

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



CONTENTS

03 Introduction, Vision & Mission, Objectives

04-05 Chairman's Statement

06 Board of Directors

07 Secretariat

08 Programmes and Activities

14 Research

VISION

To be a leading research institution in the region



INTRODUCTION

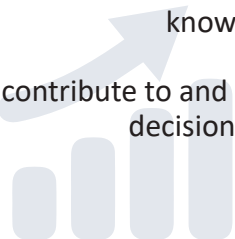
SDI was established on 2 November 1995. It is registered as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital under the Companies Act, 1965, Malaysia. As an autonomous non-profit research institute, it is entrusted to undertake inter-disciplinary research on pertinent development issues related to the state and nation for policy inputs to the government and private organisations/clients.

MISSION

To offer comprehensive professional research services that provide valuable inputs to planners and policy makers

To offer professional management services for conferences/seminars and generate reports and recommendations for public policy input and knowledge oriented publications

To contribute to and complement the policy and decision making process in Sarawak



OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of SDI is to provide independent and objective inputs to complement the policy and decision making process in Sarawak. Its specific objectives are to:

Undertake interdisciplinary research for policy inputs to the government and other clients;

Provide an avenue for professionals and other practitioners to discuss, exchange views and opinions facing the state and nation through conferences, seminars, workshops, dialogues and lectures;

Disseminate information, knowledge and findings to the public through both formal and informal channels; and

Network with other institutions with similar interests, in and outside Malaysia to facilitate the flow of information and knowledge.

The priority focus areas are: Public Policy
Development Studies
Socio-economic Studies



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Year 2021 was another challenging year for everyone after the disruption caused by the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Recovery efforts were launched to build back better and solidarity was called for to ensure everyone receive sufficient support and protection. Malaysia continued to face waves of the Covid-19 in 2021 which required the imposition of different phases of the movement control orders throughout the year.

On SDI's part, we continued to pivot to the online platform to organise pertinent discussions on topics such as online teaching, vaccination rollout, reforestation and circular economy, Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Sustainable Development Goals. As the world started their recovery from the pandemic, all these topics were widely discussed to meet the rising need for economic recovery and social resilience.

These discussions uncovered issues and challenges faced as well as opportunities to review and realign policies. The education sector was one of the sectors worst affected by the pandemic where the institutions of learning and students needed to pivot almost immediately to online teaching and learning respectively. The necessary transition highlighted the disparity and the digital gap between the different communities throughout the nation especially in larger states like Sarawak and Sabah. Poor Internet connection and the lack of readiness for the shift were the main issues faced by the educators, parents and students. These challenges and issues also open up possibilities and opportunities for the respective stakeholders to review and assess the current education policy and curriculum.

Concerns on the Covid-19 vaccine was also a big issue in 2021 as the world rolled out the vaccination campaign to curb the pandemic. There were many false information circulating particularly on social media which raised concerns on the safety of the vaccines. These issues were deliberated during our public talk on the Covid-19 vaccination to dispel some of the myths, concerns and challenges faced by the Sarawak Health Department in their communication campaign on the Covid-19 vaccination.

Globally, climate change and sustainability issues also picked up momentum during the pandemic to resolve issues for better economic recovery, sustainability and human resilience to face the impact of the pandemic. At COP26, the call for decarbonisation and net zero emission target was the order of the day. Innovative technological solutions, decarbonisation strategies, investments in ESG, green financing, etc. were issues being discussed worldwide to fund climate change mitigation projects. Our Brown Bag talk on Reforestation and Circular Economy in Sarawak was one such effort to explore the potential of agroforestry in reforestation efforts to combat global warming and at the same time provide a viable model to attract sustainable financing. This circular economy concept can be further explored in the State's and nation's drive to achieve net zero by 2050. Complementing this talk was the Roundtable on SDGs by the Ministry of Local Government and Housing Sarawak for the local authorities which will support, align and better coordinate sustainability initiatives and programmes at the local level.

I am happy to share that SDI has embarked on the production of a booklet for community leaders which will provide quick reference on information pertaining to their duties and responsibilities. The booklet will provide much needed updated information for the community leaders to carry out their work effectively. Another project aimed at the community leaders is the BIJAK project, which provides easy to understand information pertaining to the JKKK's duties and responsibilities, skill development and current development initiatives. Information in the form of infographics, videos and documents, will be packaged in a Raspberry Pi for sharing among the JKKK members without the need for internet connectivity.

With movement restrictions still in place throughout most of the year, SDI only managed to launch a 'Survey on assessing the needs of the local population in relation to the services provided by the Digital Community Centres (DCC) in Sarawak'.

Despite the challenges faced, the secretariat had managed to continue carrying out the activities and programs planned for the year. I must commend them for most of our online talks garnered more than 250 participants. I wish to thank them for their hard work. I also would like to put on record my appreciation especially to the members who presented the online talks, and those who have contributed in one way or another to the activities of the Institute. My sincere appreciation also goes to the Corporate Members who have continued to support SDI.

A big thank you also goes to the Sarawak Government, our Board members, international partners and collaborators, institutions of higher learning, civil society entities and the local media for their collaboration and unwavering support throughout the year.

Sarawak is embarking on a full-fledged transformation through the Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030 which envisions Sarawak to be a thriving society driven by data and innovation where everyone enjoys economic prosperity, social inclusivity and a sustainable environment. We will see how SDI can support the State government in this endeavour and I look forward to suggestions and ideas from all members.

Thank You.



DATUK AMAR JAUL SAMION
Chairman
Sarawak Development Institute

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHAIRMAN
YBhg. Datuk Amar Jaul Samion
State Secretary of Sarawak
*(Currently Advisor in the Office of the
Premier of Sarawak)*



DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
**YBhg. Dato Sri Haji Mohamad Abu Bakar
Bin Marzuki**
Deputy State Secretary of Sarawak
(Socio-economic Transformation)
(Currently State Secretary of Sarawak)

DIRECTORS



**YBhg. Dato Sri Dr. Haji Wan Lizozman
Wan Omar**
State Financial Secretary
State Financial Secretary's Office



YBhg. Datu Ik Pahon Joyik
Deputy State Secretary of Sarawak
(Rural Transformation)
*(Special Administrative Officer, Greater Kuching
Coordinated Development Agency (GKCDA)
since 1st November 2022)*



**YBhg. Datu Dr. Muhammad
Abdullah Haji Zaidel**
Director
Economic Planning Unit, Sarawak
*(Currently Deputy State Secretary of Sarawak
(Economic Planning and Development))*



YBhg. Datu Buckland Anak Bangik
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Transport
*(Currently Deputy State Secretary of
Sarawak (Administration))*



YBhg. Datu Sr Zaidi Bin Haji Mahdi
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Natural Resources and
Urban Development



YBhg. Datu Antonio Kahti Galis
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Health,
Housing and Local Government



**Tuan Haji Abdul Hadi Bin
Datuk Haji Abdul Kadir**
General Manager
Sarawak Economic Development
Corporation (SEDC)



Mr. Hii Chang Kee
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Tourism, Creative Industry
and Performing Arts



Professor Dr. Patrick Then Hang Hui
Director
Centre for Digital Futures
Head
School of Information and
Communication Technologies
Faculty of Engineering, Computer &
Science, Swinburne University of
Technology Sarawak

SECRETARIAT



1st Row From Left

- Rosalind Wong
Deputy General Manager
- Lelia Sim
Chief Executive Officer
- Kamaruddin Sajeli
Acting Head, Research Division

2nd Row From Left

- Tang Tze Lee
Research Officer
- Nur Hadisha
Graphic Designer
- Evelette Robin
Conference / Events Executive
- Patricia Nayoi
Senior Administrative Assistant
- Nur Asmida Arzmi
Research Officer
- Amy Mustiha
Trainee
- Abdul Khalik Putit
Administrative Assistant

3rd Row From Left

- Khairul Anam
Accounts Assistant /Events Assistant
- Alan Teo
Administrative & Finance Officer
- Ralph Balan Langet
*Communication Officer
Sarawak Communication for
Development (SCD) Centre*

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

TALKS AND BRIEFINGS



BROWN BAG TALK: COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ONLINE LEARNING/TEACHING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATORS, PARENTS, STUDENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

30th March 2021 |
via ZOOM Application

The talk was conducted via ZOOM Application and was attended by more than 350 participants virtually. It was presented by Associate Professor Dr. Johari Abdullah, Lecturer, Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and a member of SDI. Dr. Johari shared that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, various aspects of normal life have been disrupted.

One of them is the migration of teaching/learning activities from face-to-face to online medium. School doors around the world were closed for several months to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Approximately 1.6 billion students in 194 countries were impacted by school closures. During this crisis, an incredible amount of large-scale efforts to use technology in support of remote learning was deployed. At the same time, the crisis exposed the challenges for technology in education, including many inequities starting at the lack of access to computers and the internet. Due to this shift, all parties involved in the teaching/learning ecosystem faced challenges and issues from various aspects.

Dr. Johari highlighted the challenges which included the infrastructure that provides the connectivity, the equipment needed for online teaching/learning, content of teaching and the instructors' readiness for online teaching/learning. One of the key issues was the readiness for the shift. Based on a poll conducted during the session, majority of the participants indicated they were not ready for the shift to online education when the Movement Control Order was announced in March 2020.

A year after the pandemic the readiness among the participants had improved. The most used device for online learning was the smartphone/handphone, followed by the laptop (as polled). Feedback from the participants also indicated connectivity in the rural areas remains the main challenge faced by the parents and teachers in delivering a conducive environment or platform for online learning.

Dr. Johari pointed out that arising from this pandemic, there are also opportunities for all stakeholders to improve the transition into online learning/teaching. This includes development of a proper action plan for pedagogy and content creation for online classes. The government also needs to improve the internet connectivity and penetration in rural areas by providing affordable remote satellite and learning devices at reduced costs. He further emphasised that although online learning/teaching is accepted as the new norm, it will not be able to replace the face to face classroom environment which also nurtures the developmental social skills for the students. The challenge lies in finding a balance between acquiring academic excellence without sacrificing the informal social interaction and connection.



Infrastructure
·connectivity·



Equipment



Content



Instructor



BROWN BAG TALK ON SARAWAK COVID-19 VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

20th April 2021 |
via ZOOM Application

The special edition Brown Bag Talk on Sarawak Covid-19 vaccination campaign via Zoom received an overwhelming response where 370 participants joined to listen to YBhg. Prof. Datu Dr. Andrew Kiyu Dawie Usop, Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and also the Chairman of the Sarawak Covid-19 Vaccine Advisory Group (SCoVAG) in the Sarawak Disaster Management Committee, Dr. Radziah Mohamad, Public Health Specialist, Principal Assistant Director, Family Health Development Section, Sarawak State Health Department and Haji Aziman Mahdi, Principal Assistant Director, Health Promotion Section, Sarawak State Health Department.



Prof. Datu Dr. Andrew, in his presentation shared on the goals from the medical perspective on managing the Covid-19 pandemic which are to eliminate the pandemic and to control the transmission so that the healthcare system is not overwhelmed by Covid-19 patients. He opined that the non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) have not been as effective in 2021 as compared to 2020 because the virus is currently present all over Sarawak (both in urban and rural areas).

The rise in cases in Sarawak was due to outbreaks and clusters created by super spreaders (individuals), lack of compliance in SOPs in the workplaces and social events like weddings, birthdays, parties and funerals. He emphasized that practicing the SOPs remains important to curb the spread and vaccine is the final barrier in the shared responsibility to control and end the Covid-19 pandemic. He also explained on the side effects of the vaccination as this was one of the concerns raised by the participants.

Dr. Radziah shared on the Covid-19 vaccination plan for Sarawak which aims to protect frontline personnel from the Covid-19 infection; to minimize morbidity and mortality among high-risk groups; to create herd immunity for economic recovery; and to control the outbreak. A poll among participants indicated majority have registered for the vaccination via My Sejahtera app and manual registration via the Resident's Office, community leaders and YBs. Quite a significant number also registered twice both using online systems (MySejahtera app) and manual registration.

Haji Aziman shared on the communication strategy plan to enhance positive perceptions on the Covid-19 vaccine. Among the communication channels used are via television, radio, banner, bunting, flyer, newspapers, social media (FB, IG, Twitter etc.) and others. From a poll question on the first source of information regarding the vaccines, majority of the participants picked the Ministry of Health Malaysia's FB and website and via social media like FB and IG.

During the interactive session, one of the issues raised was on the efficacy of the vaccines. The speakers informed that new development are still on-going; thus there is still uncertainty on whether an annual booster shot will be required. Their advice is that the most important step is to get vaccination in order to prevent the pandemic from getting worse.



BROWN BAG TALK ON REFORESTATION & CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN SARAWAK

20th May 2021 |
via ZOOM Application

The virtual Brown Bag Talk on Reforestation & Circular Economy in Sarawak via Zoom attracted more than 230 participants to listen to Dr. Henry Chan, Conservation Director of WWF-Malaysia and a member of SDI.

Dr. Henry shared that in Sarawak, reforestation is required in all degraded and deforested areas that have been designated for forest cover under the state's policy goal to gazette 1 million hectares of Totally Protected Areas and 6 million hectares of Permanent Forest Estates. He highlighted that reforestation is a costly exercise that requires about USD1500 per hectare and a minimum of five continuous years to maintain the growing trees. Only beyond the fifth year would the trees be able to overcome the surrounding shrubs and creepers that can overwhelm and strangle them.

During the 5 years crucial period of tree growth, he proposed a conceptual circular economy framework, which incorporates agroforestry in the reforestation effort to combat global warming and to provide a viable model to attract sustainable financing. The open space between rows of growing trees can be planted with plants like tapioca that have high carbohydrate content. Farmers who tend to the plants can then help to control the weeds and cut creepers that would otherwise strangle the young trees. Once the crops mature, they could be harvested and sold to production plants to convert the carbohydrates into biofuel as a source of renewable energy. In turn, the carbon dioxide generated by the production plants and transportation will be absorbed by the plants growing between the rows of trees. In short, planting the commercial crops for conversion into renewable energy will be used to offset the high cost of reforestation through this proposed circular economy framework.

He concluded that Sarawak needs to maintain a good forest cover to be used as a permanent carbon sink. The good forest cover will restore the efficiency of the carbon sink, generate biofuel as renewable energy and put Sarawak at a competitive advantage to remove GHG at scale. This is in line with the global commitment to decarbonize and achieve net zero by 2050. During the question and answer session, among the questions asked were on how to identify secondary forest areas that are particularly suitable for reforestation, role of the communities living in areas for reforestation, and how does Sarawak fare in engaging in proactive carbon sensitive policies, compared to West Malaysia and Sabah.



"Our goal must be to restore rainforest with different canopy layers to become permanent carbon sink as well as wildlife habitat"

Following the talk, the secretariat organized a follow up discussion with relevant government ministries namely the Ministry of Modernisation of Agriculture, Native Land and Regional Development Sarawak, Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources Sarawak, WWF-Kuching, Forest Department, Natural Resources and Environment Board Sarawak and Department of Environment Sarawak. In the discussion, representatives from the Forest Department shared information and data on the status of forest and reforestation efforts in Sarawak and a pilot agroforestry project in Lubok Antu, Samarahan. From the session, it was noted that there are a number of small-scale agroforestry initiatives in different parts of Sarawak and there is no interest yet to go into biofuel generation from agroforestry on reforestation projects.

WEBINAR AND ROUNDTABLE

AAEC2022 WEBINAR: INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 4.0
OUTLOOK IN MALAYSIA AND AROUND THE REGION23rd June 2021 |
Via Webex

A series of AAEC2022 webinar were organised to promote the ASEAN Australian Engineering Congress which is jointly organised by Engineers Australia Malaysia Chapter (EAMC), Swinburne University of Technology (Sarawak) and Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC). The first webinar gathered three speakers to provide some insights and understanding on Industrial Revolution 4.0 and how it will affect businesses and their operations.

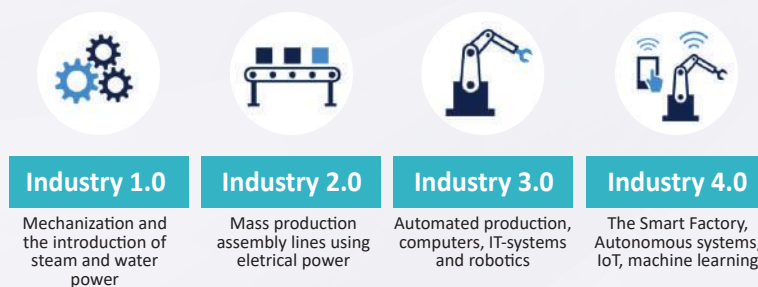


The Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) is commonly known as the ongoing automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart technology. Machine-to-machine communication and the internet of things (IoT) are integrated for increased automation, communication and self-monitoring, and production of smart machines that can analyse and diagnose issues without the need for human intervention.

Prof. Dr. Ir. Al-Khalid Othman, Deputy Chief Scientist, Sarawak Multimedia Authority, Prof. Dr. Ishkandar Baharin, President of Malaysia Robotics and Automation Association (MyRAS) and Ir. Dennis Ong, Independent Director of Malaysia Pacific Industries Berhad cum Organising Chairman of AAEC2022 shared their views, knowledge and experience on the implementation of IR4.0 in Malaysia and across the region.

From the presentations and panel discussion, issues raised centred on the misconception that IR4.0 is costly, knowledge based, technologically challenging and involve complex processes. However, the panel of speakers stressed that there are returns on investment, human capital that is available and the technological gap is surmountable. The misconception persisted because there is a lack of knowledge on IR4.0 and sharing on success stories. They believed with more success stories sharing, people will understand IR4.0 better and be more aware of the benefits. Dr. Choo Chung Siung, Discipline Leader (Civil Engineering) and Senior Lecturer of Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak Campus moderated the session.

The Four Industrial Revolutions



VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES21st - 23rd September 2021 |
Via ZOOM Application

The virtual roundtable was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Housing Sarawak with the objectives to undertake mapping on current ongoing projects related to public health; to propose key priority areas related to public health; to propose potential ideas/programmes/activities related to public health; and to establish synergies between different authorities on the programmes and activities.

The roundtable programme comprised paper presentations such as 'SDGs Implementation in Malaysia' by the Environment and Natural Resources Economic Division, Economic Planning Unit Malaysia, Prime Minister's Department; 'Waste Management and SDGs in Malaysia' by the Jeffrey Sachs Centre, Sunway University; 'Environmental Sustainability Issues and Challenges in Sarawak' by WWF-Malaysia Sarawak; and 'Strengthening Public Health Programmes in Local Authorities in Sarawak' by University of Malaysia Sarawak. The paper presentations were followed by workshop group discussions and presentations. The roundtable was attended by 94 participants from the local councils/authorities throughout the State.

The roundtable session provided a good opportunity for the local authorities to map, discuss and share on the current on-going activities, proposed key priority areas to be addressed as well as the issues and challenges faced in implementing their core activities/programmes. These activities/programmes provided a snapshot overview of what is being conducted at the grassroots level and the kind of issues and challenges faced by different local authorities.



As the roundtable was geared towards mobilising the local authorities to implement the SDGs at the local level in the State, the roundtable outputs provided the feedback for the ministry to identify the priority areas for further action. Among the many programmes and activities proposed, further improvements and enhancements need to be looked into to ensure the objective to achieve the SDGs in the State is fulfilled.

The participants also highlighted the need for enablers to be put in place to support the implementation of the SDGs by the local authorities. These are important to ensure the successful localisation of SDGs' programmes and activities. Policy integration was also emphasized as the State is accelerating development particularly in the environmental security focus area. Stakeholders' engagement is paramount to avoid overlapping roles and to seek consensus on collaboration areas.

In general, this roundtable has served its objective as the first step to localise SDGs in the State under the local authorities through the mapping of current activities and priority areas for the State. Moving forward, the next tasks will include refining the outputs from the roundtable, as well as to look into the necessary enablers to ensure the success of future programmes and activities.

ACTIVITIES UNDER SARAWAK COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (SDC CENTRE)

BOOKLET FOR KETUA KAUM – ‘BUKU PANDUAN KETUA KAUM NEGERI SARAWAK’

This project began in 2019 in collaboration with the General Administration Unit (UP), Department of the Premier of Sarawak. Several rounds of discussions and consultations with respective departments and agencies on the development of the content of the booklet were carried out. Agencies such as the State Attorney-General's Office, Land and Survey Department and the *Mahkamah Bumiputera Sarawak* were consulted.

Further consultations were done with UP to assess the relevance of information incorporated in the booklet to prepare the final draft.

The final draft of the booklet is expected to be approved in 2022 and published for circulation through UP.



BIJAK (BERSAMA INTU JAGA KAMPUNG) PROJECT

The BIJAK (*Bersama Intu Jaga Kampung*) Project is a resource tool (anchored on the Raspberry Pi) for the reference of the Village Security and Development Committees (JKKK) to undertake their roles and responsibilities more effectively, especially for communities in areas lacking internet connectivity. The content development for BIJAK has been finalized in collaboration with Dr. Johari Abdullah, from the Faculty of Computer Science & IT at UNIMAS, who provided the technical expertise.



The contents focus on easy to understand infographics, but also include videos and documents covering guidelines on JKKK organisational structure and role of each committee member, different categories of bureaus, as well as a skill development section and other relevant information for the JKKK.

Project presentations will be made to the Board of SDI and General Administration Unit (UP), Department of the Premier of Sarawak, in 2022 for feedback and approval.

RESEARCH



Photos by Dalat Digital Community Centre Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/dccdalat/>) and Sarawak Smart website (<https://sarawaksmart.com/v1/?p=680>)

ASSESSING LOCAL POPULATION NEEDS IN RELATION TO SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DIGITAL COMMUNITY CENTRES (DCC) IN SARAWAK

This survey is commissioned by the Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA). It was resolved that with the launching of Digital Community Centres (DCC) in Sarawak by the YAB Chief Minister during the International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak 2020 (IDECS2020) in October 2020, proper planning must be made based on the current status of the communities' digital readiness.

As a background, Digital Community Centres (DCC) were set up to empower the community with skills and abilities so that they will not be left out from the digital economic transformation mainstream. The establishment of the DCC is expected to improve the socio-economy, quality of life of the community as well as the development of local businesses. The Pustaka Negeri Sarawak (Pustaka) together with the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH) are responsible for coordinating the DCCs.

According to Pustaka, the centres are equipped with digital devices and gadgets including internet connectivity, digital video conferencing, maker space equipments such as 3D printers as well as online book collections. The goals of the centres are to catalyse the community's socio-economy through digital inclusivity, and will focus on four key areas namely digital skills and capacity building, socio-economic development, community empowerment, as well as community sustainability and resilience.

Thus, the main aims of this survey are to identify and assess the needs of the local population in relation to the capacity-building activities provided by the digital community centres. The survey targets to interview 2000 respondents from the 20 DCCs which were launched by YAB Chief Minister of Sarawak during the IDECS2020. The survey is expected to be completed in the last quarter of 2022.

It is expected to provide valuable inputs for planning and decision making on requirements for capacity building activities in areas where the DCC is present. The level of readiness of the community will be examined in the form of community awareness, knowledge, capacity and capability which are considered crucial in achieving the goal of this digital development initiative.





SDGs Promoting Sustainable Waste Management



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