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UNIVERSITIES SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF
SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Partner Training Evaluation Report by

CIRSDe, University of Turin (UNITO), Italy



CEPS Projectes Socials
Barcelona



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Centre for Gender Studies



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UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TORINO



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1. Introduction

The training program was developed and implemented, in the University of Turin and in the Polytechnic of Turin (Associated Partner) taking into account specific characteristics of these two universities and of the Italian context, that will be more precisely described in the “Context” paragraph.

Two reflection, in particular, are to be highlighted: Firstly, the topic of gender violence is not an emergency, in the Italian universities, for the number of rapes in the campuses, but, rather, for more subtle and spread several form of harassment, also in working context that the patriarchal cultural context still justify. For this reason, an important part of the training program was focused on cultural justification of gender violence and to the definition of its several forms: among them a specific topic was workplace harassment.

Another central aspect is the logistic characteristics of the Universities, in particular the University of Turin that is located in several part of the metropolitan area. This had two implication. First, we had to organize group sessions in the different places of the University. Secondly, a collaboration with the territorial government (Municipality of Turin) - and its net of services- was very important as students live in the city more than in the campuses.

2. Context

National and Regional Legislation

Sexual violence in Italy was considered a «crime against public decency and morality» until two decades ago. Law no. 66 of 1996, establishing "Provisions against sexual violence", turned the crime of sexual abuse into a crime against the person, introducing the crimes of sexual violence (art. 609 bis of the Italian Penal Code), sexual acts with children (art. 609 quater of the Italian Penal Code), corruption of a minor (art. 609 quinquies of the Italian Penal Code) and gang rape (art. 609 octies of the Italian Penal Code). Since then, a series of amendments and new laws to contrast the phenomenon of violence have been enacted under the pressure of the civil society organizations. For instance, Law no. 38 of 2009 has exacerbated the punishment for sexual acts and introduced stalking as a type of offence punishable with imprisonment ranging from six months up to four years.

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Moreover, interesting legislative measures have been recently adopted at the regional level. Piedmont (to which the University of Turin belongs), after approving *Regional Law* no.11 of 2008, "*Institution of a solidarity fund for the legal representation of women victims of violence and harassment*", has just approved (16 February 2016) the Regional Bill no. 142, "*Measures for the prevention and contrast to gender violence and support to the victims and their children*", which, among other important novelties, intends to implement the national directives concerning the introduction of the so-called "pink code" for female victims of violence in order to offer them a protected assistance from a specialized task force composed by health and law enforcement professionals and expert advocates.

- Cultural Context

The focus on violence against women has grown together with its visibility in public discourse and, more recently, in the political debate. Notwithstanding a greater attention in the media, in public debate and in the central institutions on gender violence, there is a wide discrepancy between the change in the rules on one side and the cultural representation of violence against women and social practices on the other side, especially in the private sphere (Farina 2013). It can be, in our context, expression of a still existing patriarchal culture and, as someone (Corradi, 2009) describes, gender violence is an expression of male affirming power (or looking for affirming power) on women.

- National statistics on sexual harassment and violence

The National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) realized in 2014 the survey *Sicurezza delle donne (Security of women)*, about violence against women, commissioned by the Equal Opportunity Department. It stated that: 31% of 16-70 year old Italian women had experienced any forms of violence along her life; 20% had experienced physical violence; 21% had experienced sexual violence. Sexual harassment is the most frequent experienced type of sexual violence (74%): 77% of sexual harassment are perpetrated by unknown individuals; Most of rapes or attempted rapes are perpetrated by partners, ex-partners or friends.

- Territorial services

In the city of Turin, the City and Provincial Coordination against Violence on Women (CCPCVD) is present: it is a net coordinated by the Equal Opportunities Office of the Municipality of Turin. It involves and integrates the action of several territorial services and associations who contrast sexual violence

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(shelters, public order force, sanitarian services, ...). It provides expertise and health, psychological, legal, public policy, cultural, social welfare and educational services, in order to protect the fundamental rights of women and to offer them support, countering gender violence and promoting a culture of respect, reciprocity and equality between women and men.

- Italian universities context

Even if all *Guarantee Committees (Comitato Unico Di Garanzia – CUG)* of Italian universities are organized in the National conference of University CUG (<http://www.cpouniversita.it>), there are no initiatives or policies to contrast sexual violence in common between all Italian universities.

Some services, however, mainly to support victims of harassment and discrimination can be cited: Some psychological counselling services, that are not specific for sexual violence, but students who are victims of sexual violence can turn to them; some services offered by territorial services to contrast violence against women in partnership with University.

Regard to training, two kind of activities can be listed:

- Some conferences, events or similar initiatives to spread awareness about the topic of sexual violence in the week of 25th November and 8th March
- Some courses or masters for operators who will help victims of sexual violence (eg. Nurses, lawyers, educators, ..)

1. *Institutional Policies in your university*

In the University of Turin is paid attention to the topic of discrimination based on gender and/or on sexual orientation and to the topic of gender violence by some normative instruments, some services and by some past and present initiatives.

Normative instruments

- *Unito Behavioural code*: The Unito Code of Conduct was approved in the 2016 (as a legal obligation) but it includes the previous (2001) “Code of Conduct for the protection of the dignity of employees and students of the University of Turin” proposed as initiative of the University of Turin. It is aimed to protect the dignity of each woman and men inside the University from any kind of harassment and/or discrimination and in particular from sexual harassment. Where cases occur, independent and impartial protective institutional figure (the Confidential Counsellor) is available.

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- *Ethic Code*: The Unito Ethic Code, in relationship with the Code of Conduct, protect any people's (employee and students) dignity inside the University, from any form of discrimination.

Institutional figures and services

At the moment in the University of Turin a service specifically dedicated to gender violence is not foreseen, but there are some services that, in case of sexual violence, can intervene and/or offer support:

- *Guarantee Committee (Comitato Unico Di Garanzia, CUG)*: The Guarantee Committee for equal opportunities, the enhancement of the welfare at work and against discrimination (CUG): promotes a culture of equality and operates against any form of discrimination under the University Code of Conduct.
- *The Confidential Counsellor (Consigliera di fiducia)*: Provides information, advice and assistance free of charge to University personnel and students suffering from discrimination, harassment and infringements to their dignity or bullying. She/he does not belong to the University personnel and is therefore independent and impartial.
- *Counselling service*: Provides listening and support for students encountering difficulties related to their studies.

Similarly, in the Polytechnic of Turin, Associated Partner, attention is paid to protection of safe and wellbeing of people who study and work in the university.

In particular a "Behavioural code to safeguard workers and students" exists and it is guaranteed by the Confidential Counsellor (Consigliera di fiducia).

In the university a Guarantee Committee (Comitato Unico Di Garanzia, CUG) is present, too. Other services for workers and students are the Infirmary and a counseling service.

In order to prepare training program and content, the University of Turin collected three kinds of data:

- a. Interviews to Universities and territorial stakeholders
- b. Questionnaire T1 filled in by all trainees before starting the first plenary session of the program
- c. Online questionnaire filled in by students of the University (Unito) and of the Polytechnic (Polito) of Turin.

a. Interviews to University and territorial stakeholders

During months (May-October 2016) prior to the training, 7 interviews to

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stakeholders, both of the two University involved (University of Turin-Partner and Polytechnic of Turin – Associated partner) and of the city.

Interviews with stakeholders allow us to better know existent services inside the two universities and in the city to support victims of gender violence and harassment. They made evident that, even if services are many, they not always are able to work together as a net: to enforce their relations and their visibility could be an important outcome of the project.

b. Questionnaire T1 filled in by all trainees before starting the first plenary session of the program

Before the starting of the first plenary session (our program for trainees included an initial plenary session, two small group sessions, a final plenary session), all participants filled in a questionnaire about their representation of gender violence, their attitude to intervene to contrast violence, their knowing of existent services in University and in the city and their expectations for training. The questionnaire filled in by 92 trainees in Unito and 83 in Polito highlighted not frequent situations of gender harassment in universities (3,3% in Unito and 3,6% in Polito). Then, their declared confidence to be ready to intervene to prevent or to stop a gender violence is very high. Even if this is reassuring, some results were to be taken in account developing the training program: 1. About definition of violence a large part of respondents hesitate to define violence a not physical action that “*made you feel uncomfortable*” (about 50% in Unito, 60% in Polito); 2. the Rape Myth Acceptance (McMahon & Farmer, 2001) is really low for all participants, but about 15% of trainees agreed that “*Rape happens when a guy’s sex drive gets out of control*” and about 12% agreed that “*If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble*”; 3. Existent services in universities to support victims of sexual violence are not spreadly known by trainees: 29% in Unito and 22% in Polito do not know the Counsellor of trust.

c. Online questionnaire filled in by students of the University (Unito) and of the Polytechnic (Polito) of Turin

Before starting of small group sessions all students of the two university were invited to fill in an online questionnaire similar to trainees’ one. 3043 students in Unito and 1034 in Polito answers to the questionnaire. The online questionnaire describes a not critical situation about gender harassment in universities: only 2,1% in Unito and 2,5% in Polito declares that quite often experience gender harassment. The harassment perception is higher for women; but, both women and men claim to have suffered quite frequently only the less serious behaviours are perceived (e.g. “*Someone in University in the last 3 months, told*

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sexually suggestive stories or offensive jokes”). Even if the situation seems not really critical, some data are to be highlighted:

- The most part of respondents (98,7% in Unito and 97,8% in Polito) agreed that “...made you afraid of poor treatment if you didn't [sexually] cooperate” is violence, but, similarly to trainees, a not physical action that “made you feel uncomfortable” is not defined violence by 40 to 50% of respondent students.
- The Rape Myth Acceptance (McMahon & Farmer, 2001) is quite low for students, but about 23% in Unito and 24% in Polito of students agreed that “Rape happens when a guy's sex drive gets out of control”. About 18% in Unito and 22 % in Polito, then, agreed that “If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble”. For all 22 item of the scale, male students express significantly higher agreement than female.
- Existent services in universities to support victims of sexual violence are not spreadly known by students: 91% in Unito and 90% in Polito do not know the Counsellor of trust. Much more known, on the contrary, are territorial services.

3.Training

Training design and delivery

The training program was organized in four moments:

- one initial 4-hours plenary session
- two 4-hours small group session
- one 4-hours final plenary session.

The training started in November the 30th , with a plenary session of 4 hours involving all the trainees. Rector and Director of Unito and the Assessor for equal Opportunities of the City of Turin participated at the conference. Other national expert on sexual violence and gender violence presented a communication. This plenary session involved the Associate Partner (Politecnico di Torino) too.

The 8 Unito groups started the training in January 2017. The last group will finish in March 2017. The 5 Polito groups started in March and they finished in April 2017. Each group was involved in 2 meetings of 4 hours each in two consequential days. 13 groups (for a total of 140 people) were involved. During the training, short moment of theoretical information were given, mainly referred to law. Many real cases were presented (referred to real situation happened in Italian universities) and discussed. Moreover, some photo stimulus were presented, to highlight the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes. Fragments of

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a movie were used to stimulate discussion on the necessity that to change organizational climate a responsibility of the whole community is needed.

In May, the 22th, another plenary session was organized, involving all the trainees (Unito + Polito). Some reflection on the training and results of questionnaires filled in by students of the two universities and by trainees at the initial plenary session were presented. Some suggestions about the topic “Which gender of violence?” were offered then by our expert advisors.

92 trainees in University of Turin (Unito) and 80 in Polytechnic (Polito _Associated Partner) participated to program. See table 1.

	Administrative staff	Teachers	Students	Workers in University residences	Tot
Unito	65	10	13	4	92
Polito (AP)	76	2	2	0	80
Tot	141	12	15	4	172

Table 1. Participants in the University of Turin (Unito) and in the Associated Partner (Polytechnic of Turin - Polito)

Trainers were a psychologist, expert in stereotype and sexism, and two lawyers. The psychologist and one lawyer were always co-present.

Psychologist is a research fellow, who for years dealing with gender issues both in research and in training. Lawyers are experts in law on this topic and, moreover, they work with *Telefono Rosa*, an important association that deals with women violence.

In developing our training program, we took in account several elements that preliminary research highlighted:

- to enhance knowledge of existent Universities and territorial services we invited in the initial plenary session representatives of each of them (or their coordinators) to present them and their activities. During group sessions, then we planned to wider describe the role of Counsellor of Trust in university
- to enhance trainees’ awareness of gender and gender violence stereotypes (and try to contrast them) we developed a sort of role playing and debriefing during group sessions
- to help trainees to identify the several forms of gender violence we decided to present and to discuss their initial answers to the question

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- “Which of these behaviours are violent?” (Figure 1 and 2 above); after discussion a legal definition of violence were planned
- to make evident the importance of cultural changing about gender and gender violence, in order to sustain contrast and prevention of harassment, we decided to expose result of questionnaire filled in by students during the final plenary session.

Because University of Turin is spatially scattered in the urban environment, moreover, the groups were built according to a spacial criterion; the meetings were organized, where possible, in the place in which people work/study. The idea was to create in the different areas of the university, "sentinels" sensitive to the issue of gender violence.

Then, as we pay attention to university as a place both for studying and for working, we focus the training content on gender violence in university context and on workplace sexual harassment.

Taking into account all these elements, the training has different aims:

- . to sensitize participants to the presence of thin forms of sexism and stereotype, because all we are subjects and objects in the same time of stereotyping process;
- . to develop a culture of respect in the workplace in which all the community helps to create an environment based on respect and everyone is responsible in contrasting all forms of abuse
- . to reflect on the most appropriate way to intervene (a forced aid can be perceived as a further form of violence) and to become aware that violence implies everyone's responsibility
- . to know the different services, both into the University and public structures existing in the town, to which it is possible to refer to in case of violence
- . to know national and regional legislation and in which condition it is possible to denounce.

Assuming that “sexual violence” is any form of violence, both physical and psychological, going beyond the violent sexual behavior in the strict sense (i.e. violence on women but also a violence acted on an individual with a behavior that is perceived not respecting the expectations according to gender role), the principal contents of the training are referred to social psychological perspective about gender stereotype, sexism, prejudice.

Another perspective at the basis of the training is the Bystander approaches to address and prevent sexual violence; this perspective aims to increase the likelihood that specific instances of potential violence or abuse are disrupted

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and to contribute to fostering peer and community environments that discourage aggressive or disrespectful behavior toward women. Bystander based prevention programs focus on equipping people with the skills and competencies to safely intervene when they witness behaviors that can result in dating and sexual violence (Potter, Fountain & Stapelton, 2012). To develop the bystander approach we refer to another psychosocial issue about the helping behavior: why people intervene/don't intervene in the face of situations of abuse, stalking, mobbing, etc.

Moreover, training presented and discussed: a) the European and Italian law about sexual violence, discrimination and harassment, with a specific focus on university and workplace contexts; b) legal definition of these concepts; c) how it is possible to intervene; d) to what extent the law protects the victim of violence and abuse;; e) what are the legal path for a complaint. The specific context of University is examined, referring to ethical code and to institution figures (Counsellor of trust) that can protect victims of violence and harassment.

Training evaluation

To evaluate the training we use three different instruments:

a- evaluation form, filled in at the end of the second small group session, aimed to know how appreciate by participants was the program and why

b- questionnaire aimed to measure attitude towards gender violence and its contrast filled in at the beginning of the initial plenary session (T1) and of the final plenary session (T2): comparing T1 and T2 we can see if their attitudes changed after the training participation

c- 3 group interviews (2 at the University of Turin and 1 at the Polytechnic-AP) with some participants some days after the final plenary session: we asked to express a reflection upon the program and some suggestion both to imagine a new edition and to leave a legacy of the project in the universities .

a- 68 evaluation form were filled in by Unito trainees and 67 by Polito (AP) trainees. Someone did not filled in the format because had to go out before the finishing of the training session. The trainees' overall reaction to the training is definitely good: we asked to express their satisfaction for the program. Their average answer is 8.7 on a 1-10 Likert scale. No differences are between the two universities trainees, nor among different trainee categories. Overall trainees' reactions in the post-group evaluation form seems express that their expectations were fulfilled. Notwithstanding several trainees affirm that more deep analysis of some aspects could be interesting or important. In other words, a large part of trainees wanted the course to last longer. Trainees evaluated positively mainly: interactive methods and case

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discussion; trainers' approach; groups' positive climate. Among less appreciated aspect are: short duration of the course; the frontal part of lessons: they preferred a higher number of interactive activities; length of analysis of laws about gender violence. Then the main suggestion from trainees are strictly connected with limits of the program, in particular about duration and width of the program. Several of participants highlight that a longer (and more in depth) program should be very appreciated. Moreover gender violence, in its several forms, is perceived as an important topic, so this program should be mandatory for all staff and teachers, at least, in university, they said. Some of them, then, expressed its availability to support some permanent service to contrast gender violence in the university. Two more suggestions are: try to involve a larger number of men; more largely analyze LGBT topic, too.

b- As someone was not present at the initial plenary session (T1) and someone not present at the final plenary session (T2), T1-T2 that can be matched are 38 for Unito and 29 for Polito (AP).

Comparing answers of participants at the beginning and at the end of the training, we can see that:

- No differences emerged respect to the agreement about equality of gender relations and respect to the attitude to intervene as bystander for sexual harassment (confidence to intervene and reasons pro and versus intervention)
- Significant differences can be noted respect to the agreement with the two rape myths: "She asked for it" and "He didn't mean to": these two myth, in particular, represent justification for sexual violence that are still quite spread in Italian cultural context (as partially our questionnaire to students highlighted).
- the percentage of respondents that labeled as violent several forms of harassment are higher in T2 than in T1.
- Definitely higher in T2 than in T1, moreover are the percentage of respondents that declare to know Unito, Polito and territorial services to contrast discrimination and sexual violence.

We can affirm, so, that the training was effective for participant both in Unito and in Polito (AP). The low differences between T1 and T2 respect to the agreement about equality of gender relations and respect to the attitude to intervene can be in part explained because participants, voluntary, were people already quite sensitive to the topic and interested to understand how to support victims and to contrast violence.

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c- During the 2 (in Unito) +1 (in Polito) group interviews two main topics were developed. In the three groups some consideration about the training and its impact were expressed: the program has been generally appreciated, particularly the interactive activities. Several participants stated that the training produced a higher awareness of the presence of gender stereotypes and of subtle forms of violence and harassment. They also appreciated the possibility to better know services in the universities. The second topic was how to leave a legacy. Two are the main suggestions: to propose a similar program, mandatory for all people working in the universities; to let better know existent services and to create several information/first responder points in each site of the university (especially for the University of Turin).

a. Summary: how successful was the training, what lessons have been learned, what aspects will be taken forward at your institution and/or could be used successfully by others, and what aspects might you change if you were to implement the training again?

Summarizing the training was quite successful; participants expressed good satisfaction and positive feedback. For participants, then, comparing T1 and T2 questionnaires, the training seemed quite effective. Some aspects, notwithstanding, can be improved:

- proposing even more interactive activities during small group sessions
- trying to involve higher percentage of men and of teachers: possibly, involving all teachers and staff in the universities.

b. Institutional recommendations

As the resources and services available at the University of Turin (Guarantee Committee - Comitato Unico Di Garanzia, CUG; The Confidential Counsellor - Consigliera di fiducia; Counselling Service for students), that can be involved in sexual violence questions, are not well known, mainly amongst students, the first recommendation is to give wider information to students and to staff about existent services.

Thank to the USV React project, then, we are negotiating with the General Directorate of the University the possibility of activating an "on-line desk" with two functions: 1) to build a network among the several University services and with existing services in the city; 2) to be a reference point both for victims of

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violence and harassment and for witnesses of inappropriate behaviors within university. All participants shared the idea of a “desk” aimed to create a network among the different services and a desk, managed by some expert people, to be contacted also to report “incorrect” situations.

The training was focused on bystanders’ intervention. The participants consider the need to repeat these kind of training. Representatives of the students suggested to repeat training opportunities on this topic. Teachers should also be involved: this is the most difficult category to engage. Staff participants, then, suggested to offer a mandatory training program to all workers in the University. Moreover, since many years, the city of Turin co-ordinates the various services that operate and intervene on the matter of sexual violence. The University of Turin, through CIRSDe, is part of this coordination, mainly through research and training. The on-line desk could create a network and expand the knowledge not only among internal services of university, but also among services at the city level. This idea is shared with the councillor for Equal Opportunities of the City of Turin, in coordination with the University.

The City of Turin, then, have a very clear and useful website to inform about the several opportunities and the several care pathways. Also for this reason, it is important that the actions implemented at University level are organized in connection with the City.

For the Associated partner, the Polytechnic of Turin, recommendations can be very similar. Specifically:

- Systematic information campaigns to make better known existent services for students and for staff
- Involvement of more staff, teachers and students (especially men) in training programs on the topic of gender discrimination, harassment and violence.

c. Regional and national recommendations

Both during lessons and during informal meetings, we noticed a need for more training on gender issues, stereotypes, and issues related to sexual orientation. The social context in Italy does not help to build a thought free from prejudices and commonplace, and students are influenced by them, too.

In Italy, Universities have a "mechanism" at the base of educational programming that limits the widening of disciplines and topics to be studied.

Universities, at the national level, should instead provide tools for knowledge of social and cultural processes in order to contrast discrimination and sexism, developing a culture and a science out of ideology and obscurantism, but it is difficult to institutionalize this.

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The University of Turin is one of the few Italian universities to have established officially a Center dedicated to the study of Gender (CIRSDe) and this allows to make the reflection on these issues a little more visible.

The problem is political and therefore also financial.

What can be done, even within the University of Turin, is possible only by funds obtained through participation in calls (European, national and local), but the institutional budget for these aims is zero.

The University of Turin has even tightened its relationship with the City (also thanks to the European Project USV React), but this with a zero budget, too.

The Piedmont region is one of the few that has maintained the public anti-violence centre (in other regions they have been closed for economic issues or are offered by private social societies) and anti-violence centres are very present in the territory, including volunteers and a network of voluntary associations and local authorities.

Both Piedmont and other Italian regions have developed training courses dedicated to specific professional categories (Eg, police, health practitioners, etc.) to make them aware of the most appropriate relational modalities when faced with a woman who claims to have been a victim of sexual violence. So, some initiatives in the field of sexual violence, especially in tertiary prevention (at least in the Piedmont region, in other Italian regions the situation is more critical) exist. What is critical, in general, is the presence, in the Italian socio-cultural contexts, of attitudes based on stereotyped images of Man and Woman, that reiterate forms of sexism and homophobia, embedded in patriarchal and androcentric thought, which give raise to forms of justifications of sexual violence, blaming the victim. These are the aspects that should be addressed with forms of education and training, for all social categories beginning with childhood.

It is interesting to note that, as a result of the training, a group of students from the Unito and a group of Poli asked us to attend a meeting organized by them on the subject of sexual violence and homophobia.

In addition, half a day of training was organized by the University personal service, where CIRSDe was involved.

This confirms that training has responded to a need to develop reflection and sensitivity on these aspects.

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