

# Programme Update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Southern Caucasus

Appeal No. MAA69001

31 August 2008

This report covers the period 01/01/08 to  
30/06/08.



Georgian Red Cross volunteers marching in Tbilisi on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.  
**International Federation**

## In brief

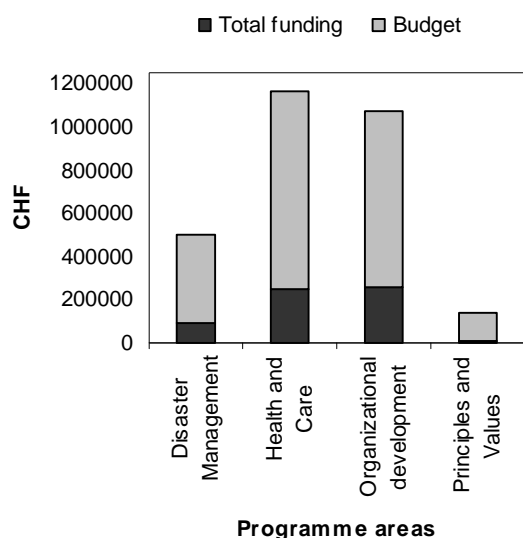
**Programme purpose:** The programme activities of the southern Caucasus National Societies were aligned with and contributed to the Global Agenda Goals aiming to improve the lives and alleviate suffering of the most vulnerable people through disaster management, health and care, organizational development, and focus on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values.

**Programme(s) summary:** In the first half of 2008 the National Societies in southern Caucasus implemented activities mainly within disaster management, health and care and organizational development. The main activities within the programmes were:

- **Disaster management** with special emphasis on disaster response capacity-building
- **Health and care** through harm reduction and social care
- **Organizational development** focusing on financial management and resource mobilization, communication and public relations, and youth and volunteer development
- **Fundamental principles and humanitarian values** were indirectly targeted by other programmes and only to some extent directly with specific activities.

Although the National Societies managed to implement multiple and various programme activities, the total contribution towards the overall objectives was seriously hampered by the level of funding as the 2008 appeal was covered by merely one-fifth. Outstanding balances from the previous year and minor contributions in the first half of 2008 therefore funded most activities. Large parts of the funds were spent on core organizational functions. Consequently not all the planned activities could be carried out and were either postponed or cancelled all together. However, along with the actual funds available programme activities implemented during the

reporting period nonetheless represented a continuation of previously International Federation supported and funded programme activities.



**Financial situation:** The total 2008 budget for Southern Caucasus was initially 2,901,541 Swiss francs (USD 2,637,765 or EUR 1,796,620). The revised budget is 2,379,840 Swiss francs (USD 2,163,491 or EUR 1,473,485), out of which 25 per cent covered. The revision is due to a decrease in the budget for Azerbaijan.

**Figure 1:** Funding received in the first half of 2008 compared to 2008-2009 appeal budget

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

**No. of people we help:** Table 1 shows the number of people the National Societies helped as disaggregated percentages for gender, age, people with disabilities and location.

PROG. AREA	COUNTRY	% GENDER		% AGE			%	% LOCATION	
		Male	Female	0-18	19-40	41 +	Disabled	Urban	Rural
DM	Armenia	45	55	60	30	10	0	55	45
	Azerbaijan	56	44	2	26	72	0	0	100
	Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HC	Armenia	43	57	10	60	30	3	60	40
	Azerbaijan	53	47	19	46	35	14	37	49
	Georgia	32	68	1	70	29	-	83	17
OD	Armenia	40	60	10	80	10	0	60	40
	Azerbaijan	54	46	22	41	37	6	41	53
	Georgia	48	52	34	59	7	57	-	-
HV	Armenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Azerbaijan	52	48	20	47	33	13	27	60
	Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	Armenia	43	57	26	57	17	1	58	42
	Azerbaijan	54	46	16	40	60	8	26	66
	Georgia	38	62	14	66	20	-	77	23

**Table 1:** Number of people helped by the National Societies

**Our partners:** The southern Caucasus National Societies had at least seven partnerships within the Movement. Outside the Movement the National Societies cooperated with numerous actors including among others state bodies at different levels and with different functions, the United Nations (UN), organizations and institutes.

## Context

Southern Caucasus, comprising the three former Soviet countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, is a region characterized by unresolved conflicts, political instability, lingering economic crises, endemic unemployment and social problems as well as grave environmental problems. Furthermore a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are located in the region. All these elements contribute to high rates of poverty among the populations.

Presidential elections took place in both Georgia and Armenia in January and February respectively. The opposition in both countries brought allegations of fraud and irregularities and intense protests and violent confrontations between police forces and protesters followed. In Armenia the president declared a 20 day state of emergency in March and in Georgia extraordinary parliamentary elections took place in May. In Georgia tensions also significantly increased over the two outbreak regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia accompanied by growing tensions in the relationship between Georgia and the Russian Federation. Tensions also grew between Armenia and Azerbaijan in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh area. However, the two countries' foreign ministers initiated talks to reach a peace settlement over the disputed area.

Economic conditions continued to be difficult although some improvements were registered such as a 25 per cent increase in the monthly pension in Georgia and considerable economic growth in Azerbaijan due to large and growing oil exports. However, poverty remains widespread and according to the CIA World Factbook the average rate of people living in poverty is near to 30 per cent for each of the three countries. Furthermore in 2008 the region was affected by soaring world food and energy prices. Social and health indicators such as the number of injecting drug users (IDUs) and people living with HIV showed an upward trend.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Disaster management

**Expected outcome/result:** The number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters has been reduced.

### Disaster response capacity building

The National Societies in the region continued developing their disaster response capacity. Enhanced response capacity was achieved by preparing and implementing guidelines, reaching agreements and cooperating with internal as well external stakeholders, participating in meetings and round-table discussions and through practical trainings, exercises and by implementing their response mechanisms in real-event emergencies.

During the reporting period the Armenia Red Cross continued its implementation of national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms (NDPRM). The project which was initiated in November 2007 and ended in May 2008 aimed to carry out theoretical as well as practical testing of disaster preparedness and response guidelines and to determine its effectiveness in the Armenian context. Meetings and round-table discussions with National Society board members, headquarters staff as well as branch staff and volunteers were conducted covering NDPRM guidelines, including among others roles and responsibilities, the Sphere project and codes of conduct. The Armenia Red Cross, together with the Armenian Rescue Service and the newly established Ministry of Emergency Situations, developed and near to finalized a memorandum of understanding which is to be signed in the latter half of 2008.

Together with Oxfam the Azerbaijan Red Crescent discussed future cooperation and assistance in developing the National Society's contingency plan. Furthermore Oxfam recognized the International Federation's and the National Society's support to the Sphere project which was recently translated into Azeri.

Several trainings, exercises, meetings as well as the actual utilization of response systems were undertaken. In Armenia 22 volunteers received national disaster response training and a two-day disaster management training course was organized by the Crisis Management State Academy for 15 Red Cross volunteers. In schools 18 simulated evacuations were organized countrywide with the participation of some 10,000 pupils and 1,000 teachers. The simulations aimed to prepare for and train on how to organize and manage evacuations in a secure and efficient manner. Furthermore, in cooperation with the German Red Cross, lifeguard trainings were conducted in which 32 volunteers participated. The trainings aimed at developing lifeguard capacity in order to establish a Red Cross lifeguard service at the Sevan Lake. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent conducted several training seminars on emergency needs assessment for 24 staff and members of mobile volunteer teams (MVT) and sought to motivate MVT members through the purchase of 35 chess boards.

The Armenia National Society participated in a humanitarian relief operation course in Sweden and a course on international environment operations in Croatia as well as regional disaster response team (RDRT) training in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Federation and Azerbaijan Red Crescent disaster management officers participated at the regional disaster management coordinators' meeting in Budapest in March. During the meeting National Societies' knowledge and experiences were shared and updated information within shelter, relief and water and sanitation was presented. Disaster management priorities for each National Society were set up and an agreement to coordinate and cooperate during the implementation of prioritized activities was reached.

Both the Armenia Red Cross and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent put their response mechanisms into practice during the reporting period. Responding to the local authorities' request the Armenian Red Cross responded to fires which occurred in February and March through its disaster preparedness and response structure. The National Society provided blankets, second-hand cloths and ten sacks of flour to the people affected by fire. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent supported one family which lost its home in a fire after receiving information from local authorities as well. Thus the National Societies in Armenia and Azerbaijan have to various degrees put their disaster management capacities into practice and the action taken also signalled that the cooperation and coordination with state authorities worked as intended.

Although the financial situation limited the implementation of the National Societies' disaster management programmes, they nonetheless managed continue working towards enhancing their disaster management skills and competencies, especially their response capacity. Hence efforts were undertaken that contributed to the first Global Agenda Goal. The National Societies to a large extent applied a practical and operational oriented approach through trainings, simulations and contributions in real emergency events, thus putting into practice their disaster management guidelines and planned courses of action.

### **Constraints or challenges**

Lack of funding meant that several activities were postponed or cancelled including organizational as well as operational activities. Workshops, simulations and equipment to disaster teams were but a few of the activities affected. The Armenia Red Cross recognizes a need to test its contingency plan and integrate it with the government disaster structure.

### **Health and care**

**Expected outcome/result:** The number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies has been reduced.

## Harm reduction and preventive health

All three National Societies focused on health promotion and harm reduction targeting IDUs and people living with HIV and Tuberculosis (TB). Furthermore, blood donation activities were a priority.

In Armenia and Georgia harm reduction projects provided IDUs with sterile syringes in order to reduce the use of non-sterile syringes. The giving out of syringes as well as alcohol pads and condoms, was conducted at centres as well as through outreach work. A range of other services were provided too. Trainings targeting IDUs as well as Red Cross volunteers, staff and community leaders were conducted covering HIV and TB prevention and drug use in ways that would prevent transmission of different infections. In Armenia a main achievement with potential positive long-term effect of the harm reduction efforts is an enhanced understanding of sexually and blood transmitted diseases and changes in behaviour among IDUs. The Georgia Red Cross became a member of a Georgian harm reduction network which encompasses 13 NGOs working in the field of harm reduction.

The Azerbaijan Red Crescent health promoters disseminated information on preventive health to 3,125 children with disabilities, orphans, youth, women and elderly people. As a result of the activities 85 women registered for and underwent medical examinations which uncovered 6 cases of mastopathy, 11 cases of breast cancer and 121 cases of anemia. Furthermore timely immunization of children resulted from joint prophylactic events by the Red Crescent and the Ministry of Health.



Armenian Red Cross volunteers celebrating AIDS memorial day on 18 May. **International Federation**

In Azerbaijan almost 1,000 peer educators conducted sessions covering information on the immunity system, how HIV and AIDS impact on the human body, transmission and symptoms as well as a videoclip on prevention. In total 8,840 school children, youth and university students were reached. The National Society's HIV and AIDS coordinator and the International Federation's technical officer in Baku participated at the Commemorial Day to honour people who died of HIV-related illnesses. All actors who participated during the day were encouraged to strengthen their partnership with the Republican AIDS

Center and between each other. Along with the Georgia Red Cross, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent expressed willingness and worked towards joining the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV. Both National Societies corresponded and received support from the International Federation to facilitate their participation. Furthermore, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent intends to further clarify the requirements during the forthcoming European Red Cross Red Crescent Network on HIV/AIDS and TB (ERNA) meeting.

The National Societies implemented specific activities connected to TB prevention and treatment. The Georgia and Azerbaijan National Societies cooperated with partners to secure access to updated information on TB in general as well as information on TB patients to avoid delays in future treatment. The Georgia Red Cross, with support from the International Federation and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), implemented activities within the framework of the national TB programme and worked to improve the health and social situation of people living with TB through supporting treatment and raising awareness. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent participated at a regional meeting in Istanbul on TB within the frame of the regional cooperation programme organized by the Turkish Red Crescent. The meeting resulted in agreements on common purposes and tasks, indicators, budget development and an

activity plan. The National Societies were all actively involved in the celebration of the World TB Day in March.

Furthermore the National Societies in Azerbaijan and Armenia implemented activities targeting former inmates with TB, encouraging them to continue treatment on a regular basis and to complete it as well as providing them with social support and information. In Armenia the activity was supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).



Young Azerbaijan Red Crescent volunteer is giving blood on behalf of children ill with thalassemia.

**International Federation.**

### **Non-remunerated blood donor motivation and recruitment**

The National Society in Azerbaijan arranged sessions for a total of 770 people on the importance of donating blood and through joint blood donor campaigns with the Ministry of Health and the Thalesmia Association 2,815 new blood donors were recruited. Moreover the National Society participated at the 11th international voluntary blood donor recruitment colloquium arranged by the International Federation, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society and WHO for the mobilization of people for blood donation.

### **Social care and support**

Through its work to provide social support to vulnerable people the Georgia Red Cross has built a network of trained and professionally skilled social workers. In total 50 Red Cross volunteers provided services to some 1,500 beneficiaries including food and non-food parcels. Furthermore Red Cross volunteers and social workers, together with 30 beneficiaries, provided home care services at least once or twice every two weeks depending on the beneficiaries' health condition. Moreover, through its work with elderly people living alone, the Tbilisi authorities have recognized the National Society's contribution in the field and have started to explore the opportunities for further cooperation with the National Society in project development as well as financial and technical support.

In total 15 first-aid trainers from the Azerbaijan Red Crescent conducted first-aid skills training for 538 employees in Garadag Cement Trust as well as community members, Red Crescent staff and volunteers.

All the activities the National Societies managed to implement have contributed to improve the health conditions in the countries, especially for IDUs, and people living with HIV and TB, and thus to achieve Global Agenda Goal two.

### **Constraints or challenges**

The primary challenge for the National Societies is a lack of funding or funding arriving too late. The immediate consequence is activities being cancelled or at best postponed. In their work with IDUs and people living with HIV the National Societies in Armenia and Georgia found it challenging to reach the target group. In Armenia it is difficult to reveal injecting drug use and subsequently, it is hard to get in touch with IDUs. The Georgia Red Cross experienced difficulties in gaining the target groups' trust and in involving them in project activities. Stigma contributes to these challenges. Furthermore, those being reached do in many cases not follow up on regular treatment or do not comply with the treatment at all.

## Organizational development

**Expected outcome/result:** Local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability has increased.

### Financial management and resource mobilization

In Armenia a new computer system to enhance and improve the efficiency of financial management was installed. In its work towards donors, the Armenia Red Cross systematically mapped potential local donors. In order to award donors and benevolent organizations as well as other actors that contributed to the work of the National Society, an awarding system was developed and a proposal submitted to the board for approval. The Georgia Red Cross improved its financial management by enhancing internal financial procedures as well as strengthening the material-technical base locally. Furthermore the National Society developed a funding strategy to diversify its funding base and thus the sustainability of the society's overall work. Improvements in human resources were notable through the hiring of professional personnel and qualified staff.

The Georgia Red Cross initiated donation initiatives such as donations through its website; donations through mobile phones or by landline; as well as a one-day fund-raising event in public sites. During its celebration of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Day youth volunteers managed to raise funds as well as in-kind contributions from the national and international corporate sector, public authorities and foreign embassies.

To generate additional and needed income the National Societies placed donation boxes at crowded community venues. Armenia Red Cross youth organized weekly meetings to plan fund-raising campaigns. 18 boxes were placed in the shops of Yerevan and volunteers initiated other small actions to encourage people to make donations to Red Cross youth projects as well. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent, after meeting with other organizations, placed charity boxes in commercial locations. Furthermore several community actors participated in a fund-raising exhibition showing posters made by orphans.

All three National Societies developed resource mobilization plans for the period of 2009-2010 and thus aim at diverse sources of funding enhancing the prospects for long-term and sustainable programme implementation. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent also developed a new strategic plan covering 2008 to 2010 through various meetings on different levels with staff and volunteers, members of primary organizations and other stakeholders.

### Branch development and community capacity building

In Azerbaijan the branch development project continued and was implemented in five branches. The implementation focused on identifying target groups and a more active promotion of Red Crescent activities and underlining the imperative to involve volunteers in the process. The Georgia Red Cross continued developing its branch structure and was working towards implementation of the National Society's branch development strategy. Trainings aiming to further implement its statutes and enhance leadership competence building as well as enhancing the communication and integration of the newly elected members and management staff were conducted. The National Society strengthened its links with local communities through the participatory community development (PCD) approach.

### Communication and public relations

Internal and external communication and public relations development were priority areas for the National Societies in Azerbaijan and Georgia. In the former society some 40 articles covering the activities of the National Society were published on its webpage, in 12 newspapers and through news agencies. Furthermore the National Society along with Federation information officers participated in two ICRC meetings on collecting data on missing or dead persons and on developing a communication strategy. The National Society in Georgia emphasized work on internal and external communications focusing on relations between the headquarters and local

branches as well as the society's relation to the media. The communication process commenced upon is considered as a first stage for the implementation of the National Society's communication and public relations strategy.

### **Youth and volunteer development**

As part of its programme providing psychosocial care to elderly refugees 60 Armenia Red Cross youth paid weekly visits to 600 lonely elderly refugees. Moreover three minor social and cultural events were organized. In total 20 youth volunteers involved in the Smiley Club project organized daily sessions on various school subjects and other recreational activities for 165 children. Youth volunteers arranged monthly events, visits to cultural institutions and tours as well. In total 260 youth in another project focusing on taking the right choices organized events on HIV and AIDS for volunteers from 13 regional branches.

In cooperation with Armenian university law faculties, volunteers were recruited for the international humanitarian law (IHL) programme. Furthermore a basic information seminar on IHL for newly recruited volunteers was organized followed by two seminars which further explored IHL. A dissemination seminar targeting students and volunteers was arranged in January and a final gathering promoting humanitarian values took place which saw 20 pupils involved in the project presenting the work carried out.

The Azerbaijan Red Crescent youth conducted training on various topics for 420 schoolchildren from 4 schools including health promotion and education, HIV and AIDS, first aid and humanitarian values. Youth paid visits to and arranged events for orphans and children living with HIV to provide moral support, teaching new skills, exploring cultural activities and distributing items. As a result 83 new volunteers were registered bringing the total number of volunteers to 18,778. One central and two regional youth board meetings were organized in which information on branch activities in the regions were exchanged as well as the challenges faced and events planned.

During the reporting period the National Society in Georgia focused on youth development and especially encouraged youth to participate and become key actors in decision-making processes. New youth units were established in five branches. The Red Cross youth contributed to the International Red Cross Red Crescent Day with various activities lasting a week targeting orphans and other vulnerable groups.

### **Constraints or challenges**

The financial situation did not bypass the organizational development programme and resulted in activities being postponed or cancelled or reduced in scope and quality. A concrete result of the situation in Azerbaijan is that local branches still use paper blankets for registering volunteers as computer equipment is missing. In Georgia internal and external communication as well as the role of the Red Cross needs to be further clarified. Furthermore there were challenges towards motivating volunteers.

## **Humanitarian values**

**Expected outcome/result:** Intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion has been reduced and respect for diversity and human dignity has been promoted.

As mentioned above Armenia Red Cross youth cooperated with the Armenian university law faculties to recruit volunteers to the IHL programme. Several seminars also took place. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent organized a seminar on humanitarian values for 24 staff and new volunteers addressing among others how personal initiatives can contribute to reducing stigmatization and discrimination.

## Constraints or challenges

Apart from the funding situation and its consequences for the level of activity, no major constraints or challenges occurred.

## Working in partnership

The Armenia and Georgia Red Cross Societies and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent cooperated with Movement partners and a wide range of central and local governmental, non-governmental, national as well as international organizations and institutes including:

- The International Federation at zone, regional and country level and ICRC
- Sister National Societies including the British, German, Norwegian, Italian, Polish Red Cross Societies and Israel's Magen David Adom. Furthermore the three National Societies plan to establish additional or new partnerships with the German, Finnish, and American Red Cross Societies and the Turkish Red Crescent
- Ministries and public authorities, agencies and centres covering health, social affairs and labour, science and education, culture, sports, youth, emergency, crisis and rescue and mine clearing
- UN bodies and agencies including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Southern Caucasus Anti-Drug programme as well as the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)
- Organizations and institutes such as Save the Children, the Open Society Institute (OSI), the European Voluntary Service (EVS), the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Youth Exchange Organization
- Networks or memberships working towards harm reduction, HIV and AIDS and TB including European Red Cross Red Crescent Network on HIV/AIDS and TB (ERNA), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the Global Alliance on HIV.

## Contributing to longer-term impact

The National Societies monitored and evaluated their programme activities to ensure the most efficient use of the limited amount of resources available and to continuously assess programme progress towards the overall objectives. Monitoring included a continuous collection of data and analysis of programme activity information. Internal as well as external monitoring was carried out and tools for data gathering included data collection in general, field visits and meetings, reporting and final evaluation.

Gender issues were addressed by ensuring that all activities carried out by the National Societies benefited the most vulnerable regardless of gender. Internally equal access and opportunities for participation and decision-making for both genders are an imperative for the National Societies. In the planning process towards 2009-2010 gender equity and diversity was taken into account and emphasized.

## Looking ahead

To varying degrees, the southern Caucasus Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies struggle with financial shortcomings. This situation must be addressed in a proper and adequate way, requiring investments of more resources to ensure a solid, sound and sustainable financial base for future programme development and implementation. Initiatives have been undertaken in all three National Societies to achieve this and these will continue in the latter half of 2008.

From an operational point of view the insufficient funding in the first half of 2008 contributed to numerous activities being postponed or even cancelled all together. Consequently the National Societies intend to implement some of these activities in the latter half of 2008 as more funding may become available. However, although funding remained a difficult issue and affected the work towards overall objectives, the southern Caucasus National Societies did manage to work within the four programme core areas of the Global Agenda. This work will continue in the latter half of 2008 and will possibly improve along with greater access to funds and other resources.

The National Societies within the region have been working actively within HIV and AIDS for years and are currently working towards joining the Global Alliance on HIV. Both the Azerbaijan Red Crescent and the Georgia Red Cross have cooperated with the International Federation to facilitate their engagement in the alliance to further scale up and improve their work. In July the American Red Cross donated 100,000 US dollars for work on HIV prevention, especially in Armenia, and for participation in the Global Alliance on HIV. The funds are intended to cover activities such as attending planning meetings, exchange visits to share best practices and lesson learned with partners within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The National Societies are also encouraged to continue their extensive partnership work and to establish other operational alliances in order to combine capabilities to make an even greater humanitarian impact within local communities. In this respect the National Societies already have experience in partnership work which may prove essential in their work towards pursuing operational alliances with Movement, as well as external partners.

<b>How we work</b>	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p><b>Global Agenda Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.</li> <li>• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.</li> <li>• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.</li> </ul>
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