ANNUAL REPORT
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JRS
ASIA PACIFIC

The Jesuit Refugee Service is an International Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

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Published: June 2016

This report covers the period January to December 2015

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The Spirit Shouts for Joy

The JRS annual report of 2015 comes to you depicting activities, in numbers, short stories and testimonies with pictures of the community of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and how our staff interact with them. The report wants to present to you not only the achievement of JRS as an organization but also the struggle JRS wants you to participate in and commit to.

It is a struggle because the information we provide may not be able to cover the whole complex realities from which the refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people view the world.

In April-May 2015, we saw how Rohingya people were refused to disembark by the government of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Malaysia despite the willingness of ordinary fishermen of Aceh to save and host them.

The same ordinary citizen continues to commit themselves for the service of refugees in Arrupe Center in Paramatta, shelter refugees in Bangkok, on farms in the northern part of Thailand, in schools in Myanmar, or by accompaning women in the conflict affected area of the Philippines.

A friend shared an interesting finding after conducting a photography workshop with refugees' and asylum seekers in Indonesia. As a trained photographer with a journalism background, he was amazed how the pictures taken by the refugees described their lives in Indonesia as a moment of growth, learning and even an observation of their surroundings.

The photos, he said, gave a new angle of how refugees' and asylum seekers live in the world and they should be viewed as a way of learning. They are able to observe their new habitat, deal with the structure of the society they interact with, and yet find ways of expression.

"You will never suppress the spirit of human beings forever" says Anne Lim,an International Development Group member, as she reflects on her singing practice with a group of refugee children and women.

I think this statement would be good guidance for policy makers. Also for organizations, staff, donors,etc. to remember that when we deal with people, we deal with the human spirit which always seeks to find a way to express itself…to connect and to call for an effort to live together and to improve our world.

Bambang A. Sipayung SJ
Regional Director, JRS Asia Pacific
June 2015

JRS

Australia

The Shelter Project- Arrupe Place

In 2014, through a series of needs analyses and consultations, JRS identified numerous challenges facing asylum seekers and refugees, including a lack of financial resources, a lack of access to safe and affordable housing, the need for legal services and employment support, poor mental and physical health and social isolation. In response to these needs, at the beginning of 2015 JRS opened Arrupe Place, a drop-in centre in Parramatta, western Sydney, where large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees live. By partnering with religious and refugee-focused organisations, the centre strengthened the capacity of vulnerable asylum seekers by increasing their access to relevant services and support.

Our services included the following:

English classes
Around 80 individuals accessed professional English language support while attending more than 100 English classes throughout the year.

Employment-seeking
Arrupe Place offered job search and resume-writing assistance, and offered two job-search workshops in partnership with Training for Change in order to strengthen clients' job search skills.

Health
Almost 300 clients were given access to quality fresh and non-perishable food during 35 foodbank days in 2015. Two health workshops were conducted during a Women's Health and Pamper Day held at Arrupe Place.

Social well-being
Staff and volunteers conducted 33 home visits, reducing the isolation felt by many asylum seekers and refugees. However, clients have preferred to visit Arrupe Place itself rather than have people come to their home, and so the home visit programme will be reviewed. Cooking Together sessions were held throughout the year in an effort to strengthen clients' connection with the community.

Legal Aid
JRS partnered with the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) to run a legal clinic based at Arrupe Place. The clinic provided over 1200 asylum seekers with much needed legal advice, as well as information on the Fast Track Assessment process. JRS also worked with RACS to train volunteers to provide clerical form filling assistance, as well as partnering with Baker & McKenzie to provide people with pro-bono assistance with civil law issues.

ACCOMPANIMENT

All of my friends in JRS …had a special role in building the foundation of my new life. Without their help I am sure that I would not have made it."- Afghani asylum seeker

SERVICE

Arrupe Place was the recipient of the Australian Psychological Society's 2015 Community Wellbeing Award. The principal criteria for the award were the involvement of volunteers in the programme and the contribution it made to the wellbeing of those in the local community.

ADVOCACY

JRS consistently urged the Australian government to end its policy of offshore processing and other elements of Operation Sovereign Borders, such as the turning back of boats bearing people seeking protection. JRS was actively involved in efforts to urge the government to find alternatives to the detention of people seeking asylum, in particular children and families.

The Arrupe Place in Parramatta, western Sydney

Cambodia

Dominating JRS Cambodia in 2015 has been the assistance of the Montagnards, by providing food and shelter and accompanying them since they arrived in Cambodia and throughout a prolonged period of limbo. JRS has also advocated for this asylum process in Cambodia to take place and for the the Cambodian government under no circumstances to deport these people before a fair process is carried out.

Accompaniment, service and advocacy for the 300 Montagnards who fled to Cambodia after facing religious and ethnic persecution in Vietnam has been central to the work of JRS Cambodia in Phnom Penh. Besides providing friendship, shelter, food, legal advice and educational opportunities. JRS with allies has advocated that the Montagnards be treated in the same way as other asylum seekers and access the registration and RSD process and be protected from forced deportation. Legal and counseling assistance drew forth many stories of long prison sentences, beatings, and being prevented from practicing their Christian religion.JRS also cared for 103 refugees and asylum seekers from a variety of countries and rejoiced at the resettlement of 5 Rohingyas to Canada.

The Metta Karuna Reflection Centre in Siem Reap which is managed by JRS provides a haven of peace and reflection space for displaced people, the vulnerable and visitors. It hosts exposure visits, raises awareness of issues confronting Cambodia from the perspective of the poor,stages interfaith events and seminars for people with disability.

Fostering the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty and the Cluster Munitions Convention is part of our effort for peace and for preventing forced displacement. Following the publication of their groundbreaking book " I am Happy I AM Alive" landmine survivors have followed their vulnerable peers in remote provinces and provided personal support and assistance.

In 2015 Jesuit Refugee Service commemorated 35 years of working alongside refugees and the displaced on Dec. 1, and presented Sr. Denise Coghlan, RSM with the JRS Accompany Award.

SERVICE

Advocacy- 6477 people
AID- 181 people
Education- 427 people
Livelihood- 61 people
Psychosocial assistance- 3540 people
Total- 10,686 people

ACCOMPANIMENT

"Listening with the eyes and ears of the heart is what accompaniment is about. As Srun Sony our long time social worker and refugee friend says it means laughing with them, crying with them,.rejoicing in new babies and mourning the dead. It means helping find a house or understanding new food or explaining to police. It can also be tough love when you insist it is time for you to help others and yourself"- Sr Denise Coghlan

Sr. Denise with Fr. Thomas Smolich SJ, Fr. Bambang Sipayung SJ and others

Indonesia

"I no like study, No read, No write," said Hasan*, a Rohingya teenage boy explaining why he would not `attend English classes with others of his age in Aceh, Indonesia.

The illiteracy rate within the Rohingya community in Myanmar is estimated at eighty percent. More than sixty percent of children aged between 5 and 17 have never enrolled in school.

Feeling discouraged because they cannot read or write many teenagers give up quickly. JRS started to provide informal lessons to Hasan, who was soon joined by Rofik*, Mohammed*, and Armin* - who like Hasan where too shy to attend classes with their peers because they were illiterate.

Over many of the encounters with JRS the teenage boys learned how to read and write, spending an increasing amount of time studying and becoming more excited about learning.

One and a half months after he began, Hasan looked more cheerful and confident. "Brother, now I can write my name. This is father, this is mother, and this is my sister", as he proudly presented his ability to write the names on a small white board. Later that day teenagers gathered around Windi, a staff member from JRS, who brought a laptop to show the boys how to type.

In 2015 JRS accompanied and served over 1700 refugees in Indonesia in Java Island, East Aceh and North Sulawesi. Mutual learning was at the heart of our encounters. Our close relationship with those we serve allows us to support their goals whileassisting them to develop their skills. We have assisted over 800 refugees to strengthen their skills in English and Indonesian language, as well as with computer and handicraft skills.

Often we simply have to provide the materials to support refugee teachers who are detained in immigration detention centres. Or, we provided the space and lesson plans for an inclusive Learning Center for the urban refugee community that quickly became a safe and welcoming place where refugees from different countries could meet. Volunteer teachers from the refugee community teach children and adults mainly in English language but offer share skills in managing finances or handicraft.

The process of learning and creating a safe space to exchange knowledge, a place for people to meet, to find hope, or even act as a distraction, was embraced and valued more than the practical side of lesson plans and tests.

For those asylum seekers or refugees who show interest, JRS provides trainings on teaching methods or interpreting skills which supportrefugee's aspirations to continue their education and be of service to their own and the wider community. Education has also allowed young Indonesians to meet refugees in Yogyakarta, who as teachers or volunteers became acquainted with the histories, cultures and struggles of their new students.

For Salima, a 16 year old girl from Afghanistan, education is very special. "In our village, it is impossible for the girls to go to school. We have to study secretly in our home. If they [the Taliban] found out, they will bomb our house. They always bomb our village. That's why we run". "I love studying English at the JRS Learning Centre. I wish I could be a teacher there someday. And if I am resettled I would love to go to school and study a lot more".

JRS Indonesia values life-long learning and hopes to further strengthen and support educational activities for and with refugees. In our work we find that learning is a process that transforms teachers and students, as confidence and hope grows out of new skills and knowledge.

ACCOMPANIMENT

JRS Indonesia provides direct services to asylum seekers and refugees in immigration detention centers. JRS accompaniment of asylum seekers and refugees in Immigration Detention Centers includes befriending them by listening to their concerns, needs, and hopes. JRS aims to to facilitate communication between the detainees and immigration staff preventing the escalation of tensions between them. By being present JRS listens not only to detainees but also to immigration staff and helps clarifying and communicating concerns from both sides to each other.

Philippines

At the end of 2012, the Philippine government and the M.I.L.F. have signed a landmark Framework Agreement Bangsamoro (FAB) moving the peace process forward. While there are remaining unresolved substantial issues, the FAB was broadly recognized and supported by most stakeholders and paved the way for the formation of a committee to prepare the transition and referendum on a basic law that establishes the Bangsamoro and dissolving the ARMM.

In 2015, JRS was present in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao and in Zamboanga City in Mindanao. JRS assisted livelihood projects in Maguindanao and Zamboanga City. These projects were centered on women IDPs and aimed to enhance women IDPs in returned communities for sustainable peace and reconciliationon purposes. Through these livelihoods JRS aimed to develop sustainable opportunitites for returning or returned female-headed IDP households.

JRS' close relationship with local contacts and principle of non- partisanship has helped JRS gain trust from the communities which allow JRS to access to JRS' working areas in Maguindanao and Lanao to regularly implement and monitor projects like livelihood activities. Based on the increasing income, numbers of initiative, and good cooperation among the people served, livelihood activities have been a success due to close monitoring and consultative spirit that JRS uses which created commitment and ownership among the people served and enabled JRS to have timely intervention.

However, BBL information sessions were affected by slow progress of BBL. In response, JRS tackled the challenge by adjusting the topics to discuss about anxiety and fear of the participants through focus group discussion and interviews to keep the peace panels available, rather than only focusing on the development of BBL.

ACCOMPANIMENT

"JRS comes from another belief but they are the only one interested to come in remote areas like this to educate you about the peace process and its updates. It is a great opportunity for you (Christians) and we (Muslims) should be thankful of their sincere interest. I think there are no other organizations want to come aside from them."

- Alim Khair (JRS peace process beneficiary)

SERVICE

329 people took part in sustainable livelihoods. 209 were from female-headed IDP households, through increasing capacity in food production and livelihoods by providing social, technical and material assistance.

JRS Staff and particiapnts review the Bangsamoro Basic Law duiing a session on the peace process

Myanmar

JRS is currently working in two states inside Myanmar. Namely Kachin and Kayah State, which have very limited international presence and relies largely on local Church and national NGO's for humanitarian needs.

In addition to about 13,000 Karenni refugees in camps at the Thai borders, there is an estimated 1,450 Karenni IDPs forced by government to live in about six government relocation camps. This is in addition to an estimated 34,000 IDPs in Kayah State forced by government to live in about eight government relocation camps.

JRS aims to promote quality education for IDPs through improving the learning environment and building capacity by conducting teacher trainings, formation of boarding house staff and providing education materials. In 2015 we served 536 students, 76 teachers, 5 IDP boarding house staff and 425 returned IDP's.

JRS promoted coordinated and comprehensive education services through improving collaboration among education stakeholders by facilitating dialogue among Diocesan-based organizations and initiating an education framework.

JRS has continued to foster its bilateral relations with all education stakeholders in the Diocese, JRS also advocates for concerted efforts among all of them through establishing regular platform for all parties to share information and synchronize their activities.

In 2015 the government strictly implemented a new policy on exam rates, meaning students now need higher scores then in the past. After JRS supported the boarding house wardens and tuition classes, 4 students passed the exam which was an increase from last year. The low passing rate is generally caused by the fact that students are from a weak education background. JRS Myanmar recognizes the passing rate should be higher in the next matriculation exam and will continue working closely with its education partners and to improve the environment conducive for students to learn.

Singapore

JRS Singapore seeks to raise awareness about refugees and human trafficking issues, as well as support the work of JRS country offices in the Asia Pacific region through various joint initiatives. In Singapore,talks and exhibitions about refugees are planned in parishes and institutes of learning. There are also ongoing activities to accompany and provide material assistance to residents of a shelter home for women and children, many of whom are victims of human trafficking. Visiting teachers and leaders from communities at risk are brought to visit persons who have been trafficked in Singapore for exposure.

Jointly with JRS Myanmar, former and current teaching professionals from Singapore imparted their skills to trainee teachers. One group trained 19 aspiring teachers in project based learning. With JRS Indonesia, Singapore volunteers helped develop and conduct English classes for immigration officers at an Indonesian detention centre.

ACCOMPANIMENT

"My name is Mung Dan. I am proud to teach these students because they could be doctors, engineers, successful business owners and artists for the future. Steadily and slowly, I know them well and I love them. I am satisfied and happy with my work. I am always grateful to God who provides me my need all the time. My aim in life is to become a a great teacher who can serve the interest of the country and the people. -Myanmar Beneficiary

ADVOCACY

JRS continues to promote equal opportunity in education with special attention to the inherent vulnerabilities of young women and girls among the people served and for any refugee who wishes to voluntary return to Myanmar.

JRS Education Coordinator with students at graduation.

On the Thailand & Myanmar Border

MAE HONG SON

JRS has been present in two of nine official refugee camps since 1997. Located On the northwestern Thailand/Myanmar border the two camps host more than 14,000 refugees, largely of the Karen and Karenni ethnic groups from Myanmar. JRS partners with the Karenni Education Department (KnED) to implement and deliver basic, special, vocational and adult literacy education.

There are approximately 11,098 refugees in Ban Mai Nai Soi (Camp 1) and 2,650 refugees in Ban Mae Surin (Camp 2) where JRS works. The camps are made up of mainly a population who fled from decades-long armed conflicts from Karenni and Karen State in Burma/Myanmar.

JRS aim's to improve the formal educational opportunities of refugees in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp (1) and Ban Mae Surin Camp (2) through supporting the Karenni Education Department in its provision of formal education by supporting school operations, building teacher capacity, and improving the curriculum.

As of November 2015, 1,950 primary students (KG – S4) and 2,041 middle and high school students (S5 – S10), a total of 3,991 students (M=1,986, F=2,005) are continuing basic education in both camps. There are 229 primary, middle, and high school teachers employed.

Throughout 2015, opportunities for extra-curricular activities (e.g. sports, music, drama, art, debate, cultural dance, and essay writing) were provided to all students, and at least 80% of students participated during the academic year.

Throughout 2015, all of KnED teachers, head teachers, deputy head teachers, teacher trainers, and curriculum development staff were provided with monthly compensation and operational support according to agreed standards with JRS.

Throughout 2015, all 229 local teacher were trained through teacher trainings to teach, manage, and develop their classes by local trainers and JRS. Additionally, relevant capacity building trainings were provided to designated KnED management and non-teaching staff based on specific needs.

Curriculum development was a signifcant adjustment made in the camps. Both students and teachers adjusted well to the changes in curriculum design and contents for Burmese, English, Maths, and Social Studies.

SERVICE

Naw Jubel, a teacher and a mother of 3 girls, is currently serving as a Deputy Head Teacher and Myanmar subject teacher at the Middle School in Ban Mae Surin Refugee camp (Camp 2). She expressed her feelings about her career as a teacher saying "I see teaching as a happy thing and it is a gift, and I try my best as a teacher.
"While serving as a teacher, I received General Teacher Trainings and Subject Specific Teacher Trainings provided by JRS. I gained more knowledge and experiences and was given a chance to be invited by trainers for subject trainings. I received trainings related to school management that enables me to understand more about school management. I become more aware about the responsibilities of a Deputy Head Teacher and I was able to assist my colleague teachers in my school. I love teaching. It has value. It is a job to nurture the youth and our future leaders."

Fr. Thomas Smolich SJ visits a JRS supported school on the border

On the Thailand & Myanmar Border

Outreach on the Shan border

Shan State is the largest state in Myanmar and borders Thailand in the northwest. Longstanding internal fighting in Shan between ethnic groups and the army led many to flee for Thailand. JRS provides financial support to three community-based education programmes; a nursery school, primary school, and night classes for Shan refugee students from Krung Jor camp in Wieng Haeng.

In 2015, educational opportunities were supported for 215 students at Lak Tang Primary School, 135 students at Krung Jor Nursery School, and 194 students at English night classes in Krung Jor Camp. Beyond primary level JRS offered scholarships, 7 in 2015, to Shan and Lahu refugee students to continue their secondary education in Thai schools.

JRS plans to provide financial support to teachers from Lak Tang Primary School to study and obtain a teaching certificate, which is recognised by the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE).

We have made considerable progress in transferring the management responsibility of the livelihood projects in both Lak Tang Primary School and Mary's House Orphanage. JRS is implementing the strategies to successfully exit the project in March 2016.

MAE SOT

Sharing a border with Myawaddy of Burma/Myanmar, the Mae Sot district of Tak province, a north western province of Thailand, is notable as a trade hub as well as its substantial population of both Burmese migrants and refugees. Located near by Mae La Temporary Shelter, the largest officially refugee camp in Thailand, that hosts approximately 44,000 refugees from Burma/ Myanmar, the city has long been used as a site for community-based organizations (CBOs) and international aid agencies who provided support for both the migrants and refugees.

JRS remains one of the few international NGO's working with the migrant population in Mae Sot and one of very few organizations working in the surrounding rural communities. JRS aims to provide durable solutions by establishing sustainable livelihoods, income generating activities and capacity building of migrants in order to serve their own communities. We continue to advocate towards integration of migrants into the local Thai community, equal opportunities granted for men and women and to avoid aid dependency.

JRS has also been the only organization with a consistent presence in the immigration and police detention centers since 2006, providing food and non-food items to detainees, and working towards improved detention conditions.

230 beneficiaries received training in sewing, basic computer training, and other income-generating activities.

JRS supported livelihoods on the border in Mae Sot

ACCOMPANIMENT

"I personally want to thank JRS for helping me out through the grocery shop and follow up support for my household's income generating activitity." - Mae Sot Beneficary

"My family is very poor. If I didn't get the scholarship from JRS, my mom would not be able to support me to go to school. I almost gave up all my hope to continue my study but getting the scholarship made me so happy."
-Shan Beneficary

ADVOCACY

To ensure access to education opportunities of the Shan and Lahu refugees and sustainability of the Lak Tang Primary School after the project exits, JRS, in close partnership with local Thai education authorities advocated successfully for this JRS - supported school to be under the jurisdiction of a local Thai school and teach in line with the Thai curriculum.

Thailand

Urban Refugee Program in Bangkok

Asylum seekers and refugees in Bangkok face significant difficulties in the quest of durable solutions. As Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, asylum seekers and refugees are not recognized nor protected under Thai law.

Instead,they are regarded as illegal immigrants and subject to arrest, detention ,and deportation under the Thai Immigration Act of 1979. As a result, asylum seekers and refugees have extremely limited access to healthcare, education, employment, and social services.

Overall the policies and practices of Thailand's military government are resulting in severely restrictive and punishing conditions for urban refugees.

This challenging situation is exacerbated by the immensely long waiting periods imposed by UNHCR for Refugee Status Determination (RSD). Although UNHCR states that the average waiting time for the first RSD interview is 2 years, most asylum seekers, especially those from Pakistan, are made to wait 3 – 4 years. In addition, the RSD results are taking up to 2 years to be released.

Once recognized as refugees, the process towards resettlement may take another few years. All this means that it can take 8 years or more before a refugee arrives at a durable solution

In 2015, the number of asylum seekers and refugees seeking sanctuary in Bangkok remains substantially high. As of end November 2015, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees'(UNHCR) office in Bangkok has reported that there are 1,733 refugees and 7,294 asylum seekers registeredin the urban areas of Thailand.

The overwhelming majority originates from Pakistan, mainly Pakistani Christians and Ahmadi Muslim fleeing religious and sectarian violence incited by extremist elements in their homeland. Other major groups include Vietnamese religious and ethnic minorities, Syrians and Palestinians who fled the war in Syria, Somalis, and Sri Lankans.

A large number of smuggled or trafficked Somalis, particularly single females who have suffered gender-based violence as well as others who escaped social unrest and clan-based violence in Somalia, continue to be seen in Bangkok.

ADVOCACY & ACCOMPANIMENT

JRS piloted a Skill Building income generating acitivity for asylum seekers and refugees in Bangkok.

"I will never forget about this training project, because I improved something that will help me in future. I can say I achieved a good goal through this training and I really thank Elisa (URP caseworker) and the director who made this training possible. I wish I would be able to attend this training again. Thank you so much."

-Somali woman

SERVICE

1,296 registered for JRS services, 892 (M=417, F=475) helped with intensive casework and regular financial assistance, 932 (M=471, F=461)received emergency assistance .

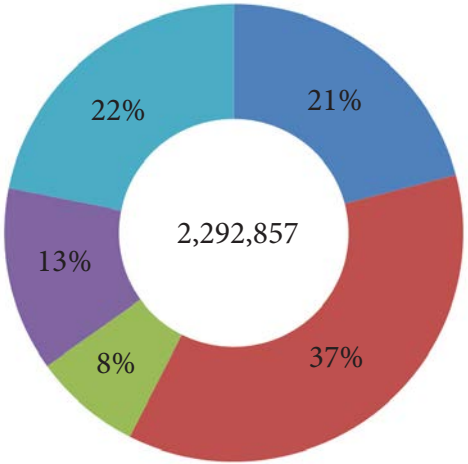
751(M=320, F=431) received psychosocial support through counselling, community visits and referrals.

Staff of the Urban Refugee Programme in Bangkok

JRS

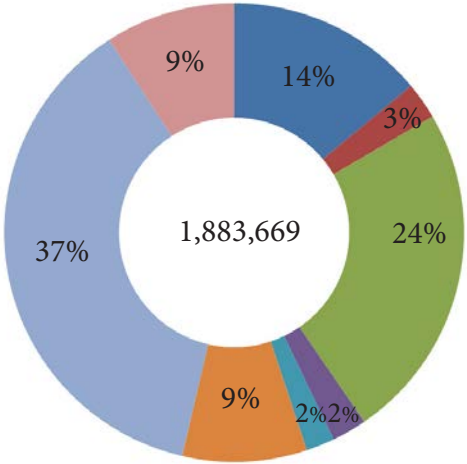
Financial summary

SOURCES OF ASIA PACIFIC INCOME



- 21% Private Individuals, foundation & corporations ($479,721)
- 37% Caritas Network Catholic agencies ($838,525)
- 8% Institutional Donor ($174,934)
- 13% Jesuit Network & Sources ($298,312)
- 22% NGOs and Other Income ($501,365)

ASIA PACIFIC EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY



- 14% Operation Support Cost ($263,214)
- 3% Advocacy and protection ($48,662)
- 24%Emergency ($449,743)
- 2%Livelihoods ($46,279)
- 2%Other Support ($37,576)
- 9%Psycosocial ($165,304)
- 37%Education ($700,328)
- 9%Administrative cost ($172,263)

JRS
www.jrsap.org/donate

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