



# JICA-Palau Alumni Association NEWS LETTER

2021. March



## Message from Alumni President

Hello everybody, my name is Miver Umedip and I took office in 2009 to become the President of Alumni Association by being nominated by the other Alumnus. I am currently the Chief of Division of Information Commu-

nication and Technology (ICT) in the Bureau of Communication, and have participated in numeral JICA programs in the past all in relation to IT. I learned about e-governance during these trainings and came back to Palau and helped develop the Bureau of Land and Survey to become paperless. I have also obtained my IT license from Okinawa giving me credibility to advise government offices with any IT related issues.

I have happily stayed as the President of Alumni Association for over ten years now helping bring exposure to the community. The Alumni Association has been part of donating for typhoon reliefs to Kayangel, Monument clean ups for the Japanese Shrines, Christmas Candy Distribution, and promoting pristine paradise by providing trash basin

to needed locations. We also helped the community in reviving their Palauan oil production in their state as it was affected by storm surges by purchasing steel for them. We have been called to assist in the rat eradication clean up in other states as well as cleaning up their coastal areas.

I strongly believe in the JICA programs and I know they are extremely useful. We are fortunate to have this kind of relationship with Japan and that they can provide us with free trainings. It's a pleasure to have such an opportunity and that we are able to gain from Japan and then transfer the knowledge back to Palau, and I know it will benefit not only individually but also for the people of Palau.

I know some of the young Palauan's are afraid to leave the comfort of their home and to

experience something new where it is uncertain whether somebody has your back or not. But I want to tell everyone to just go out and get lost in the country. That way you can learn to always find your way back by learning to ask for help and reaching out.

Lastly, I would like to deeply thank JICA for giving us these opportunities to help the young generations of Palau. To those who are hesitant to apply, just do it. You have nothing to lose. You might go and find a better solution to already existing problems from home. You might be able to find good people and good relationships with people from all over the world. I have made some great friends that I keep in touch with till this day. To those who have already decided to go, I say go and get lost and most importantly, have fun!



Mr. Miver Umedip  
President of Alumni Association

# What is KCCP?

JICA's Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) is one of the technical cooperation that JICA carries out in Japan.

Japanese society has developed uniquely by fusing its national characteristics with foreign knowledge and technology through the process of trial and error. Most of these experiences accumulated in Japanese society can be understood by actually visiting Japan.

KCCP receives nearly 10 thousand participants each year. Most of the participants is affiliated with a governmental or public organization, though the number of people from

NGOs has been increasing in recent years. Japan has enlisted cooperation from a wide range of levels including national and local governments, universities, non-profit organizations, private companies and NGOs, creating a system capable of responding to any sort of need from advanced technology to expertise in vitalizing villages. In terms of scale and available resources, there is no other program in the world that can compare to JICA's KCCP and have become one of the cornerstones of Japan's international cooperation.



## Feedback from SDGs Global Leader Participants

### Mr. Manny Adelbai



Mr. Adelbai received his master's degree on Business Administration at the Kwansai Gakuin University in Nishinomiya, Japan (August 2016-September- 2018). He has been working at the Palau Public Utilities Corporation (PPUC) since 2012 as a mechanical engineer under Power Generation. He applied for this JICA opportunity because he wanted to obtain the business skills to help improve power generation's operation. However during his program he realized that the problem was not with the power generation but in the power distribution. For this reason, when he returned from his master's program, he changed department and worked under the Project Planning & Implementation Division as their Mechanical Engineer.

"What I found out from my final research was to suggest doing a grid upgrade and to develop a business case for that upgrade. I estimated PPUC needed around 20 million dollars to do that and if they do it, the grid

upgrade will pay itself. When I came back to Palau, I submitted that research to PPUC and since then we have been working on making that happen." Said Mr. Adelbai. By learning the business angle he learned how to negotiate between companies and making deals to find a "win win" situation that addresses all parties.

Mr. Adelbai explained that the process of application for the master's program consisted of two phases, one through JICA and one through the University. He shared some of his struggles of being away from family and language barrier, also being the first batch to go to Japan having things still being established and tested. However, he stated that the application went smoothly and there were many people willing to help you get through all the obstacles. He believes that the administration also learned a lot from the first batch and has already improved the process for all the future programs.

Mr. Adelbai gladly shared, "in 2019, Mr. Kitaoka, the president of JICA visited Palau and he asked us for any recommendation of suggestions for future programs. Getting your Associates being the highest education here in Palau, We suggested that the program open up opportunities to a bigger audience and include Bachelors Program as well. I really support what they're doing right now for this program. To get the word out and increase the people interested and further build the Japan Palau relationship."

### Ms. Eve Morei



Ms. Morei received her master's degree on International Development at the Nagoya University in Japan. She resided in Japan (August 2017- July 2020) starting with six months of research followed by her master's program. She has been in the office of Planning and Statistic under the Bureau of Budget and Planning in Ministry of Finance since 2014 to this day.

During her Masters Program she learned a lot about data analysis and how to interpret the data, seeing the numbers for not just as numbers but to also understand the meaning behind the numbers, the situation, and the reason behind why these numbers exist.

"I love Japan, and I really love how people are over there! They are so elegant!"

"The overall experience not

only taught me a lot in school but also taught me patience and discipline and to think in a logical manner on an everyday basis." Said Ms. Morei.

She recommends other fellow Palauan's to take this chance if the opportunity arises because according to her, "not only do you get to experience the different environment and the different thinking ambiance, you can learn and understand how people live and what drives and motivates them." She learned some Japanese as well during her program and even though there was a slight language barrier, she was "just eager to talk to people and get to know them."

Ms. Morei excitedly said, "I urge them to go! It is such a great opportunity! Not only does it allow us to think differently but it also broadens our horizons! Allowing us to immerse in the culture not only in schools but also with the people of Japan. I really want to thank JICA because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I was so lucky, and I will forever be thankful for everything they did, encouraging me to go even if I had my doubts at first. Once I got over the initial homesickness, I loved that place and I love Nagoya!"



## About **SDGs Global Leader**

“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Global Leader” is one of the JICA’s KCCP Program for Long Term Participants. SDGs Global Leader is newly established in JFY 2019 to promote cooperation for sustainable development in the world, under the framework of JICA Development Studies Program (JICA-DSP). This program aims to foster junior/ mid-level government officials, academicians and leading human resources in various fields who are capable of influencing policymaking in their countries or contributing to socioeconomic development in the near future.

The course will provide participants with special program on Japanese developmental experience and internships if necessary, in addition to obtaining Bachelor’s, Master’s or PhD.

### Ms. Shirley Koshiba



learn more about the environmental aspects in relation to waste management policies and recycling which are things already done at PICRC for the National Marine Sanctuary.

Ms. Koshiba had the opportunity to do an internship in Northern Okinawa at the Okinawa Churashima Foundation Research Center and learned about different invasive species in Okinawa. This opportunity also gave her exposure to different types of research fields, such as tilapia reproductive research, shark research and whale reproduction, and geographic distribution. She also had the opportunity to attend various conferences with her professor, and was able to present her thesis in Taiwan, Kyoto, and Sapporo at the Regional Science Association International Conference.

Ms. Koshiba urged for others to apply even if the applications are strict because she claims it to be “worth spending time and effort applying for it” and how “it was eye opening. The program enabled her to deepen her understanding of not only Japan, but other pacific islands and their troubles and similarities in the environmental challenges.” She thanks JICA and The University of Tsukuba for the opportunity as a Palauan to be able to go and obtain a degree and also to experience living in Japan.

Ms. Koshiba received her master’s degree on Environmental Science at The University of Tsukuba in Ibaraki, Japan (August 2016- March 2019). She has been working at the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) since 2011 as a researcher to this day.

During her master’s program, Ms. Koshiba focused her studies on socio-economics and did her thesis on assessing the relationship between the tourism industry in Palau, environmental pollutants and Palau’s overall economy.

All of the different methodologies for surveys she has learned through her program has been very helpful for her conducting PICRC’s socio-economic surveys. The location of the university being the green city educational focused area, she was able to visit multiple research centers in her free time. Her visit to the northern part of Kyushu helped her

### Ms. Fenny E. Seklii



summer with a local NGO in Okinawa called Okinawa Pacific Partners. During that month she visited many eco friendly factories and was introduced to many things Japan was already doing that they could potentially implement in their own countries, such as reusing oil from restaurants to make electricity and collecting deep ocean water to generate energy.

“What I learned the most in Japan was to be timely and paying attention to the details. Us Palauan’s have the same word “komakai” (komakai: detailed) and I’ve learned that every little thing I do need to be “komakai”. Said Ms. Seklii

This was Ms. Seklii’s first time to visit Japan, but she said “the food and the culture are very similar to Palau” so she was very comfortable there. She loved it so much she did not want to leave when her program ended and said that if she ever had another chance, she would go again. She highly recommends for others to apply because “it is a great opportunity not only to study academically but to learn and experience different cultures.”

Ms. Seklii is excited about the potential opportunities in the near future and optimistically stated, “I am looking for a job that I can implement what I have learned from the master’s program.”

Ms. Seklii received her master’s degree on Policy Science at the Ritsumeikan University in Osaka, Japan (August 2018- September 2020). She worked as an administrative officer in Ministry of Education but resigned before leaving for the master’s program. Upon return, she waited for the new administration to start working again and currently looking for a job in the judiciary department.

During her Masters Program, their class was divided into four different groups according to their research and was assigned professors to help them complete their thesis. Her group was named “Machi Research” (machi: town) where they focused on analyzing policies and creating policies especially on urban planning. Ms. Seklii also had the opportunity to do an internship through the JICA scholarship for a month during the



## About Group and Region Focused

JICA's KCCP Program for Group and Region Focused course is a proposal-type program. This means Japan identifies the issues for developing countries, in which they make a lineup of programs for, and proposes them to these countries. From there, based on their requests, accepts participants from each country.

This type of program is rarely seen in Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs, which are mainly composed of request-type programs. A rare and unique characteristics not often seen in other countries and international organizations. It is also a strategic measure to transmit Japanese strength effectively such as disaster reduction, natural environmental conservation, and so on.

## Feedback from Group and Region Focused Participants

“There is always something you can learn.”

MR. LEVAN TOKTANG AKITAYA



Mr. Akitaya went to Yokohama, Japan (June 2014-August 2014) to participate in the JICA training program on International Maritime Conventions

and Ship Safety Inspection Course at the JICA Yokohama International Center. He started working for the Division of Marine Transportation in 2013, which over time changed to Division of Safety and Security in the Bureau of Marine Transportation.

“This program was a very technical course which required a basic prior understanding on ships and its functions. I myself had a navigation background, which helped, but I had to catch up on the engineering side.” Explained Mr. Akitaya. After returning

from the program he succeeded in achieving one of his goals from his action plan, which was to upgrade the aids navigation. Compared to five years ago, Palau now has 90 percent coverage of the shipping lanes with buoys. Now that this has been established, they have shifted their focus to the secondary channels that are used by local boats.

Mr. Akitaya believes that Palau should also apply to be part of the Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was established to have “an effective port State control regime in the Asia-Pacific region through co-operation of its members and harmonization of their activities to promote maritime safety and to protect the marine environment, and also to safeguard working and living conditions on board ships.”

“Palau used to be a maritime nation 30-40 years ago, but that culture faded with time. This course and its expo-

sures were very helpful, and having that experience is something you’ll never get in Palau with that level of training. We were able to listen to many lectures and go on educational visits. The exposure to the maritime industry in Japan in itself was very valuable.” Said Mr. Akitaya. He believes that if every staff attended this training, it would increase the level of knowledge and expertise. He truly believes that “any training, any human capacity building is always good. That there is always something you can learn and any kind of ship safety or safety of life at sea would be helpful to gain and bring back to Palau.”



## “Nice introduction to how Japanese handle IUU”

MR. JIM SHIRO KLOULECHAD

Mr. Kloulechad went to Yokohama, Japan (December 2019 for three weeks) to participate in the JICA train-



ing program on Policy and Countermeasures Against IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) Fishing at the JICA Yokohama International Center. He is working as a Marine Law Executive Officer for PSS Kedam and has stayed in the same position to this day.

“One of the things I learned from the program that I found useful to bring back to Palau was knowing all the Chinese fishing boats because now, when I see them here I recognize them.

I am now able to associate different things with illegal fishing activities and be able to point them out.” Proudly explained Mr. Kloulechad. Just after the training, he was able to locate a Chinese ship that was associated with illegal fishery at Helens Reef. Japan, as well as many other Asian countries, has created a framework where every region can share information to others in terms of what they discover. “Information to me is really important,” said Mr. Kloulechad, “if we create the same framework for the Pacific, we will all know what types of activities are happening and be able to create a system that would keep them up to date on the new techniques the illegal fishery come up with. He strongly urges and hopes that in the near future the Pacific Islands can also implement this into their system.

This program was a “nice introduction to how Japanese handle IUU fishing” and Mr. Kloulechad hopes that

in the future this JICA training can include an even more specific topic focusing on maritime law working with the Japan Coast Guard, having the opportunity to join their training on investigating and policing the ships and handling the illegal activities. He would love to participate in another if the opportunity arises for him.

“Overall the program was very well organized and had everything ready for us.” Said Mr. Kloulechad. He shared that he has already recommended many Palauan’s to join this training especially everyone from his office because it was a unique opportunity and a “good experience to see what’s really happening.”



## “Change is for the worse, or for the better, you never know until you try.”

MS. KIMBERLY IDIP

Ms. Idip went to Tokyo, Japan (October 2015- November 2015) to participate in the JICA training program on Nursing Management (Asia and Pacific Region) at the JICA Tokyo International Center. She was working at the



National Hospital as a Senior Registered Nurse before departing for the training, and upon return she was promoted to an ER Nurse Supervisor. By March 2020, she became the Chief Nurse for the Hospital and Clinical Nursing.

“We visited a lot of different hospitals and listened to many lectures during our training and what really got to me was

the 5 S’s (Sort, Set, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain). I was in awe during my hospital visits. Even as a big hospital with plenty of available resources, they remained conservative and were never wasteful and always only used the very minimal that they could.” Explained Ms. Idip about her experiences in the Japanese hospitals.

One of the first things that she noticed in the Emergency Rooms that impressed her was the way people replenished condiments in the fridge and how organized they were.

Some of the lectures Ms. Idip attended included customer service and care at the hospital. She explained that she was able to “learn about dealing with patients and even employees and learned to listen to both sides and weigh what’s been said before making any decisions.” She “learned to respond instead of simply reacting to each situation.” They even had a fun field trip to Tokyo Disney Land to learn about

Customer Services in Japan!

Ms. Idip explained that her biggest struggle implementing her training into practice in Palau was the fact that “some people don’t want change or are afraid of change.” But she strongly stated that whether “change is for the worse, or for the better, you never know until you try.”

Ms. Idip shared her overall experience in Japan and said, “I loved it! I loved the food, and even Seven Eleven satisfied me! Being able to go to Japan and joining the training was a very good experience. If an opportunity is there just grab it. If you have a chance to go and learn something, then go grab it and come back and help your country.”



“Without the training I wouldn't be where I am right now.”

MR. DISON SBAL

Mr. Sbal went to Okinawa, Japan (October 2015- March 2016) to participate in the JICA training program on Internet Communications Technology



for the Improvement of Government Capacity and Services at the JICA Okinawa International Center. He was an Immigration Officer before departing for the training, and was sent to this training for the sole purpose of creating a whole new department in the Ministry of Justice. A year after his return, he became the IT technician for the Bureau of Immigration overlooking their data system, and a year after that, he

became in charge of all four Bureaus within Ministry of Justice under their new department called Information Management Services (IMS).

“During the program, we had the chance to learn about e-governance and project management. Palau currently does not have the ability to create a new system, but what we can do is create a project to submit and be there to manage and help improve the service delivery and access for the clients.” Said Mr. Sbal. After his return from Japan, he helped create new and updated systems for Palau, such as the CCTV surveillance system on the roads.

Mr. Sbal joyfully shared his experiences, which expressed the kindness of the people in Japan. One of which was with the chef at the cafeteria who knew his favorite was the baked salmon, so every time when salmon was being served, the chef would put one giant cut of the salmon just for him. “I really loved Okinawa! It was quite the culture shock,

yet I was still able to feel the familiarity from Palau. I had no problem with the food since we eat the same things. And I think I was lucky to go to Okinawa because they were mellow which gave me time to adjust to their lifestyle and even had access to betel nut.”

“The JICA training programs are definitely useful for Palau and the people of Palau because without the training I wouldn't be where I am right now.” Stated Mr. Sbal. And he proudly explained that after two years from the program, he was able to submit a report to JICA on the progress of his action plan he submitted during the program and was able to describe how he implemented his training into practice for Palau.



“Go and study and find what you really want to do in your career!”

MS. MELINDA SUBEDIANG

Ms. Subediang went to Hokkaido, Japan (September 2018- November 2018) to participate in the JICA training program on Improving Teaching Methods for Science and Mathematics in Primary Education at the JICA Hokkaido International Center. She started off as a librarian at the Ibobang Elementary School since 1994, and went to live in the States for ten years and came back and became a classroom teacher at the school since 2010. She teaches 7th and 8th graders all content areas such as math, science, English, Palauan, Social Science, and Health.



“The most useful thing I have learned in my training was the concept of Student Center. This included allowing the students to learn more by themselves, pairing with their classmate and engaging with one another learning from each other. As a teacher, we learned to be the facilitator and monitor them but give them the chance to explore for themselves.” Explained Ms. Subediang.

In Palau, most school settings focus on lecture base classes where the teacher talks and the students just listened. Ms. Subediang shared that this system helped her in her classroom setting since her school is a multi-grade classroom, meaning she has to teach two different grades in one room. After she came back from the training she talked to the principle and started working with her colleagues by sharing her knowledge, eventually implementing this system to their school. She claims that it

“became easier for the teachers to teach and students to learn better.”

“I recommend this program to any teachers. I encouraged my nephew who just graduated from Palau High School to look for these opportunities in the future and apply for them. It was a great training program and I wish they would extend it to a year. The people I met were all so helpful and had the best hospitality. The facility was very well equipped making teaching and learning very fun. My experience in Japan was exceptional and great! If you can get a scholarship, then just go and study and find what you really want to do in your career!” Happily shared Ms. Subediang.



“Witnessed the professionalism which helped me set a course for what we can do here in Koror.”

MR. SELBY ETIBEK

Mr. Etibek went to Yokohama, Japan (June 2012- August 2012) to participate in his first JICA training program on Comprehensive Solid Waste Management and The 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) at the JICA Yokohama



International Center. He then had another opportunity to attend a second JICA training in Osaka (June 2015- July 2015) on Enhancement of Solid Waste Management Capacity (Advance, Planning & Policy) at the JICA Kansai Inter-

national Center. He has been working at the Koror State Recycling Center since 2009 to this day. He was the Hazardous Waste Officer when he went to the first training, and a year later he was promoted to a position as the Supervisor. Right before departing to Japan for the second time, he was promoted again this time to a position as the Manager for the Koror Recycling Center and has maintained this position to this day.

“I learned how the Japanese waste management system operates and also witnessed the professionalism which helped me set a course for what we can do here in Koror.” Said Mr. Etibek about the first program. From the second training, he “learned a lot of new ways to recycle” which then lead to the Koror State Recycling Center to start implementing glass projects and changing plastic to oil projects. He highly recommends more Palauan's to participate in

these trainings and have already sent a few staff from the Koror State Recycling Center to join the trainings. He strongly believes that this type of training is crucial in progressing in this field of work.

Mr. Etibek happily shared his overall experience in Japan and said, “It was eye opening! The culture was very different. I used to live in the US but going to Japan was a whole different world. People were very respectful and I really enjoyed it. It was a culture shock but at the same time you get a familiar feeling because of the Japanese influence in Palau.”



## About Young Leaders

**The KCCP for Young Leaders is a cooperative program, aimed at human resource development for future generations, designed to provide basic program to young people from developing countries in Asia, Africa, South America, Pacific regions and the Middle East. Participants in the program learn about Japan's experience and technologies in the specialized fields that will be required for the future development of their own country. This program provides participants with Japanese know-how concerning the basic technologies and systems used in the relevant fields. It also teaches participants about history, experience and cultural/social background of development in Japan. And lastly, it enhances participants' knowledge and awareness of matters that will contribute to efforts to resolve problems they will encounter in the development of their own country.**

## FEEDBACK FROM YOUNG LEADERS PARTICIPANT

Ms. Sato went to Okinawa, Japan (July 2016) to participate in her first JICA training program on Fishery Using Resources Management Approach for three weeks. She then had the opportunity to participate in her second one also in Okinawa (November 2019- December 2019) on Coastal and Marine



Ecosystem Conservation through Collaborative Management of Marine Protected Areas Implemented by Japan Wildlife Research Center, both at the JICA Okinawa International Center. She had been working at Ebiil Society when she went to her first training, and changed jobs after a year to work for Koror State Office under the Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement. End of last year, she returned to work for Ebiil

### Ms. Jevon Sato

Society and have stayed there since.

“I was able to go to the first training program because I was the member of Northern Reef Fisheries Cooperative. What I learned is useful now that Ebiil Society works as fishery coordinator. She also “had a chance to visit multiple fishery cooperatives and see their management” and puts that into her work today.

“The second training taught me all the different methods and resources to use in teaching students about its ecosystem.” Explained Ms. Sato. She was surprised to see that there was an office dedicated to environmental awareness in Okinawa and hoped Palau will also have one in the future.

Ms. Sato enthusiastically said, “the application may look long but don't be discouraged! Just do it! It's worth it because not only did I learn about the trainings, I learned so much about how people are and their different ways of living, cultural differences, politeness and respect. It will be up to me to share what I learned to the people of Palau.”



# JICA Alumni

Former participants voluntarily established JICA-Palau Alumni Association in December 2004 in hopes to maintain contact with Japan and other participants and learn more about the programs and the country.

Today There are more than 120 JICA alumni associations worldwide. Initially, alumni associations concentrated on activities conducive to strengthening friendship with Japan amongst their members. In recent years, however, they have been involved in more wide-ranging activities, includ-

ing collaboration in the activities of Japanese embassies and JICA overseas offices and community service.

Many of JICA-Palau Alumni members presents their experiences and knowledge at the JICA Volunteers Activity Presentation Meeting, which is held twice a year. Ex-participants of the training program present their action plan during the seminars or meetings to extend the experiences and knowledge they obtained through the training program.



## JICA-Palau Alumni Activities

1. Annual general meeting and regular meetings
2. JICA Ex-Trainees Action Plan Presentation Program
3. JICA Alumni Coastal Clean-up
4. Christmas candy distribution
5. Issuance of an association newsletter and preparation of membership directory
6. Participation to Japan fair

### JICA-Palau Alumni Executive Members

Mr. Miver Umedip  
President of Alumni Association

Mr. Fabio Siksei  
Vice president

Ms. Tanya Rengulbai  
Secretary / Treasury

## Message from JICA Palau Chief Representative

Mr. TACHIHARA Yoshikazu

Alii, dear ex-participants of JICA KCCP program and personnel of government of Palau.

I am pleased to issue this first newsletter for JICA Alumni of KCCP, whose purpose is to share 1) the experience and knowledge acquired through this program in Japan, 2) the good practice of application of them for the development of Palauan society, and 3) the activities of alumni association.



I wish this newsletter be a tool to enhance networking among ex-participants, and promote collaboration regardless of the organization or working fields where you may belong.

Your opinion, suggestion and contribution to this newsletter is the most welcomed.

I am leaving this beautiful Republic soon --after working for almost 3 years— with gratitude to your unforgettable warm support and cooperation.

I pray for you and Palau be blessed with better future.

Mr. KOBAYASHI Ryutaro

Hello every one, I'm Ryutaro Kobayashi, New Chief Representative of JICA Palau Office. My assignment is just started from January this year as successor of Mr. Tachihara. This is the third time for long term assignment in JICA overseas office. First time is Philippine, next is Vietnam. Every assignment was nice, but the assignment of Palau is the most exciting for me because I studied about fisheries and marine science when I was young. Palau is the one of the country I'm longing for.



But unfortunately, I'm still in Tokyo and waiting for the flight to Palau. Due to the COVID19 and related restrictions, now it's quite hard to travel and meet each other freely like in the past. This matter is not only related to myself but also everyone in the world. In such era, human relation is very much important. I believe that JICA Alumni enhance your friendship and trust. It's precious in the difficulty.

Congratulation for publishing this newsletter, hope this alumni to be encouraged more and more. And I wish to see you soon in Palau.



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