



CHILDREN WELFARE WEEKLY SPECIAL EDITION: CELEBRATING THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD 2025!

Welcome to this power-packed edition of Children Welfare Weekly!

This week, we shine the spotlight on the vibrant and inspiring celebrations of the Day of the African Child, held across counties nationwide. From Bungoma to Makueni, voices of children echoed through rallies, forums, and performances—demanding action, recognition, and respect for their rights.

Join us as we take you through the powerful stories, bold commitments, and dynamic partnerships that marked this year's theme: "Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress Since 2010." This is more than a celebration, it's a call to action for every stakeholder to put children at the heart of Kenya's development agenda.

NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN **CHILD 2025: A CALL TO PRIORITIZE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS** IN KENYA



RATIONALE FOR THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD

The Day of the African Child (DAC) was launched ning and budgeting by Member States of the AU by the Assembly of Heads of State of the Organiza- and further encouraging States to assess and tion of African Unity (OAU) in 1991 to be commemorated on 16 June each year. The Day of the African Childs pays tribute to the 1976 student uprising in Soweto, South Africa, which resulted in the killings of students who demonstrated against the poor quality of education they received and demanded to be taught in their own language by the apartheid regime.

all stakeholders and actors involved in the protection and promotion of children's rights in Africa to come together, consolidate common goals and tackle the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving an Africa fit for its children.

theme is aimed at assessing the level of progress from aspiration to concrete action. achieved in mainstreaming children's issues in plan-

reform their mechanisms of budgeting and planning to adopt a child rights-based approach.

Kenya has embarked on a journey of aligning its national policies and legal frameworks with regional and international child protection standards. This includes ratifying key treaties and updating child-centered legislation. However, while policy frameworks are commendable, budget allocations Over the years, the Day has been an opportunity for remain a sticking point. A main challenge has been ensuring these budgets adequately address the needs of all children: especially those in vulnerable situations including orphans, children with disabilities, and those living in poverty.

DAC 2025, therefore, aimed to stir collective reflec-This year the Day of the African Child was com- tion and accountability. Planning and budgeting for memorated under the theme; Planning and budget- children's services: including healthcare, education, ing for children's rights: progress since 2010. The social protection, and child protection, must move

Day of the African Child 2025 Launches in Bungoma County

On June 9, 2025, Masinde Muliro Stadium in A Celebration with Meaning Bungoma County became a symbol of hope, Several Child Protection stakeholders were present, progress, and commitment to Kenya's children. As including Children Officers. Among the dignitaries the host of the national launch of the Day of the present were the Principal Secretary, State African Child (DAC) 2025, Bungoma stood tall, Department for Children Services, CPA Caren showcasing how county-level leadership can Agengo, and NCCS CEO Abdinoor Sheikh breathe life into policies and turn aspirations into Mohammed and the Secretary Children Services. action.

The event was a joint effort by the National Council for Children Services (NCCS), the Ministry of • Labour and Social Protection, and Bungoma County Government under the stewardship of Governor • Kenneth Lusaka



Governor Lusaka speaks at the DAC 2025 launch in Bungoma County.

Why Bungoma?

Bungoma wasn't chosen by accident. The county has made deliberate and visible investments in . childhood education. child protection frameworks, and school enrolment initiatives. Governor Lusaka put it best during a preparatory meeting: "This event underscores the national recognition of our deliberate efforts to invest in the well-being of our children. We are proud to lead by example."

Bungoma has become a model for child-centered with governance, aligning seamlessly Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Children Act 2022, and Vision 2030.

- A series of impactful moments stood out:
- A spirited march-past by pupils from local schools.
- Moving performances that highlighted children's hopes, rights, and dreams.
- An intergenerational dialogue on child-sensitive budgeting, featuring county children's officers, planners, and civil society.
- Unveiling of new initiatives including enhanced Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs, safeguarding structures, and expanded bursary and cash transfer schemes.

What Bungoma Pledged

The national launch was also a moment of accountability. Bungoma County announced fresh commitments to deepen its investment in children:

- Boosting ECD programs: Over 1,200 centers will see improved infrastructure, well-trained teachers, and feeding programs. During this event, the county launched its children policy.
- Expanding support for vulnerable children: Bursary schemes and the CT-OVC program will reach more needy families.
- Enhancing child protection: A new county committee inter-agency will responses to child safety concerns.
- Engaging the community: Chiefs, elders, youth leaders, and grassroots actors vowed to actively participate in anti-FGM campaigns, education, and anti-child labor drives.



Children Marching during DAC Launch in Bungoma

Children and Communities Speak Out

the children themselves. One student poet stood momentum by: before the crowd and declared: "Let our rights to . Publishing learn and play be honoured."

Parents, teachers, and community leaders echoed these sentiments.

Civil society partners called for:

- Creation of child-friendly public especially in towns.
- resources.
- county level.

The National Council for Children Services called Perhaps the most powerful messages came from on all county governments to adopt this

- annual child-focused budget statements.
- Allocating resources to ECD, safety, education, and child protection.
- Embedding child rights indicators in County Integrated Development Plans(CIDPs).

spaces, The launch was more than an event, it was a blueprint. A living example of what can be achieved Inclusion of children with disabilities through when leadership meets vision and action. The task infrastructure upgrades and specialized learning ahead is to replicate and scale this across all 47 counties, so that every child, regardless of where Better tools to track child rights progress at they are born, can thrive in dignity, safety, and joy. That every budget, plan, and program reflects the promise of our children.



PS Carren Ageng'o dances with children at the DAC 2025 launch in Bungoma.



PS Carren Ageng'o delivers her remarks during the DAC 2025 launch in Bungoma.



Child guest addresses the audience during the DAC 2025 launch in Bungoma.



Guests and dignitaries follow proceedings at the DAC 2025 launch in Bungoma.

Makueni Hosts National Celebrations for Day of the African Child

Makueni County played host to this year's national Sophia Abdi Noor, Chairperson of the NCCS Board; celebrations of the Day of the African Child (DAC), Hon. Susan Kiambaa, Area Member of Parliament; with Unoa Comprehensive School transformed into CPA Carren Ageng'o, Principal Secretary for Chila vibrant hub of song, color, and advocacy. The dren Welfare Services; Hon. Hannah Wendot theme "Planning and Budgeting for Children's Chuptumo, Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture & Rights - Progress Since 2010" echoed across all Children Services; and H.E. First Lady Rachel Ruto, sessions, performances, and speeches — rallying who served as Chief Guest and delivered the keystakeholders to prioritize Kenya's children.



First Lady Rachel Ruto carries a child who welcomed her at the DAC 2025 in Makueni.

Parade, Performances & Exhibitions

The day began with a symbolic march through the town, followed by spirited entertainment by children from various schools and organizations. They performed songs, dances, poems, and skits that championed children's rights and inclusive development.

an exhibition tent showcasing efforts by child protection stakeholders. These included the County Government of Makueni, Directorate of Children Services, National Council for Children Services, and Compassion International, who highlighted their mandates, operations, and child-centered innovations and initiatives.

Policy Launch and Leadership Commitments

A key highlight of the day was the launch of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the National Care Reform Strategy for Children in Kenya (2022–2032). This framework is expected to bolster child protection through improved data use, coordination, and accountability.

Dignitaries present shared their unwavering commitment to children's rights. These included Mrs. note address.

Keynote Address by H.E. the First Lady

In her keynote speech, First Lady Rachel Ruto reaffirmed the government's dedication to prioritizing children in planning and budgeting. She lauded the efforts made since 2010 but also acknowledged gaps, especially in service reach and equity. She urged leaders at all levels to ensure resources reflect the needs of the present-day child, emphasizing that children are not just the future, they are the present. From classrooms to clinics, every child deserves quality care and opportunity. She called for collaborative efforts between government, civil society, communities, and international partners to design child-centered budgets that are responsive and inclusive.

Voices from the Ground

Hon. Hannah Wendot Chuptumo, the Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture and Children Services, praised Kenya's legislative milestones like the Chil-Guests, led by H.E. First Lady Rachel Ruto, toured dren Act Cap 141, noting that it aligns national legal frameworks with international child protection standards. She revealed that regulations to operationalize the Act are at the final stages and will soon be gazetted. Additionally, she noted that the Children Policy 2010 is currently under review following nationwide public participation, and will be presented to the Cabinet for approval.



CS Hannah Chuptumo delivers her speech during the DAC 2025 national celebrations in Makueni.

A highlight of her remarks was the inclusion of chil- Stakeholder Contributions meaningful child participation in governance. However, she acknowledged that challenges remain. Many children in Kenya still face unsafe environments, limited opportunities, and unequal access to essential services. She called for a united approac hto ensure every child in Kenya grows up in a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment.

Children Take the Lead

Child representatives Treasure Mwende and Shamma Mwendwa delivered bold and thoughtful reflections. They expressed joy that children's rights and welfare were being prioritized at national level and thanked both the government and development partners for continued investment in education, healthcare, and protection. Yet, they highlighted the real struggles many children continue to face, including unsafe homes, lack of clean water and feeding programmes in schools, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate health services, and insufficient access to sanitary towels for girls.



They challenged leaders to think critically about budgeting and asked whether funds are truly reaching the most vulnerable children—those with processes across the board. disabilities, those living in poverty, and children on the streets. They urged for children to be included in all decisions that affect them and delivered a strong message: "Nothing for us without us." The duo also underscored the importance of reliable child data to Plan for us. Walk with us," they declared.

dren in the national budgeting process for the first Ms. Florence Korir, Cluster Manager at World Vision time in history—signaling a shift toward more Kenya (Makueni/Machakos), spoke on behalf of non-state actors and emphasized the role of grassroots organizations in bridging service gaps, especially in marginalized communities. Magdalene Wanza, County Director of TDH-N, representing national development partners, applauded ongoing efforts but stressed the need for continued investment in child health, education, and protection. The County Commissioner of Makueni also recognized local initiatives and promised sustained government support for community-based child welfare programmes.

Reflections and The Way Forward

As the national celebration concluded, it was clear that while Kenya has made commendable progress, important gaps remain. Among the challenges highlighted were underfunding of county-level child protection services, delays in implementing the Children Act 2022, inadequate data systems to guide decision-making, and limited support for children in street situations, with disabilities, or in contact with the justice system.

To bridge these gaps, stakeholders recommended several key actions: prioritizing child-sensitive budgeting at both county and national levels; fully operationalizing the Child Welfare Fund as per the Children Act 2022; improving child-focused data collection and monitoring systems, including child-led tracking of progress; expanding cash transfer programs, bursaries, and protection networks; and ensuring inclusive, cross-sectoral service delivery that prioritizes vulnerable children. There was also a strong call to strengthen child participation in planning, budgeting, and evaluation

Conclusion

The national DAC event at Unoa Comprehensive School was more than just a celebration. It was a powerful call to action. As the First Lady planted a guide planning. In their final plea, they reminded all tree symbolizing growth and hope, the message present that children are citizens of today—not just was clear: the future of Kenya depends on how we the leaders of tomorrow—and deserve to be seen, treat, include, and invest in our children today. Let heard, and supported. "Believe in us. Invest in us. the commitments made at this event grow into real policy change, impactful budgets, and better outcomes for all children in Kenya.



School children march in unity to mark DAC in Makueni County.



Guests follow proceedings during DAC celebrations in Makueni County.



H.E. First Lady Rachel Ruto delivers her keynote address during DAC celebrations in Makueni County.



CS Hanna Chuptumo gives her speech during DAC celebrations in Makueni.



PS Carren Ageng'o delivers her speech during the DAC celebration in Makueni.



NCCS CEO Abdinoor Sheikh Mohammed addressing guests during the DAC celebrations in Makueni.



Magdalene Wanza, County Director of TDH–N, delivering her remarks at the DAC event in Makueni.



Mrs. Sophia Abdi Noor, Chairperson, NCCS Board, addressing guests during the DAC celebration in Makueni.

Voices of the Valley: Narok County Commemorates Day of the **African Child**

In commemorating the Day of the African Child 2025, stakeholders and partners in Narok County came together for a vibrant and impactful event at • Leshuta Comprehensive School in Narok West Sub-County. The site was intentionally chosen due to its high prevalence of child protection issues, making it a fitting location to rally community action and awareness.



Regional Coordinator of Children Services and Narok West DCC lead the DAC procession at Leshuta Comprehensive School.

Collaborative Planning for Impact

Led by the Directorate of Children Services – Narok County, planning for the event was a multi-stakeholder effort supported by World Vision Kenya and Anglican Development Services through the Narok ticularly in community mobilization. Local chiefs Integrated Development Program (NIDP). Three strategic planning meetings were held, bringing together representatives from national and county-level offices, partners, and the local administration—all with a shared focus: putting children at the center of every decision.

A Day of Expression and Empowerment

The celebration kicked off with a lively procession from Leshuta Shopping Centre to the school grounds, flagged off by the Regional Coordinator for Children Services and the Narok West Deputy County Commissioner. Children took the lead throughout the day, showcasing their talents through songs, poems, and dances-turning the stage into a platform for their voices and aspirations.

Key Voices from the Event

Partner Representative emphasized the need to

- involve children in budgeting processes, starting from the family level.
- World Vision Kenya highlighted ongoing child protection programs and raised concern over child marriage, urging the community to prioritize girls' education.
- Child Guest Speaker passionately addressed fellow children, calling for support in overcoming societal challenges and amplifying their voices in decision-making spaces.
- Narok West DCC issued a firm warning against FGM, child marriage, and school dropouts, stressing government commitment to enforce the law.
- County Director of Children Services requested urgent staffing for Amalo Sub-County and encouraged children to stay focused on their education.
- Chief Guest Regional Coordinator of Children Services echoed the event's theme, stressing the need for child-focused budgeting at every level and committed to follow up on staffing and Child Protection Units in police stations.

Areas of Success

The event was marked by notable successes, parand schools played a vital role in rallying the community to attend, ensuring strong grassroots participation. Children's involvement stood out, with the young participants taking ownership of the day through creative presentations and speeches. Partner organizations also offered significant support, particularly in planning and budget facilitation. The three planning meetings allowed for inclusive dialogue and contributed to the smooth execution of the celebration.



Children and stakeholders join the International DAC 2025 procession in Narok County.

Challenges Faced

Despite the event's success, a few challenges were encountered. Not all key stakeholders and partners were adequately involved in the lead-up to the celebration, which affected coordination. Time constraints also limited certain aspects of planning and execution. The absence of the County Government was a notable gap, as was the last-minute with- 4. Engage the business community and local drawal of support by one of the partners on the day of the event, which disrupted some logistics.



Narok West DCC opening remarks during DAC 2025



County Director of Children Services gives his remarks during the DAC 2025 celebrations in Narok County.

Recommendations for Future Events

- 1. Start planning early and develop a clear calendar for child protection events.
- 2. Strengthen coordination and extend invitations to all key partners.
- 3. Establish a Narok County Child Protection Stakeholders Forum.
- corporates to support future celebrations.

The Narok County celebration of the Day of the African Child was a powerful reminder that when children are given the space to speak, and when communities rally together, real change is possible. As echoed by one child speaker, "Listen to us, and we will show you the Kenya we dream of."



Regional Coordinator of Children Services delivers remarks during the DAC 2025 celebrations in Narok County.



Regional Coordinator and Narok West DCC distribute dignity kits to children during the DAC 2025 celebrations.

Nyamira County Amplifies Children's Voices on DAC 2025

On 16th June 2025, the spirit of the Day of the African Child was alive and strong in Nyamira North Sub-County, as children, stakeholders, and members of the public gathered at Ekerenyo DCC Grounds to commemorate the day. The event brought together national and county government • officers, partners in child protection, school children, and the broader community in a vibrant celebration of children's rights and their role in shaping society.

The event aimed to raise awareness on key issues affecting children—including child abuse, early marriage, child labor, and exclusion from decision-making—while reaffirming the need for Mr. Rasto Omollo, County Coordinator, gave an collaborative efforts to protect and empower the African child.



Children Lead the Way

A standout moment came when a student from Mwencha Comprehensive School delivered a heartfelt speech aligned with the day's theme. The young speaker highlighted the need for children to be heard and supported in their journey toward realizing their potential. Performances by school Mwencha students and a moving dedication by Kebabe Girls—added powerful cultural and emotional depth to the event.

Voices from the Frontlines

- ICS-SP (Investing in Children and their Societies), represented by Mr. Moses Gundi, reiterated Highlights from the Event their commitment to ending violence against The celebration was a success, thanks to strong ty-based education.
- emphasizing community dialogue and youth sions that affect their lives.

empowerment.

- Sub-County Director of Education, Madam Clare, commended parents, teachers, and learners for their dedication and called for holistic support for both girls and boys.
- National Police Service officers, including Madam Rufeen Ochieng (Gender Desk Officer) and Inspector Rebecca (Deputy OCS), highlighted the importance of collaboration with children's officers, and encouraged girls to aim high while urging parents to guide and protect their children.

Government Commitments

overview of ongoing government efforts, including the Inua Jamii cash transfer program, which supports over 5,900 caregivers in North Mugirango with monthly payments totaling more than Ksh 11 million. He also cited the Presidential Bursary Program, which has supported 70 children in Nyamira North this year alone.

However, Mr. Omollo noted growing concerns over early marriage and teen pregnancies, with 170 cases recorded in Ekerenyo out of 3,090 countywide last year. He called for increased accountability, better monitoring of social programs, and stronger collaboration between stakeholders and the community.

A Unified Message

In her closing remarks, Madam Sylvia Njogu, Assisgroups—including a traditional folk dance by tant County Commissioner for Ekerenyo Division, emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to child protection, education, and empowerment. She stressed that children are the foundation of a brighter future and urged parents and communities to nurture and prioritize them.

children through advocacy and communi- community turnout, children's active participation, and impactful messages from stakeholders. It rein-International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) shared forced the need for continued investment in chiltheir work in FGM prevention and child partici- dren, stronger multi-sectoral collaboration, and the pation across Nyamira North and Manga, active involvement of children in shaping the deci-

A Day for Every Child: Kangundo Unites for Inclusion, **Protection, and Justice**

On 17th June 2025, Kangundo Sub-County in from the Departments of Probation, Public Health, Machakos County marked the Day of the African Child with a series of impactful community-based engagements that prioritized inclusion, child protection, and access to justice. The Sub-County Children's Officer, Mr. William Omondi Ochieng, participated in three key activities throughout the day to ensure children remained at the heart of local service delivery.

Disability Awareness and Medical Assessments The day began with a Disability Awareness and Free Medical Assessment exercise at Kangundo Level 4 Hospital. The event was organized by the County Government of Machakos, in partnership with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), the Agency for Disability Development in Africa (ADDA), and the Sub-County Children's Office. Sensitization efforts led by the Children's Office, in collaboration with local administrators and volunteers, helped caregivers bring forward children with disabilities who had been previously hidden due to stigma. These children received essential assessments, referrals, assistive devices, and were linked to key services. Mr. Ochieng applauded the caregivers' courage and encouraged greater community openness and support for children with disabilities.

Community Sensitization in Matetani Sub-Location Later in the morning, Mr. Ochieng and Children's Officer Mr. Neville Musima held a sensitization baraza at Assistant Chief Madam Mary N. Peter's office in Matetani. The session involved officers

Social Development, KMTC students, and Community Health Volunteers (CHVs). Mr. Ochieng led discussions on reporting child abuse and neglect, emphasizing the toll-free Child Helpline 116. He addressed the importance of prompt response to cases of defilement and highlighted the psychological, legal, and medical considerations for survivors. Mr. Musima spoke on the shared responsibility of child upbringing and urged families and communities to work together in creating safe, nurturing environments.

Child Justice Through Pro Bono Legal Support In the afternoon, Mr. Ochieng participated in a Pro Bono Committee meeting at the Judiciary, where he is an active member. A major outcome was the appointment of a pro bono advocate for a minor in conflict with the law, reinforcing the importance of child-sensitive justice systems. Afterward, he returned to Kangundo Level 4 Hospital to follow up on the medical assessments and offer continued support to children and families.

Although the activities differed in nature, they were unified by a shared objective—to enhance the wellbeing of children in Kangundo. From disability inclusion and protection from harm to legal representation, the day embodied Kangundo Sub-County's commitment to child welfare. These activities were part of the local commemoration of the Day of the African Child and a reflection of the national theme's call for inclusive, safe, and empowering environments for all children.



Mr. Ochieng and Mr. Musima address participants during the community sensitization baraza in Matetani Sub-location.



Mr. Ochieng engages with key stakeholders during the Disability Awareness and Medical Assessment exercise at Kangundo Level 4 Hospital.

Gatundu Constituency Champions Mentorship and Rights at Day of the African Child Celebration



Children and guests seated attentively during the DAC 2025 celebrations in Gatundu.

On 13th June 2025, Mama Ngina University College (MNUC), in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Department of Children Welfare -Gatundu South, hosted a vibrant and impactful Day of the African Child celebration at the MNUC campus. The event brought together learners from Gatundu North and South, child rights champions, and organizations such as Mount Kenya University, Terre des Hommes, Metropol CRB, Equity Bank, and the Robotics Institute of Kenya.

This year's celebration coincided with the third anniversary of the MNUC School Mentorship Programme, a transformative initiative focused on equipping schools with structured mentorship strategies that promote academic, personal, and development. Through social training skills-building, the programme empowers mentors to support learners holistically—fostering safe, supportive, and rights-based learning environments.

Empowering Through Mentorship and Expression

led by MNUC staff, IEEE Kenyatta University, KMTC-Gatundu, and Equity's Wings to Fly Scholars. Children from various schools also took center stage with music, poetry, dance, and spoken word, powerfully echoing this year's theme: "Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights."

MNUC conducted a teacher empowerment training school retention and household stability.

on basic counseling skills, targeting lead mentors from partner schools. This training aimed to give educators practical tools for safeguarding children and fostering emotionally secure learning spaces.

Stakeholder Voices and Reflections

- Ms. Rebecca Kariuki, Children's Officer for Gatundu Sub-County, called for stronger community responsibility in addressing child abuse, often stemming from parental neglect.
- Mr. Isaac Muiru, Ministry of Education, urged learners to work hard, warning them against vices such as drug abuse and gang involvement.
- Prof. Peter Wanderi (Mount Kenya University) emphasized that initiatives like DAC and mentorship are integral to sustainable development.
- Representing MNUC, Prof. Thomas Sakwa reaffirmed the university's commitment to children's rights, mentorship, and community engagement, noting that the programme now supports over 12 schools in partnership with the Ministry of Education.



Prof. Sakwa Sakwa, Deputy Principal of MNUC, delivering his speech during the DAC 2025 celebrations in Gatundu.

The event featured engaging mentorship sessions Reflections on National Celebrations and the Road Ahead

The Gatundu event was part of a broader national movement marking DAC 2025, themed "Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress Since 2010." Over the years, Kenya has made commendable strides: enacting a stronger Children Act, rolling out the Care Reform Strategy, and scaling up To further strengthen child protection systems, cash transfer programs like CT-OVC to improve

However, challenges persist. Underfunding of child protection at the county level, delays in implementing the Children Act 2022, and limited data for informed planning continue to undermine progress. Vulnerable children—those with disabilities, in street situations, or in contact with the law—remain disproportionately excluded.

A Call to Action

- 1. To truly protect and uplift every child, stakeholders emphasized the following next steps:
- 2. Integrate child-sensitive budgeting at national and county levels.
- 3. Fully implement the Children Act 2022, especially the Child Welfare Fund.
- 4. Strengthen child data systems, including child-led monitoring.
- 5. Expand cash transfers, bursaries, and child protection networks.
- 6. Ensure inclusive services for children living with disabilities or at risk.
- 7. Promote child participation in decision-making and evaluation.
- 8. Enhance multi-sectoral coordination for integrated service delivery.

The Gatundu celebration stood out not just for its vibrance and energy, but for its clear message: children are not only our future—they are active participants in shaping it. Institutions like MNUC, alongside community leaders and partners, continue to lead by example in creating safe, inclusive, and empowering spaces for every child to thrive.



Sr. Consolata, Guest Speaker, addressing participants during the DAC 2025 celebrations in Gatundu.



Ms. Rebecca Kariuki, Children's Officer, Gatundu Sub County, delivering her speech during the DAC 2025 event.

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