

Comparative Analysis of Development Aid Modalities and Institutional Architecture between the North-South and South-South Development Cooperation-Perspectives from Donor Recipients

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Abstract

The modalities of development cooperation saw drastic changes over the last decades when fast-emerging economies of the global south entered the business. Therefore, aid no longer rests solely on the global north with the global south being the recipient. In this light, authors compared the modalities of development aid of the north-south with the emerging South-South development cooperation (SSDC) based on the perspective of donor recipients. The seminar is titled “China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation Policy & African Agricultural Technology Extension and Transfer Mechanisms”, held in Beijing, China. Delegates argued that donor support from the SSDC and NSDC (North South Development Cooperation) comes with varied features and similarities; Firstly, the NSDC is monetarists and characterized with stringent conditionality of fiscal discipline, thus maintaining and sustaining macroeconomic stability in a given country, whereas the emerging SSDC aid is without strings and conditionalities, therefore, SSDC supports small schemes of social productive sectors in the area of health, education, infrastructure, agriculture without strings of macroeconomic performance. Also, aid from NSDC is channeled through institutions such as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), UN, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nation Development program (UNDP), whereas aid from the SSDC is received by the government ministries. Secondly, the study acknowledged the leading role played by China as an aid donor among the BRICS. China provides various forms of aids to developing world especially African countries in the form of concessional loans, grants, technology transfer, and capacity building among others. Its trade and investment projects are not without strings and conditionalities nor does it pursue a neo-colonialism interest, unlike the NSDC, which uses transparency, good governance, microeconomic as basis for the qualification or otherwise for aid. However, both the NSDC and SSDC puts premium as regards to proper use of funds by recipients, thus strict mechanisms for proper monitoring and evaluation. Non-interference in recipient’s political and domestic issues is not a condition for Aid for SSDC, it’s a mutual business and friendship that author’s found as an important consideration. Finally, the SSDC is expected to emulate the positive side of the NSDC since has a lot to learn from how aid and grants are disbursed.

Keywords: South-South, Development, Cooperation, North-South Development, Aid, Perspective

1.0 Introduction

The discourse on the modalities and effectiveness of development aid has recently caused uproar among scholars. The pandemonium and debate tend to surge in the face of the intensification of the South-South Development Cooperation (SSDC) as against the traditional North-South Development Cooperation (NSDC). Conventionally, most development aid were sourced from developed economies, particularly the regular donors, including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and European Commissions’ International Cooperation and Development (Europe-AID), United Kingdom Department for International Development (UK-AID) etc., and were often directed to the developing economies mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia. Lately however, some of the fast-emerging economies of the developing countries, like China, Brazil, India, Russia, and South-Africa (BRICS) started executing programs and projects mainly designed to fasten the economic development in the poorer countries within the global South. The reason for this new paradigm of development aid is associated with solidarity and common history. SK Mohanty (2015) opined that the SSDC emerged strongly because most of the participant shares similar colonial ties, they are generally poverty stricken, and bedeviled with social ills leading to underdevelopment, hence preferred to be called development ‘partners’ instead of ‘donors’ as used by the NSDC.

Whichever way it is Christine, the question on the modalities for effective aid delivery has always been put forward. Barder (2009) proposed that effective aid can be achieved through transparency and accountability among the donors, intermediaries, and the recipients. This brings to light the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across the sub-region of recipient countries pushing for transparency from the stakeholders in charge of aid disbursement. The civil societies in the developing countries have repeatedly criticized the way aid is often

used as a neo-colonial tool by the NSDC –imposing policy conditional loans to developing countries and tying aid to commercial, political and military interests of donors. In contrast, SSDC is often presumed to be based on principles of commonality rather than on adjustment recipe. For instance, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), a civil society base in Ghana, affirms during their Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that, “South-South cooperation on development aims to observe the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, equality among development partners, and a respect for independence, national sovereignty, cultural diversity, identity and local content” (AAA, 2008). These features, the civil society added, will ensure that the SSDC be allowed to play an important role in international development cooperation, making it a valuable complement to NSDC.

Therefore, lots of efforts are being made to support the CSOs in their quest to ensuring aid accountability and transparency, and this explains why their opinions are highly regarded. More than a decade ago, there was considerable funding for projects to strengthen CSOs in developing countries. More so, there has been much discussion on how to modify the UK-AID’s ‘drivers-of-change’ approach (DFID, 2005). Recently, the Chinese government through the China-Africa Development Fund (CADF) has organized various seminars and workshop, both in Africa and in China to unearth and understand delegate’s perceptions and expectation of their development aids in Africa. Most of the topics discussed in these conference centers on understanding the nature, shortcomings, and the potential of the SSDC against the NSDC. The conference provides opportunities for ideas sharing and opinions on aid expectations between the SSDC led by China and donor recipient mostly from Africa and Asia. This is done in order to strengthen the CSO advocacy for better aid approach and effectiveness, whether South-South or North-South cooperation. The paper examines the modalities and expectations of SSDC and NSDC, in the perspective of African delegates in Beijing conferences on China-Africa Agriculture Technology transfer, organized and held in China Agricultural University, Beijing, China.

2.0 The traditional ODA: The North-South Development Cooperation (NSDC)

The International Development Cooperation Policy has been an old age issue since Development studies first emerged as a subject in the second half of the twentieth century. After World War II, scholars and practitioners sought to understand the causes of poverty and underdevelopment in a more systematic and sustained way. In this regards the Marshall plan and Marshall aid emerged in order to find solutions to the sustenance of development and welfare of the populace in relation to the developing world with emphasis on poverty reduction and improving human development.

Aidwatch (2008) summarized the history of the traditional development aid from the global north to the south. According to them, aid is as old as colonialism. At the early stage of colonization, aid money from the western governments was in the form of loans. Although not enough for genuine economic development, due to lack of accountability and sincere objectives, they usually benefited urban elites and colonial business interest. Between 1944 and 1946, the United Nations, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were established to play an intermediary role in helping developing countries to industrialize like the Western countries. This came with a lot of promises from the successes achieved by implementing the Marshall Plan in Europe; however, the plans were disastrous for countries in Africa.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, many African countries obtained their independence. The lack of industrialization in the newly independent countries necessitated that poverty reduction should hold greater importance in aid programs. By 1970s, a more human approach was adopted. Development aid then focused on social consideration through the human development indices (health, education, income) rather than on macroeconomic growth. However, the recession of the 1980s and debt crisis associated with it compelled the western donors to force major economic reforms (structural adjusted programs) in SSA. This was achieved through a set of aid conditionality dictated by their intermediaries (World Bank and IMF). Many studies have found that the structural changes did not lead to economic development in Africa; rather it led to more poverty and hardship among the masses.

Many more policy changes were implemented afterward. These included the imposition of net Official Development Assistance (ODA) and that about 0.7% of GNI of OECD countries should be devoted to aiding. There was also a Paris declaration in 2005 where about 91 countries made a joint agreement on aid effectiveness. Most recently, major attention has been on the sustainable development goal which focused on environmental protection and provision of public goods. The policy shift of traditional donors who turned attention to the provision of global goods due to limited budget and resources have led to the shrinking support for domestic progress in partner countries to support for International cooperation.

While the traditional North-South development paradigm and their paradoxical tendencies are seen. (Fues, 2015) observed that, the practices of traditional donors and rising powers seem to be gradually converging with the modalities of the emerging donors. He stipulates that member countries of OECD are opening up to the notion of mutual gain and are questioning the traditional concept of ODA, a debate that could lead to the copying of the South-south cooperation.

2.1 Emerging Donors: The South-South Development Cooperation (SSDC)

The emergence of South-South Cooperation was not surprising as it came when the over dependence of NSDC aid was not bringing the needed improvement in both human and economic development in Africa and Asia. It was born in the 1950s in the context of the common struggle of former colonies to attain genuine independence and development. The Bandung conference in 1955 brought together 29 countries from Asia and Africa to promote economic and cultural cooperation in the Asian-African region “on the basis of mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty.” This pioneering South-South conference paved the way for the rise of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) in 1961 and the Group of 77 in 1964.

The major contributors of the SSDC are the newly formed BRICs economies – Brazil, Russia, India, and China – with 40% of the world’s population spread out over three continents. They already account for 25% of global gross domestic product (GDP). Goldman Sachs reckons that these four emerging economies could collectively surpass the output of the Group of Seven wealthy nations by 2032, with China becoming the world’s largest economy before 2030.

In terms of official development assistance (ODA), the developed countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) continue to be the source of most international development assistance contributing about US\$121.5 billion in 2008. But the shares of non-DAC contributors have been rising, especially from middle-income developing countries such as China and India. The aid projects within the BRICS are oriented towards agriculture, industry, infrastructure, education and medical health care. By the end of 2009, China alone had provided aid to 161 countries and more than 30 international and regional organizations, for the total volume of US\$39 billion in the form of grants (16 billion), interest-free loans (12 billion) concessional loans (IOSC-PRC, 2011). China is the highest donor in the South-South Cooperation.

2.1.1 China Development in perspective

China has long been an aid provider since the 1950s when the South-South Cooperation emerged. Although the increase in China’s foreign aid has a remarkable implication for the Global Aid Architecture, its development finance generally diverges from an OECD model and standards in terms of norms, definitions, and principles (Huang, 2011).

The history of the Chinese aid system can be divided into two phases: the first period between the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the age of economic reform (1949-78), and the second period is after China’s opening to the rest of the world in 1978. From the 1950s to 1970s ideology was the most important factor influencing China’s aid policy. It was during this time countries were engaged in the *Third World* war, thus fighting against imperialism and colonialism, in those periods, China regarded the Third World as an important ally in an International United Front against imperialism and colonialism (Burke et al., 2007). Specifically, the Africa countries strongly supported China bid for world power. For this reason, China provided more aid to other African countries and exported the ideology of socialist society as against the capitalist system of the NSDC (Li, 2008).

In a swift development, the Chinese government has started to institutionalize and professionalize their development Cooperation, separating them from purely political and ideological transfer to the commercial transaction such as trade and foreign direct investment (Schulz, 2013). Chinese aid programs and cooperation activities are now aiming at capacity building, demonstration centers, expert technical guidance and consultation, seminars and south-south cooperation (Tang 2016). On the other hand, despite converging practices, China aid differs from the traditional donor in their preferences and joint learning experience. While the OECD members and smaller providers outside the OECD, follows the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation modalities set up in 2012, by contrast, the important actors from the South particularly the ‘Big Three’ (China, India, and Brazil) seem to incline on their own way, and they have recently established an informal network named the ‘Delhi process’ following the conference held in the Indian capital in April 2013.

2.2 Western (North) and Southern (South) Development aid

China foreign aid is founded on ‘Five Principles for Peaceful Coexistence’ as presented by Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference in 1955. The pivot of these principles emphasizes the centrality of mutual non-interference, quality, mutual benefit (win-win) and South-South solidarity, however, western donors always impose various conditions on recipient countries when providing aid (Cabello et al, 2008). Therefore, in the 1980s, this practice came under fire, as the aid from the traditional donors clung to discredit conditionality hampering the promotion, coordination, and alignment of economic development (Wood, 2008).

Since the 1990s, DAC members have emphasized the protection of Human rights and democratic governance as vital features for a recipient country, and always have asserted that their aid would bring about both political and socioeconomic progress. Southern providers institutionalized and professionalized their national system for development cooperation, thus separating them from purely commercial transactions such as trade and foreign direct investments (Schulz, 2013). Yet this conditionality never promoted economic growth or

good governance, but only created mayhem, political unrest and instability as witnessed in Africa, a case in point is the political unrest in Libya, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and DR. Congo. In fact, it can be a great burden on the recipient countries as estimates indicate that conditioned aid costs Africa about US\$1.6 billion per year (Senyange, 2010).

Finally, the FDIC (2014) reviewed and compared the features of development aid from the south-south cooperation and north-south cooperation. The review has shown that the basic approach used by the OECD-led NSDC is different from the China-led SSDC. Other studies have shown that the NSDC came as a means to compensate the developing countries from the economic redundancy caused by colonialism, and the major focus is poverty eradication, human development and most recently sustainable development. Most of the loans are transfer through intermediaries such as the World Bank, IMF, UN, etc. However, the SSDC led by China; is based on solidarities and common history. A major focus is mutual economic development and learning experience, and loans are usually awarded directly to the government. The study of the FDIC and others on development aid has focused on official data and statements of the aid donors and the opinions of the civil societies, but not on the perspective of the aid recipients. The study, therefore, compared the modalities of development as perceived by the recipients and their expectations from the Northern and Southern donors. The study will help educate, inform and further strengthen the advocacy for better aid approach and effectiveness in developing countries.

3.0 Methodology

To achieve the objective of the study, a qualitative research method was employed. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was drawn from relevant textbooks, academic journals and scholarly articles related to the topic. Primary data was drawn from in-depth interviews to foreign delegates on three-week Seminar on 'China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation Policy & African Agricultural Technology Extension and Transfer Mechanisms' in Beijing, China. Participant observation, face-to-face interviews, focus-group interviews, questionnaires, and member checking were used as data collection tools. Delegates hailed from African countries including; Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia, who are mostly aid recipients from the SSDC and NSDC. The discussion was held at China Agricultural University, Beijing, China in March 2016. A total of 16 delegates participated in the study and the data were analyzed using thematic interpretations.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Delegates Perception of the Modalities of aid from South-South and North-South Cooperation

4.1.1 Forms of Aid and Institutional Architecture

Many of the delegates interviewed agreed that China aid comes in different forms (both monetary and non-monetary), and are transferred to government, ministries, departments and agencies. The China development aid includes concessional loans, grants, capacity building and technology transfer, trade and investment projects. Representative from Zambia confirmed that although his country receives different forms of aids from China, however, grants and loans are the biggest. In terms of institutional architecture, all the delegates revealed that the aid to their countries from China passes through the government ministries, and are audited.

However, aids from NSDC are normally in the form of financial support of the tangible project and are transferred through intermediaries. The Tanzanian delegate observed that aid from the developed countries, are mostly in monetary loans and grants, and road construction takes the biggest share, but funds do not always pass through the government agencies. Zambian participant cited an example of the EU-AID agency which has a clear preference to paying companies to do road construction to avoid the bureaucracy and mistrust in the Government. Respondents revealed that Japan, being a member of OECD follows the modalities of the North donors by releasing funds and loans to African countries through the African Development Bank. The USAID supports critical infrastructural development in the Agriculture sector through the construction of Dams and Canals, while the Nordic countries give monetary support in the construction of health and education facilities. The intermediaries identified to play a major role in aid transfer in the delegate countries includes; international NGOs, the World Bank, IFAD, FAO, UNDP, ADB, IMF, and they work with local people. In some cases, multilateral companies engage the local people while the responsible government ministry signs the financial agreement. However, in some cases, consultants are being used, but this seems to be creating operational bottlenecks.

4.1.2 Aid Project Implementation and transparency

Questions on how projects arising through aids are implemented and how transparent they have been, was a focal point. Analysis show that, 75% of respondents says, that in SSDC, project implementation often comes with the influx of labor from the donor country. These workers are not experts, and they do works that can be done by locals. A respondent from Ethiopia opined that, there is too much Chinese labor involvement in project execution in his country, but the implementation is faster largely owing to less consultation. Due to

mismanagement and questionable governance, transparency is always an issue. Most Chinese sponsored projects are expected to be self-sponsoring after a brief period of time; hence stakeholders tend to engage in dubious activities to start making a profit as soon as possible.

Contrarily, in the NSDC there is a broader consultation among stakeholders which leads to delays in implementation. In many cases, experts from the international NGOs are brought in to execute or supervise projects. Projects usually have the specific time span, but funding can be withdrawn due to political misunderstandings. In general, the NSDC is regarded to be more transparent than the SSDC, since objectives, budget and timeframes are clearly articulated at the inception of projects.

4.1.3 Aid monitoring and evaluation

The delegates were asked about their perception on project monitoring and evaluation of the aid from the two donors, about 61% says projects from the SSDC funds are given directly to the central government; do not often perform proper monitoring to ensuring that funds are used for the intended purposes. More so, only small scale projects are selected. In Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, and Malawi, delegates stated that the South-South cooperation selects a limited number of districts and the selection criteria are only based on small-scale projects at the expense of large-scale projects, which has the needed economies of scale. They suggested that, large scale projects should be selected at the expense of small scale since the former can absorb a chunk of unemployed youth, thereby leading to a reduction in poverty and enhancing the lives of local people.

With regards to participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E), results show 95% of respondents prefer the procedure of the NSDC projects and posited that the SSDC can emulate. Furthermore, some aspects from NSDC should be considered by the SSDC, such as; money taken directly to local leaders in the various districts instead of the central government. They gave an example with the case of Pea-Pea village in Tanzania, where funds go directly to the demonstration farm, thus eliminating delays associated with governmental bureaucratic bottlenecks which make the project more successful than others which receive funds through the central government. Some western donors have achieved greater success through the PM&E conducted by the intermediaries. For instance, an event was started by UNDP acquiring marketing information with plans to connect markets to producers in Tanzania. This event was initiated long after they discovered that market information and linkages are the major constraints limiting the success of their aid program. An Australian agency had also tried to establish a storage facility after conducting a PM&E. Therefore, the delegates concluded that these positive modalities of the NSDC could serve as a learning experience for the SSDC.

4.1.4 Aid and Neocolonialism

When asked if they perceive the Chinese have a neo-colonialist interest, they were unanimous in their response of a big no. However, they opined that , China being the largest donor from the global south and imostly business oriented and profit driven by the promise of mutual gains (win-win) with African countries. A delegate from Tanzania says *“Chinese led South-South Cooperation is about mutual benefits because both partners are developing countries and therefore knows each other strengths and weaknesses and are also “friends” having been colonized by the western superpowers, they can analyze the socioeconomic position of their countries and try to improve them. The project ownership is higher for the target group and, usually, the implementation is done together with the local people, also if any challenge arises they are also resolved together. For example, in Tanzania, the SSDC tried to involve farmers themselves to get different types of seeds which are available as well as assist with research in fields such as fishing in local areas and also to improve productivity. Often, researchers working with farmers know what the situation is and can make better recommendations which would create a higher profit”*

This is, however, unlikely for the NSDC which the respondents perceived to be aid driven. It was observed that in contrast to the “friend to friend” cooperation of SSDC, the NSDC is like “master to servant” relationship. In general, the SSDC was perceived as a better aid than the NSDC, since it is based on mutual benefits between donors and the recipients. It is not only just about dictating and conditionality but about mutual development and learning experience. It is, however, shocking that despite the irregularities associated with the SSDC projects, the respondents still prefer it to the NSDC. This could imply that respect, friendship, and mutual business commitment are held more important than aid transparency and better management by the African delegates. However, the delegates expect more improvement from the SSDC.

4.2 Delegates Perceptions of Aid Expectations from Recipient Countries

The delegates did not hide their expectations from both the SSDC and NSDC aid. However, they re-emphasized that the SSDC should learn the positive side of the NSDC. Among all the items put forward during the interview session, issues on culture interchange, incentives, consultations, labor and capacity building were pointed to need more improvement.

A respondent from Malawi stated unequivocal that the NSDC has enhanced communication between donors and local beneficiaries, for instance, donor countries from the western countries, notably the Britain and France have cultural centers in Malawi which enhance communication between the local people and the donors. He,

however, expect to see a similar cultural interchange from the SSDC especially China, since it can greatly enhance communication leading to better planning, implementation, evaluation and sustainability of programs and projects.

In addition, another participant called on South-South donor partners to expand the coverage on districts to reach a larger person and to provide funds for large-scale projects which have the tendency to absorb the unemployed youth. He said also that they need to improve incentives and decentralization of projects. The issue of decentralization is that each district is supposed to establish their projects. So funds must be allocated be directly to the various districts so that they can have their autonomy and draw its own budget.

As part of the recommendation, participants called for an improvement in the consultation between South-South countries. For example; one respondent stated that if China, Brazil, and India can share information and findings easily with the recipient countries, then it can be beneficial for everyone. This is a feature of NSDC which he would like to see being adopted by the SSDC.

They, also, advocated that the SSDC aid should be allowed for “free hands”, thus recipient countries can use local labor for project implementation.” Excess labor import from the southern donor should be stopped” a respondent emphasized. This will give way for the local labor force, especially farmers to be employed. However, all the delegates agreed that few experts are needed to fine-tune the implementation of projects.

Also, analysis shows that almost 100% of respondents identified the need to tackle the persistent challenges facing the implementation of projects in their countries. Generally, the challenges include limited funding, lack of storage facilities for agricultural products and marketing, poor human capacity. For example, one delegate said that Irish potato is now a cash crop, it produces a good income, but the market can be anywhere, if donors could help farmers develop the crop, it can be easier to market.” Often researchers’ working with farmers knows the challenges faced by local farmers and therefore more capacity building should be encouraged.

5.0 Conclusion

The emergence of the South-South development cooperation has opened a new paradigm of aid transfer in developing countries; it has also led to an uproar in development discourse. In many circles, it is termed as the new neo-colonialism from the spectacle of the global north, and some renowned scholars in the area of aid. However, Africa recipients agreed with the Chinese donors that their aid is business oriented and profit driven, premised on mutual gains (win-win). Contrarily to the North-South development cooperation which is purely an aid-driven, the SSDC is considered a better donor by the African delegates. Although the NSDC is more organized and transparent, it comes with conditionalities which sort to achieving structural transformation, and interferes in local politics thereby limiting national sovereignty.

The main features for the SSDC and NSDC though showed differences in approach to aid disbursement, however, some similarities could not also be ruled out. Some major features were seen in the following areas; Firstly, the NSDC tied aid with conditionally to democracy and good governance as pre-requisite for aid to lower middle-income countries. This is often seen in most cycles as political interference and an invasion in their domestic affairs and state sovereignty. Attempts to democratize in order to qualify for NSDC aid usually leads to political instability as witnessed in some African countries such as Libya, Egypt, etc. Whereas the SSDC is free from political conditionality and therefore non-interference in domestic matters.

Secondly, there exist broader consultations among partners of both the recipient and donor agencies in the preparation and of projects and programs from the NSDC leading to delays in the implementation in most cases critical social intervention usually out-lift its usefulness. But in the case of SSDC, there is, less of those consultation and bureaucratic bottlenecks leading to fast and easier implementation which ultimately lead to the timely intervention in certain critical areas and the value of social interventions are usually guaranteed.

However, inadequate, poor consultation and monitoring been the greatest challenge to the success of the SSDC aid project within the recipient African countries, aid recipients from the Global south, especially within the African enclave, prefers much quicker project implementations. Also, NSDC donor gives nonconcessionary loans, whilst the SSC donor gives concessional loans for capacity building, technology transfer trade, and investment projects.

To this end, authors posited that, based on the preference from recipients of aid, there is the urgent demand for broader consultations, monitoring, and evaluation, an increase in the level of participation by government and local people in projects and programs management in order to ensure sustainability of those interventions. Also, funding, capacity building and marketing challenges should be addressed through participation for mutual gains. For instance, some newly discovered cash crops such as Irish potato and sisal triumph well in Tanzania, Malawi, and some other African countries, and that attention should be given so as to support its mass production so as to generate good income since it has good market anywhere.

In terms of capacity building, donors should assist farmers to develop the local crops instead of imposing foreign seeds and technologies without recourse to the African terrain. Finally, participants expressed a preference for the SSDC to the NSDC despite the many irregularities. But suggests that friendship, non-

interference in domestic political affairs is some of the strengths of SSDC and must be maintained. A participant from Zimbabwe opined that “*if the NSDC had done to Africa what the SSDC led by China is doing today Africa would not be mere recipient from donor community*”, The SSDC is still a mushroom in the donor community, and as a matter of fact has to learn the positive sides of NSDC, this will avert costly mistakes thereby bring about aid efficiency and effectiveness.

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