this stage people have the experience of operating in different cultures and adding chosen elements of different world views to their own culture. Culture is not seen as something one has, but more as a process. Adaptation means an extension of the culture, not giving up or exchanging it. Central to adaptation is empathy, the ability to understand others by taking their perspective. People in this stage can adapt the way of communication to different contexts to be more efficient.
- Integration In this stage people don't belong to one culture but constantly adapt to changing realities and situations. They have the ability to evaluate different situations and world views from one or more cultural perspectives.

DMIS can be a good starting point for the design of educational programmes for developing intercultural sensitivity. The model does not have to be strictly interpreted in terms of stages; it can also be viewed as different strategies to deal with differences that are applied according to circumstances and abilities.

2. COMPETENCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

Intercultural competence is the ability to recognise the way culture affects behaviour, and to adapt your communication style to your interlocutors - without giving up your own authenticity. As the competence can be intentionally developed and the developing process can be planned, both by learner and the educator. Competence is understood as the ability to do something well and incorporates the knowledge, the attitude and the behaviour.

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The process of developing the intercultural competences can include:

- The knowledge about the important facts about the place (history, geography)
- If the understanding of etiquette, does and don't
- ♂ The understanding of the situation from the local perspective
- ⊘ Critical understanding of different worldviews

The authors of the "Autobiography of intercultural encounters" (Council of Europe 2009) used the following model of intercultural competence to frame a number of identifiable elements that an individual can develop in order to be "equipped" for intercultural encounters.

> Knowledge and skills of how one's own and others' social groups and social identities function, it not necessarily apply to particular culture, but rather is the general understanding of the function of the culture. It may include:

- knowledge about other people facts about the country, region of the people you meet, but also the factors which create people as they are;
- Knowledge about social processes understanding how people interact at group and individual level. This involves awareness of one's own assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices;
- Awareness of own culture to have critical perception of own culture in the comparison to the others;
- Skills of interpreting and relating to be able to interpret and understand the meaning of documents or events from other cultures;
- Critical cultural awareness to be aware of one's own values and make them explicit in interactions with other people.

Attitudes and feelings:

- Acknowledging the identities of others to recognise the differences among people and to accept different values and insights;
- respecting otherness to understand others, acknowledging their identities and refraining from putting them into preconceived boxes. It involves willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only correct ones;
- Aving empathy to be able to take someone else's perspective, to understand their thoughts, their feelings, their opinions and motives, and not to assume, that there is only one way of dealing with the situation;
- Self-awareness and self-knowledge to identify and name positive and negative emotions connected with knowledge and behaviours;
- Solution to be able to deal with this constructively. This means being able to grasp the ideas, feelings and intentions of other people, accepting that there can be multiple perspectives on and interpretations of any given situation, but also showing real interest in what other people feel and how they perceive situations.

Behaviours:

- So **Flexibility** to adapt one's behaviour to new situations and to what other people expect;
- Sensitivity to be able to recognise different verbal and non-verbal conventions, and to negotiate rules appropriate to intercultural communication.

In the process of developing intercultural competences it is important to develop awareness of one's own culture, which may be not that obvious on first sight In the process of developing intercultural competences it is important to develop awareness of one's own culture, which may be not that obvious on first sight. Our own culture is our natural ecosystem and without aware interaction with other cultures we reflect it very rarely. No one has to think about the norms and expected behaviours when surrounded by them. The reflection about differences may appear when we see our culture in the mirror of the other. And not always the reflection will be the same. When we are aware of our own culture we may recognise and acknowledge the differences and develop the ability to benefit from them.

3. FACILITATING INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Speaking about facilitation assumed, the learner taking responsibility for the learning process. The facilitator's role is not to deliver the knowledge, but rather to encourage learners to ask questions and look for answers, to share the knowledge, to think critically, and to stay curious. Responsibility of the learners is one of the principles of non-formal education and

the facilitator's role is to support the learners in their own way. However, trainers and facilitators bring their personal qualities, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, their own interests and cultural backgrounds into the learning process. For this reason, certain aspects need to be taken into account when preparing and running intercultural learning processes.

CONSIDER THE MICRO AND MACRO CONTEXTS

Intercultural learning is not focused on the individuals, but on the groups of people, on the society in general. Speaking about culture should not be reduced to traditions and celebrations, but should take into account the local and international socio-political context, the social reality and history, which may help to understand the reason, why people behave in certain ways and which values are behind that.

AWARENESS OF OWN CULTURE AND DISCOVERING DIFFERENCES

Discovering and accepting the diversity of the world (or the diversity of the group) starts from awareness of one's own culture. Intercultural learning is not only an opportunity to learn about people with different cultural backgrounds, but also learning about oneself. Often intercultural learning is understood as the knowledge about what to do and what not to do in the interaction with different cultures, while it is much more deeper. Intercultural learning includes understanding how social, economical and political conditions influence people's behaviours, which help to understand other's worldview.

THE COMMITMENT TO FOSTER SOCIAL CHANGE

Intercultural learning aims not only on celebration of diversity, but it includes redressing inequality and fostering social change. By learning about different cultures, their history, and Trainers and facilitators bring their personal qualities, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, their own interests and cultural backgrounds into the learning process

realities we also may develop the awareness about discrimination, inequality and injustice towards those groups. We can discover which cultures are dominating, and which are not present and we understand the reason behind that to take the action to foster social justice.

ONGOING PROCESS

Culture is dynamic and adjusting to the social, political and economical changes. Learning about the cultures is an ongoing, lifelong process. We are changing our worldview with the gained experience and developed competences but the reality is also changing. Intercultural learning involves searching for new ways of developing the competences, getting the knowledge about nowadays situations, understanding the dynamic of changes and facing the complexity of the situation.

WALK THE TALK

Trainers and facilitators of intercultural learning processes have the responsibility to behave in a way that reflects the competences they wish their participants to develop. It's important to keep cohesion between the words and your own behaviours and attitudes, both in life and in the learning space. When we encourage learners to discover differences, ask questions and stay curious they will also expect that from



us. In the learning space it may also mean to react to all discriminative comments and behaviours. It must be clear for everybody that racism, prejudice or any kind of discrimination has no place in the room. Being flexible and addressing the bias expressed by participants immediately or during a following activity designed specifically (or both) is a way to reach the learning objectives and take into account the current situation in the group of participants.

In the facilitation of intercultural learning process may be helpful to have the knowledge about human rights, but also about stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination. Intercultural learning facilitates acknowledging that human rights apply to all human beings, regardless of cultural backgrounds and of the inequalities that still exist in practice. Knowing about human rights ensures that intercultural learning is understood within a framework of equality, and thus protection from any form of discrimination. The intercultural perspective requires recognising that reality is plural, complex, dynamic and changing. One's own background and beliefs act as cultural lenses through which one can see the world. To understand the plurality of society means becoming aware of the limitations of one's own perspective, of these lenses, in interaction with others.

Facilitation process is fostering by openness and tolerance of the trainer or facilitator. It may imply dealing with uncertainty of new situations but also agreement for different values, norms and worldview. It involves the capacity to understand that there is more than one possible and correct set of values, attitudes and beliefs, but it never involves the agreement to act against human dignity and human rights.

In addition to knowledge and attitude the skill which may be developed by the facilitators or trainers of intercultural learning is empathy, and more specifically cognitive empathy, which involves being able to understand another person's In the facilitation of intercultural learning process may be helpful to have the knowledge about human rights, but also about stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination

Facilitation process is fostering by openness and tolerance of the trainer or facilitator Cognitive empathy, which involves being able to understand another person's mental state and what they might be thinking in response to the situation mental state and what they might be thinking in response to the situation. It is considered to understand someone's situation, position, background and values to, in the next step, understand his/her feelings in certain situations. Empathy does not come as easy as it may seem. To go out of your own imagination of feelings projected to someone else it is expected to ask the questions and listen to the second person to be close to what he/she may feel and need.

4. GAME AS A TOOL SUPPORTING

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

The idea for the Culture Crossover game was born as an answer to limited tools for intercultural learning aimed to develop critical thinking and understanding different perspectives and worldviews. A lot of tools used in the work with youth and young adults are based on simulation and put participants in an abstractive culture, which is not necessarily linked with reality. On the other hand there are many tools and methods aimed to underline similarities between cultures or give knowledge about particular cultures. Most of them don't go beyond ethnocentric perspective and don't develop the ability to acknowledge and recognise the differences. The core idea of the game were the intercultural clashes, which may appear in the interaction of people from different cultures.

Development of intercultural sensitivity may be the way to cross the border of ethnocentrism and shift to ethnorelativism Increased cultural diversity in different settings calls for abilities to adapt to the unfamiliar environment and to learn to work and live productively with people from different cultural backgrounds, which highlights the ability of intercultural sensitivity. Development of intercultural sensitivity may be the way to cross the border of ethnocentrism and shift to ethnorelativism, which accepts the different ways of organising the world around us, called culture. The game is based on the theory of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and Cultural Dimensions described in chapter one. It has a form of travel through different countries with the aim to reach the finish point as fast as possible. During the game participants have to answer the questions and face the challenges to gain the badges, which are necessary to cross the border and move forward. They are given in the form of culture and trivia cards.

The Culture Cards were created by representatives of each culture, who also have migrant backgrounds and could feel the differences while moving to another country. They have been created based on cultural generalisations, that is, assertions about a culture that allow one to surmise or predict how a representative of that culture might behave. The Culture Cards aim to develop the understanding of etiquette, dos and don't, the understanding of the situation from the local perspective and critical understanding of different worldviews. The answers referred often to the cultural dimensions and try to give the explanation of the situation. It can be treated as a suggestion and it's fine, if during the game, participants decide if the given answer was close to the proposed one. It shouldn't be treated as the only correct answer. The Culture Cards should provoke discussion and reflection about different worldviews, values and belives. Some of the Culture Cards are about etiquette and can be tips on how to avoid faux pax.

Trivia Cards complement the Culture Cards by giving facts and information about geography, history, social issues and culture. In Trivia Cards, only one answer is always correct.

Intercultural competences doesn't mean that we have to know everything about the culture, but rather than we are aware of differences and in the interaction with different cultures we assume that someone can have different perspective The game is not the tool to become an expert on a particular culture, but rather to try to take a look at the situations from different perspectives, because intercultural competences doesn't mean that we have to know everything about the culture, but rather than we are aware of differences and in the interaction with different cultures we assume that someone can have different perspective. It allows us to not take the things as guaranteed but rather searching for the most convenient way of interaction, which will take into consideration both cultures. Intercultural communication doesn't mean that we have to choose one culture and one person or group should adapt to the behaviours of others, but rather is the competence to adjust the behaviour to take into consideration the needs and norms of our interlocator.

The game can be used in formal and non-formal educational situations, in multicultural or national groups. It's good to have in mind that all these factors may influence the game dynamic. In the intercultural groups, including representatives of the played cultures, they may give more explanation and additional information to those already provided. It can also provoke discussion about the differences by comparing different cultures. In the national groups participants may search for additional information, if required.

Using the game can be preceded by the lesson/workshops about culture in general, identity, stereotypes and prejudice. During the game some participants may disagree with the described situations and proposed explanation, especially about their own culture. It's good to give the space for the disagreement and explain that intercultural learning is focused on generalisation, which assumes that the majority of representatives of the culture will recognise this situation as familiar. In each country there will be people who won't see the situation as typical, but most likely they will be in the minority.

Educators may adapt the game to their own needs and capacity. It is possible to use only some elements of the game, like culture cards to discuss the intercultural clashes and looking for different strategies to deal with it. It can also be used to teach about geography or social issues. *It's good to give the space for the disagreement*

Educators may adapt the game to their own needs and capacity

In the work with people with migrant or refugee backgrounds the game can be the part of orientation training, which will support them in understanding the culture of host countries. It can be also used as a tool to build the understanding between the newcomers and host society. In that case both of them may be invited to play and by answering the question understand each other better.

In intercultural education, the game as a tool helps to realise its objectives not only by providing theoretical knowledge, but primarily because of experiential learning and emotional involvement of learners. The Culture Crossover game provides an opportunity for players to experience situations of misunderstanding due to cultural differences and to realise that the same situations and behaviors can be interpreted differently depending on the cultural context.



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