

# The role of non-governmental organizations in the improvement of Rural livelihood: A case of IPFG in Nyamagabe District, Rwanda

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## ABSTRACT

The study entitled “The role of non-governmental organizations in the improvement of livelihood: A case of IPFG in Nyamagabe District, Rwanda” was guided by three specific objectives: (1) To assess the activities of initiative for family and gender promotion (IPFG) in Nyamagabe District; (2) To analyze the level of rural livelihood of beneficiaries’ improvement in Nyamagabe District, and (3) To find out the relationship between activities of IPFG and the livelihood of rural beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District. The study used descriptive and correlational research design. The sample size of the study was 378 households’ beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District. Questionnaire, interview were used to collect data, and the study used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics as method of data analysis. The findings revealed that IPFG organization offered to its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District are at very high extent in terms of off-farm income activities promotion at very high mean equaling to 4.59; agriculture interventions at very high mean equal to 4.54; gender equality promotion at very high mean equal to 4.32 and citizen participation services at very high mean equal to 4.34. The findings also evidenced that the level of livelihood of households benefiting from the IPFG activities in Nyamagabe District has been improved in terms of income increase and savings at very high mean equaling to 4.50; education facilities at very high extent, where there is very high mean score (4.67). A significant high positive correlation between promoting off-farm income activities and livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District is also indicated at ( $r=0.754^{**}$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.001<0.01$ ); there is significant moderate positive correlation between agriculture interventions and livelihoods

of beneficiaries of IPFG organization in Nyamagabe District at ( $r=0.649^{**}$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000<0.01$ ); there is significant weak positive correlation between gender equality promotion and livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG organization in Nyamagabe District at ( $r=0.397^{**}$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.026<0.05$ ) and also there is significant moderate positive correlation between citizen participation and livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG organization in Nyamagabe District at ( $r=0.547^{**}$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000<0.01$ ). The study recommended that IPFG organization should sensitize and train farmers’ groups on importance of using improved seeds, and value addition to their produce as well as acquiring information on markets for their products.

**Key concepts:** NGOs, rural livelihood, IPFG and beneficiary.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Non-government organizations (NGOs) have become a very popular sector in developing countries, particularly within the last decade of our democratic dispensation. To many, they are perceived as the most reliable agencies through which poverty is addressed (Swanepoel & Beer, 2016). Livelihood diversification includes the process by which rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in order to survive and improve their standard of living. Eneyew (2012) states that livelihood diversification among pastoralists as ‘the pursuit of any non-pastoral income earning activity, whether in rural or urban areas’. For purposes of this study, livelihood diversification among pastoralists is thus the process by which pastoralists

combine varied livelihood activities and assets for improvement of their welfare.

It has been argued that NGOs play a significant role in poverty reduction through providing an enabling environment with opportunities for income generating activities (Ferguson, 2018) and livelihoods promotion. Rwanda has been receiving an influx of NGOs since the 1994 genocide. Rapidly growing overseas aid resources now flow into the Rwandan economy through both indigenous and International NGOs operating in the country. These NGOs are engaged in various activities which include income generating activities, education, nutrition, early childhood and literacy development, agriculture, environment conservation, healthcare, and gender equality (Bingen & Mpyisi, 2018).

The IPFG is one of NGO's that helps population to improve life conditions, however it was questionable to know current households' livelihood status in Nyamabage District after the intervention of IPFG in improving the households' livelihood and the community welfare. Therefore, this study will assess the role of IPFG assistance in improving the households' livelihood of the community of Nyamagabe District.

#### **Research objectives**

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To assess the activities of initiative for family and gender promotion (IPFG) in Nyamagabe District;
- ii. To analyze the level of rural livelihood of beneficiaries' improvement in Nyamagabe District;
- iii. To find out the relationship between activities of IPFG and the rural livelihood beneficiaries' improvement in Nyamagabe District.

## **II. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **2.1. Description of Initiative for Family and Gender Promotion (IPFG)**

Initiative for Family and Gender Promotion (IPFG) is a non-profit making organization created in 2014 and legally registered by the Ministerial Order N0 17/11 of 31 January 2014 which was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda O.G N0 10 bis of 15 May 2014. It is based in Gasaka Sector-Nyamagabe District- Southern Province. The founder members have created it after noticing that the 1994 genocide against Tutsi had caused so many consequences in our society among other things vulnerable groups including women and children. In that period, the Organization was trying to assist some small women associations from former Gikongoro Prefecture in combating

poverty notably with farming and breeding. At the same time, IPFG (Initiative pour la Promotion de la femme de Gikongoro) was gathering the required documents for the obtaining of the Legal Status which was effectively obtained in 2014.

In 2016, according to the organic law no 55/2016 of 10/07/2016 which governs non-government organizations in Rwanda, the IPFG's members extended the vision of the Organization and changed its name, from the "Initiative pour la Promotion de la Femme de Gikongoro " to the "Initiative pour la Promotion de la Famille et du Genre", IPFG, (=Initiative for Family and Gender Promotion). All of its members are anxious about the welfare and the complete development of the family based on the gender equality and the participation of the man and the woman in all programs which aim to reinforce fairness and democracy. IPFG focused in three District of Rwanda which are Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, and Nyamasheke District.

### **2.2. Data collection instruments**

**Questionnaire:** The researcher collected data through questionnaire, and documentation to obtain up-to-date information. Oppenheim (2016) defined a questionnaire as a set of questions which are asked to get information from a respondent. It is also currently used to mean a set of questions, which are self-administrated. The questionnaire was developed in line with objectives of this study, research questions were answered and indicators were tested..

**Interview:** An interview guide is also drafted with a set of questions that the researcher asked respondents during an interview and this was open ended in nature. The researcher personally recorded the provided responses as per study respondents during the process of carrying out an interview. This tool was used to collect information from 2 top managers of IPFG in Nyamagabe District which include NGO manager and technical director.

**Documentary review:** Documentary review was used to obtain data that the respondents were not able to provide through other methods for various reasons such as forgetting or sensitivity reasons. With firm assurance on ethical considerations of confidentiality, the researcher request NGO directors for such documents; these include IPFG reports.

### **2.3. Data analysis**

**Descriptive statistics:** Descriptive statistics was used to describe the activities of IPFG such as promoting off-farm income activities, supporting

farmers' sustainability, promoting gender and citizen participation and level of livelihoods of people of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District by using percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation.

**Correlation analysis:** Correlation analysis was developed to measure the strength and closeness of the relationship between each independent variable to dependent variable which is the relationship between activities of IPFG and livelihoods of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District.

**Multiple linear regressions:** With multiple regression analysis, we can assess the effects of multiple predictor variables (rather than a single predictor variable) on the dependent measure. A multiple regression model was used to test the significance of the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Based on other models that were used to test the effects of IPFG activities on livelihoods of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District, the present study adopted the following model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

Where: Y = livelihoods of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District,

{ $\beta_i$ ;  $i=1,2,3$  and  $4$ } = The coefficients representing the various independent variables.  $B_0$  = the Y intercept

{ $X_i$ ;  $i=1,2,3$  and  $4$ } = Values of the various independent (covariates) variables.

e = the error term which is assumed to be normally distributed with mean zero and constant variance, Y = Livelihoods of people of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District.

$X_1$  = Promoting off-farm income activities

$X_2$  = Agriculture intervention

$X_3$  = Promoting gender

$X_4$  = Citizen Participation

### III. RESEARCH RESULTS

#### 3.1. Descriptive results

##### 3.1.1. Promoting off-farm income activities offered by IPFG to its beneficiaries

The study sought to assess how IPFG promoting off-farm income activities among its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District. To achieve this, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements in a Likert scale of 1-5 where; 1 = strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = strongly agree. The findings were presented in Table1.

**Table 1: Promoting off-farm income activities offered by IPFG to its beneficiaries**

	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	St. dev
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
IPFG helped me to start trading business	7	1.9	19	5.0	19	5.0	22	5.8	311	82.3	4.62	.93
IPFG helped me to have expanded my business over the last 5 years	3	.8	8	2.1	21	5.6	35	9.3	311	82.3	4.70	.74
IPFG helped me to increase size of my business	0	.0	6	1.6	11	2.9	54	14.3	307	81.2	4.75	.58
IPFG helped me to obtain capital for starting off-farm business activities	45	11.9	35	9.3	4	1.1	27	7.1	267	70.6	4.15	1.46
IPFG created many off-farm income generating activities in Nyamagabe District	3	.8	7	1.9	17	4.5	33	8.7	318	84.1	4.74	.70
<b>Overall view</b>											<b>4.59</b>	<b>0.88</b>

Source: Primary data, 2022

In respect to promoting off-farm income activities offered by IPFG to its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District, the overall view of respondents on promoting off-farm income activities offered by IPFG to its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District was very high mean equaling to 4.59 which implies that there is strong evidence fact that the IPFG projects was at very high extent in financing with the standard deviation of 0.88, which implies that homogeneity responses.

### 3.1.2. Income and savings of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District

The study sought to assess the level of income and savings of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District. The respondents were asked whether agreed or disagreed with the statement regarding to household income. The results were presented in the table below:

**Table 2: Income and savings of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District**

	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	St. dev
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
My household income went increasing year by year in the last 5 years	0	.0	29	7.7	18	4.8	34	9.0	297	78.6	4.58	.89
My household savings has been increased in the last 5 years	0	.0	38	10.1	25	6.6	107	28.3	208	55.0	4.28	.97
My source of income has been increased over the last 5 years	11	2.9	21	5.6	25	6.6	15	4.0	306	81.0	4.54	1.03
I was able to settle some of my outstanding debts with my income	3	.8	7	1.9	34	9.0	37	9.8	297	78.6	4.63	.79
<b>Overall mean</b>											<b>4.50</b>	<b>0.92</b>

Source: Primary data, 2022

The overall view of respondents on income and savings of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District was very high mean equal to 4.50 which implies that there is strong evidence fact that an of increase of income and savings of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District was at very high extent and standard deviation of 0.92 which implies that heterogeneity responses. This implies that IPFG played a very crucial role in changing the level of income of small household farmers. The income earned before agricultural intervention to farmers was not much good compared to the time after intervention where farmers earned more income and contributed a lot to the household income contrary to time before intervention. The implication of the above observation is that the difference in income observed in time before and

after intervention indicates the positive role of agricultural intervention by IPFG.

### 3.2. Multiple linear regression analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine whether IPFG activities such as promoting off-farm income activities; agriculture interventions; gender equality promotion and citizen participation have an impact on livelihoods of its beneficiaries. The regression models were run to test whether the model is significant or not. The statistical significance was verified by the Coefficient ( $\beta$ ), t-statistic and Prob. In additional, statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable from the model were accepted at 5% significance level. The analysis applied the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the

study. Based on the model summary; the coefficient of determination (R squared) shows the

overall measure of strength of association between independent and dependent variables.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.832 <sup>a</sup>	.691	.688	.22761

a. Predictors: (Constant), Citizen participation, Promoting gender equality, Agriculture interventions, Promoting off-farm income activities

The results from the table 4.19, indicated that the value of Adjusted R Square was 0.688(68.8%) an indication that there was variation of 68.8% in livelihoods of its beneficiaries was due to changes in citizen participation, promoting gender equality, agriculture interventions,

promoting off-farm income activities offered by IPFG at 95% confidence interval. Additionally, this therefore means that factors not studied in this research contribute 31.2% of livelihoods of its beneficiaries.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.311	4	10.828	209.005	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	19.324	373	.052		
	Total	62.635	377			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Citizen participation, promoting gender equality, agriculture interventions, promoting off-farm income activities

b. Dependent Variable: Rural Livelihood improvement

The findings in the table 4.20 indicate that the overall model was significant. The overall model was significant because calculated F statistic of 209.005 was large than the critical F(V<sub>1</sub>=4,V<sub>2</sub>=378) =2.24 and also because p-value calculated =0.000 is less than Critical p-value =0.05 level of significant. Therefore, this implies

that the combined effort activities of IPFG such as citizen participation, promoting gender equality, agriculture interventions, promoting off-farm income activities was statistically significant in explaining the variations in livelihoods of its beneficiaries.

**Table 3: Regression coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.010	.133		7.613	.000
	Promoting off-farm income activities	.376	.026	.512	14.618	.000
	Agriculture interventions	.259	.029	.314	9.037	.000
	Promoting gender equality	.058	.021	.092	2.727	.007

Citizen participation	.105	.033	.119	3.160	.002
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a. Dependent Variable: Rural Livelihood improvement

The equation ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4$ ) becomes:

$$\text{Livelihood of beneficiaries of IPFG} = 1.010 + 0.376X_1 + 0.259X_2 + 0.058X_3 + 0.105X_4$$

The regression equation above has established that taking all factors into account (citizen participation, promoting gender equality, agriculture interventions, promoting off-farm income activities) constant at zero; Livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District will be 1.010

The regression results revealed that promoting off-farm income activities have significance positive effect on livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District as indicated by  $\beta_1 = 0.376$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ,  $t = 14.618$ . The implication is that an increase of one unit in promoting off-farm income activities would lead to an increase in livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District by 0.105 units.

The regression results revealed that agriculture interventions have significance positive effect on livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District as indicated by  $\beta_2 = 0.259$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ,  $t = 9.037$ . The implication is that an increase of one unit in agriculture interventions would lead to an increase in livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District by 0.259 units.

The regression results revealed that gender equality promotion have significance positive effect on livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District as indicated by  $\beta_3 = 0.058$ ,  $p = 0.007 < 0.05$ ,  $t = 2.727$ . The implication there is sufficient evidence that an increase of unit in gender equality promotion would lead to an increase in livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District by 0.058 units.

The regression results revealed that citizen participation has significance positive effect on livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District as indicated by  $\beta_4 = 0.105$ ,  $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ,  $t = 3.160$ . The implication is that an increase of unit in citizen participation would lead to an increase in livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District by 0.105 units. The findings revealed that IPFG activities have contributed to livelihood improvement in Nyamagabe District. Therefore the research accepts the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant relationship between

activities of IPFG and the beneficiary livelihood improvement in Nyamagabe District.

For the first objective, the findings revealed that IPFG offered to its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District are at very high extent in terms of off-farm income activities promotion at very high mean equal to 4.59; agriculture interventions at very high mean equal to 4.54; gender equality promotion at very high mean equal to 4.32 and citizen participation services at very high mean equal to 4.34 where 82.3% of respondents strongly agreed that IPFG organization helped me to start trading business 70.6% of respondents strongly agreed that IPFG helped them to obtain capital for starting off-farm business activities.

For the second objective, the findings revealed that the level of livelihood of households' beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District has been improved in terms of an increase of income and savings at very high mean equal to 4.50; education facilities at very high extent where there is very high mean score = 4.67; health care of beneficiaries of IPFG was at very high extent where there is very high mean score of 4.46; nutrition status at very high mean score of 4.47; acquisition of assets at very high mean score of 4.52. 77% of respondents strongly agreed that they acquired domestic animals 77% of respondents strongly agreed that they bought a piece of land over the last 5 years.

For the third objective, the results indicate that there is significant high positive correlation between promoting off-farm income activities and livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District at ( $r = 0.754^{**}$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.001 < 0.01$ ); there is significant moderate positive correlation between agriculture interventions and livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District at ( $r = 0.649^{**}$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.01$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

With reference to the Table 1 on how IPFG promoting off-farm income activities among its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District, it is evidenced that 82.3% strongly agree that they have been helped to start business generating income and 81.6% expanded their sale volumes. This is due to the advices and training to the beneficiaries of IPFG on how to use adequately financial means especially saving and loans from financial institutions.

The findings of this study also revealed that development credit had the greatest impact on productivity and had long term effects compared to the other types of credit. Credit has a positive impact on productivity. These findings are in line with Carter (2019) who opines that, Agricultural credit can move farmers along the production surface more efficiently: firstly, credit influences the efficient resource distribution by overcoming constraints to purchase inputs and use them optimally which shifts the farmer along a given production surface to a more intensive input use. Therefore, IPFG engage in agricultural activities so as to help the community members reap more. It engaged in various activities that include: bee keeping, provision of seedlings and poultry keeping and it also conducts training to farmers on how to carry out environmental friendly farming.

The findings are in the line with the manager of IPFG who revealed that due to saving groups, technical support and financial support to Nyamagabe District change gradually because their living income increases day after day. For example those households that have received animals they no longer having children with malnutrition, you can't even see any drop out within those households. This is also evidenced by Bingen and Mpyisi (2001) who stated that use of loans in productive activities helps to improve incomes and productivity of beneficiaries. In a study conducted in Kenya, the authors found that members of a microcredit scheme in Kakamega who used the loans for profitable activities were able to quickly repay the loans, earn profits and move out of poverty compared to their counterparts who did not.

The findings revealed 78.8% have been helped by IPFG in land management protection and 57.7% used chemical fertilizers to improve productivity, this implies that agriculture intervention is one of activities of IPFG which help farmers to practice modern agriculture and conduct training to farmers on how to carry out environmental friendly farming. The role of income generating projects on poverty reduction to beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District are examined and they include promotion of agricultural production, enhancement of livestock production, post harvesting activities, promotion of handcrafts activities and shopkeeper businesses that increased the income levels and improved the standards of living of beneficiaries as proved in the Table 4.6 where source of income has increased their saving (81%) after agriculture intervention from IPFG.

The overall view of respondents on agriculture interventions offered by IPFG among

its beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District was very high mean equal to 4.54 which implies that there is strong evidence fact that agriculture interventions services offered by IPFG to its beneficiaries was at very high extent and standard deviation of 0.82 which implies that heterogeneity responses. The results of the study indicate that the project can use various means to support the small scale dairy farmers and these range from the development of favorable policies, provision of inputs as well as the marketing and sale of the dairy products. As can be seen from these results, the government has been putting measures to ensure that small scale dairy farmers across the country are supported as a way of promoting economic activities in the rural areas with the aim of reducing poverty levels. As noted by Mabiso et al., (2012), the cost of key inputs such as pesticides, fertilizer, drugs and vaccines is high for resource-poor farmers. Most farmers therefore do not use them and thus the need for the agriculture project to come in and give various forms of support such as provision of improved seeds and fertilizer. More so, provision of technical assistance and advisory skills has also been a major task undertaken by IPFG mostly in the agricultural activities to ensure better harvest for consumption and income generation. IPFG supplied also inputs to the rural people in form of fertilizers and seeds to facilitate food security.

In promoting gender equality, IPFG has helped its beneficiaries to have full access to all household's assets with their partners (71.7%) and 55.8% of people have the same access and control over resources and 77% stated that IPFG helped to eliminate gender violence in their households. The findings imply that through gender equality initiative provided by IPFG to its beneficiaries, the amount of influence women have over decisions in the household reflects positively in their health, nutrition and education and that of their children. This concurs with Ballington (2016) who suggests that women who participate directly in decision making bodies press for different priorities than those emphasized by men. This is evidenced by the findings in the Table 4.5. 69% of the respondents have been helped to decide the number of children in their household to reduce poverty in order to increase income and savings.

The fact that IPFG provides off farm income activities, agriculture intervention, promoting gender equality and citizen participation, therefore, the findings show that 100% of beneficiaries have health insurance have paid whereas before IPFG, 68.3% of them did not have any health insurance. Access to food, 65.9% beneficiaries has one meal per day but after 76.7%

of the respondents had three meals per day. About meals before and after IPFG found that in Nyamagabe District was well implemented and people have benefited from it. There is a marked improvement in the diet and nutrition of households in the villages enhanced through the nutrition gardens where households are now able to consume almost all sorts of vegetables they grow in the cooperative nutrition garden where standard crop rotations being practiced. Better diet means nutrition enrichment to better health status thereby reducing incidence of health shocks and even if they happen there is also improved positive response to the shocks (sustainability).

## V. CONCLUSION

The study aims at assessing, the role of non-governmental organizations in the improvement of livelihood: a case of IPFG in Nyamagabe District, Rwanda” After analyzing data, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that there is positive effect on activities of IPFG towards the livelihood of the IPFG beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District, where the variation of 68.8% in livelihoods of its beneficiaries was due to changes in citizen participation, promoting gender equality, agriculture interventions, promoting off-farm income activities offered by IPFG organization at 95% confidence interval.
- Off-farm income promotion is the most contributing activity to livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG organization in Nyamagabe District compared to their intervention, where an increase of one unit in off-farm income activities promotion contribute to 0.376 unit in livelihoods of beneficiaries of IPFG. This implies that beneficiaries financially improved after joining IPFG. IPFG beneficiaries managed to obtain loan, trainings and savings. This improved their economic status in terms of increase of household income, acquisition of valuable assets such as house, plot of land and more livestock through IPFG activities implemented in Nyamagabe District.
- The researcher has explored the role of direct support programs toward the poverty reduction among the beneficiaries in Nyamagabe District, and they mainly include homes construction to vulnerable people, material support for emergency cases, psycho social support to isolated people and promotion of educational initiatives. In addition, the research has explored the effects of micro financing

activities toward poverty reduction among beneficiaries of IPFG in Nyamagabe District and they mainly include promotion of saving, promotion of joint guarantee, promotion of cooperatives based on mutual trust for the resources mobilization and micro grants provision.

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