



Position

# Cultural education is coproduction

Developing extracurricular and school cultural education effectively

The BKJ position papers comment on social challenges from a cultural education perspective. They present relevant arguments and explain why cultural education practitioners are calling for educational and participatory equity for children and young people.

[www.bkj.nu/position](http://www.bkj.nu/position)

BKJ, Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung e. V. (German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning), is Germany's umbrella organisation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning in schools, cultural institutions, non-formal education and youth work. BKJ is a federation of more than 50 non-governmental organisations active in all fields of Arts Education and Cultural Learning on regional, national and international level. BKJ is the German government's key partner in the field of Arts Education and is concentrating on advocacy in the fields of foreign affairs, culture, education and youth policy.

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# Introduction

Thanks to its underlying theories and potentials, cultural education has attracted increased attention in recent years, both in educational debates and public discourse more broadly. This has generated increased developmental momentum, reflected in the many successful initiatives and programmes that have been implemented. This poses many challenges to the promoters of cultural education both in school and beyond. However, the primary objective remains the same: to grant all children and young people access to culture and education across the board and in a sustainable way.

Cultural education programmes in schools and outside open and support the growth and development of children and young people, each in their own way. Hence, it is necessary to consider and preserve the autonomous qualities and potential of school and extracurricular cultural education. At the same time, BKJ firmly believes that all areas of cultural education need to cooperate and connect to ensure that reliable, accessible and flexible cultural education opportunities be made available to all children and young people. In these terms, cultural education must be understood as a coproduction that relies on a robust and supportive framework. •



## **Principles of cultural education**

### **Cultural education is a human right**

By right, all children should have unimpeded access to culture and education, and this right has been enshrined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 10 of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It has been made legally binding in Germany through Basic Law (Article 2 – Right to Free Development of the Individual and Article 5 – Freedom of the Arts), the German Child and Youth Welfare Act (SGB VIII § 11) and the constitutions of the Federal States.

### **Cultural education helps children and young people grow in their educational biography and personal development.**

Art, culture, play and media are specific means of individual expression. Children and young people use them to learn about the world, not only to understand the world but also to reflect on it and shape it. Through art, culture, play and media children and young people develop their identities and find their position in the world. They develop skills that help them cope with the challenges ahead. They use artistic and cultural means of expression to articulate their point of view and contribute their input to society. Programmes of cultural education meet children and adolescents' need for self-development, personal involvement and sense of community. At the same time, they support young people in developing skills such as creativity, the ability to express oneself and take criticism, as well as improving self-confidence, tolerance and a sense of social responsibility. Consequently, cultural education promotes personal development as well as social, political and cultural participation.

## Cultural education is self-education in manifold informal, non-formal and formal education processes.

BKJ and its members also understand cultural education to comprise emotional-affective, cognitive-intellectual, physical-sensory and social-cultural processes. This understanding sees cultural education to be central to the principle of self-education in the sense of an individuals' capacity for autonomous cultivation of experience, relations and actions.

Children and young people educate themselves wherever they are able to exploit areas of discovery, experience and development. The principle of self-determination is derived from that, putting the focus on the needs and interests of children and young people.

Diversity in programmes and institutions of cultural education with all its artistic disciplines, formats, organisational structures, venues and professions is needed to meet the different needs and interests of children and young people.

## ➔ Cultural education as advocated by the members of BKJ is characterised by enormous diversity in terms of content and structure.

- It comprises all artistic disciplines such as music and rhythm, drama, theatre and dance, play and circus, fine arts, design and architecture, media and digitality, storytelling and literature.
- It has manifold formats such as short-term workshops, medium-term projects or long-term courses, creative programmes, visits to institutions, events or festivals, creative and artisanal work, historic research or aesthetic exploration.
- It is provided by a plethora of institutions and facilitated by many structures: public, civil society and private institutions, permanent organisations (e.g. museums, theatres, music schools, art schools for young people, libraries, opera and concert halls), in clubs and initiatives, in institutions of cultural and media education, in youth and (socio-) cultural centres, in schools and day-care centres, in mobile programmes, in youth scenes and in public places, in public-private partnerships and in families.
- It is provided and/or supported by manifold professions and protagonists: cultural and media educators, cultural mediators and managers, teachers and educators, youth and social workers, artists and cultural players, full-time providers and volunteers, free-lance and self-employed providers, friends and family members.

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## **Self-understanding and potentials: extracurricular cultural education**

Extracurricular cultural education programmes offer children and young people self-determined and, frequently, self-organised spaces for aesthetic experience in which they can begin their cultural and educational journeys. There exists a rich diversity of providers and approaches to this. **Diversity of providers see page 7**

Public and independent non-governmental providers with their specific principles such as relevance to the youth's living environment, focus on the individual's interests and strengths, diversity and inclusion, voluntariness and participation put their particular mark on the character of cultural education they offer. These principles apply equally to cultural education programmes offered by art and cultural institutions.

Hence, extracurricular cultural education programmes relate immediately to children's and young people's current living situation by directly addressing their needs. Its concepts are flexible and open in terms of method and content; its practice is oriented towards young people's social environment, and it readily encompasses youth and sub-cultures, trends in contemporary art, digital developments and a wide variety of media. It addresses local and global topics and enables inter-cultural as well as international encounters.

Extracurricular cultural education promotes dialogue between different generations: young people and adults meet in changing constellations, often with hardly any hierarchies, which makes it possible for them to explore and challenge different roles and relationships.

Extracurricular cultural education makes use of and creates places characterised by art, culture and creativity. Their aesthetics and atmosphere stimulate education and communication.

Art and culture have always created a sense of identity and community, but they are also a form of criticism and resistance. Extracurricular cultural education provides a platform to raise critical questions and a means to develop individual opinions. In this way, young people are able to develop a social, political, economic or environmental consciousness, build opinions and shoulder responsibility. These are important prerequisites for the co-existence of different generations and cultures, for European and global awareness as well as an introduction to commitment, volunteer work, democratic action and social involvement.

#### **The special importance of scope for development**

Most recent reports on children and young people, including the German Shell Youth Studies, describe how children and young people are increasingly confronted with environments dominated by pressure to perform and to be efficient. Childhood and adolescence are key phases in life during which the individual develops his/her own personality and explores different facets of his/her identity. During this phase of development, it is crucial for the child to be able to pursue activities that are not planned and take place without adult guidance or instruction, that serve no specific purpose and intend no explicit result. This requires:

- Physical space for child and youth culture: real and virtual places for independent and individual development, for exploration and invention, for unguided creative communication and action;
- Temporal space: individual opportunities for self-determined interests and activities as well as free time for leisure and recreation – that is, with the right not to pursue any activities of cultural education;
- Emotional space: for the genuine expression of emotions free from pressure or expectations;
- Open space for children and young people to encounter and experience art and culture in all its diversity in established as well as unusual settings.

## **➔ Guidelines for extracurricular players**

In achieving this, providers of extracurricular cultural education are particularly effective when their programmes for children and young people adhere to the following principles:

- They take responsibility and advocate for the rights and concerns of the younger generation. They understand their own role to be to support the empowerment of children and young people.
- They ensure that places and programmes of cultural education are open and accessible to all children and young people.
- They work tirelessly to ensure that social, cultural, economic and individual obstacles exacerbating or preventing this are eliminated and overcome.
- They continue to develop their social, artistic and educational concepts with other players, thus assuming shared responsibility for improving cultural education in particular through partnership and cooperation with schools. •



Extracurricular  
cultural education  
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rent living situation of  
children and young  
people and meets  
their needs.

# 3

## **Self-understanding and potentials: cultural education in schools**

Empirical research such as the second German Youth Cultural Barometer (Das 2. Jugend-Kultur-Barometer: Keuchel/Larue 2012) shows that without a strong commitment by schools to cultural education inequality of opportunity grows. During the crucial phase of childhood and adolescence, school offers reliable and continuous access to cultural education for at least ten years. Children and young people are able to experience and explore artistic and cultural means of expression, which is important not only for children in whose leisure time activities and family environment art and culture play hardly any role.

Schools benefit society by providing, among other things, qualification, socialisation and legitimation. In other words, they prepare children and young people for the worlds of work, ethics and social responsibility. Cultural education – including media education – is indispensable in enabling schools to achieve this. In particular intra- and extracurricular projects and working groups promote personal development, enhance skills, strengthen the sense of one's place in life and at work, encourage participation and involvement while enriching school life.

Highly qualified specialised teachers in music, art and drama as well as differentiated curricula and sophisticated teaching methodologies ensure a solid general cultural education. This also requires a rich diversity of opportunities for individual artistic practice, reflection of aesthetic experience and theoretical knowledge. This makes the study of artistic subjects in school unique and irreplaceable. Locating cultural, artistic and/or aesthetic content and experiences in other subjects contributes to this. For this reason, cultural and media education methodologies are also applied across the curriculum. Schools that cooperate with extracurricular partners achieve further cross-fertilisation and enhancement: they create additional programmes of cultural education, supporting

encounters in and outside of the classroom and/or the school building.

In this context, the newly in Germany established all-day schools with lessons and other forms of learning in the morning and in the afternoon offer important opportunities. They can offer a rich mix of artistic and cultural programmes developed in cooperation with extracurricular providers and other professions, who together can realise the potential of cultural education in and outside of the school context.

### Guidelines for school players

Schools of all forms are particularly effective when their programmes of cultural education adhere to the following principles:

- They provide a permanent place for art, culture and media in school life and make the necessary resources available; getting all members of the school community involved including parents and non-educational staff as well as cooperating with partners outside the school.
- They firmly include artistic subjects and cultural lessons in general and specialised curricula, both in terms of timing and content, on a continuous and reliable basis. They have qualified teachers teach these subjects. The prerequisite for successful cooperation with extracurricular players of cultural education in all-day schools and local education settings is qualified specialist teachers who are prepared to cooperate and are available as effective partners.

- They develop and realise educational concepts and school programmes for all-day schools that give children and young people more opportunities to learn and participate through multi-faceted cultural access outside the classroom.
- They implement an educational concept in the sense of a broad understanding of education in line with using children and young people, their living environments and development stages as their reference. They also need to include the many ways of learning and principles of youth work and extracurricular cultural education into the school's learning environment and understand the school as a living environment not only for learning but also for children's and young people's lives.
- In cooperation with the school board, they provide adequate rooms and resources required for high-quality artistic and cultural activities.
- They use the opportunities granted by the school laws, as well as their scope for independent action in terms of timetabling and curriculum, to create more opportunities and a wider range of artistic and cultural programmes at school incorporating extracurricular players.

Arts subjects in schools are self-contained and provide a basic level of general cultural education.

# 4

## **Potentials and principles of cooperation**

Empirical research has confirmed that the impact and reach of cultural participation are extended through cooperation between schools and extracurricular partners (e.g. Das 2. Jugend-Kultur-Barometer: Keuchel/Larue 2012) and that extracurricular cultural education and “third learning environments” provide important impetus to the education and inclusion of everyone (e.g. German Report on Education, Bildungsbericht 2012) complementing formal educational institutions and the family.

Children and young people get the most from cultural education when extracurricular providers and schools cooperate and coordinate their efforts. The more effectively providers are networked and the more naturally they build content-related, methodical and spatial bridges to other areas of life and education the easier it becomes for children and young people not only to participate in cultural education but also to learn to understand art and culture as a consistent principle of life.

Many years of development, trial and reflection on cooperation have shown that cooperation between extracurricular players and schools can lead to challenges as often as crossfertilisation. On the one hand, all protagonists must be prepared to open up, to challenge and to change. On the other hand, responsibilities and tasks can be shared and partners can learn from and with one another.

The partners have different mandates, principles, competences and qualities. All parties therefore need to realise that cooperation does not mean denying differences. The aim is to achieve a productive and open co-existence of school and extracurricular programmes of education without losing the respective individuality.

There is no formula for the conceptual and thematic direction of the programmes that the partners offer, which principles they follow and where their activities will be carried out. The target groups and the corresponding objectives should always serve as a guideline. If necessary, and if it makes sense, cooperation programmes are delivered at school, in the classroom or elsewhere in the school buildings. If suitable and necessary, they can be delivered in a “third place” or during leisure time.

The following chapter describes what is necessary for cooperation between extracurricular players and schools to succeed. Both systems and structures should create these conditions of success themselves to obtain a sustainable and reliable understanding that goes beyond individual commitment or the success of individual projects.

## **Conditions for success for cooperation between extracurricular players and schools**

### **Respect an appreciation**

Effective players overcome reserve and existential fear as much as competitiveness. They are familiar with the logics of their partners’ respective systems and their educational assets. They recognise and appreciate each other’s specific competencies and connect them through professional dialogue. In doing so, they adopt attitudes and a mind-set that generates an open and appreciative understanding of each other – their peculiarities and strengths, their limitations and needs.

### **Shared objectives of education and joint decisions**

Schools and extracurricular players reflect the social and (educational) political hierarchies and decision-making structures in which they are embedded. Both parties are struggling to have their respective approaches to education equally valued. Within a broad appreciation of education, they develop a shared vision and a joint understanding as to how this can be achieved. Their cooperation is organised in such a way that decisions and competences are shared and participatory planning processes are realised – depending on the respective overall conditions and possibilities.

### **Accessibility, transparency and reliability**

All players need to be accessible and responsive to each other. Extracurricular and school partners should adhere to the times, places and forms that are specific to each other’s ways of working, on both management and operational levels, and should carefully respond to their partner’s style and culture of communication. The players should continuously and reliably inform each other and agree on who, what, where, when and how the programme should develop in order for it to meet the needs and the temporal and/or spatial/mobile possibilities of children and young people. (Cooperation) agreements and (framework) contracts can help partners understand each other’s needs and contribute to a greater commitment from each side. Regardless of this, cooperation requires every partner – extracurricular and school – to play their designated role and make their contribution to implementation.

### **Facilitation, consultation and process supervision**

Schools and extracurricular providers should seek and make use of consultants and facilitators who not only promote communication and the effective organisation of cultural cooperation projects but who can also support individual institutions and their processes of change.

### **Breaking into social zones and education landscapes**

Cooperation is not only designed as a bilateral concept. The understanding of education that should be deployed in such partnerships will embrace how children and young people perceive their social environment, how they relate to their parents and friends, which places they create and use and which resources can be mobilised there, as well as how their living environment and previous experiences affect them.

### **Institution building and professionalization**

All players – civil society providers of cultural education, cultural institutions, schools etc. – should consistently evaluate the quality of their work as they develop their organisations and teams to work in cultural education. This will require the training and professionalization of their workers. This applies to content-related educational questions as well as to changes of structures and processes. Involvement of a maximum of different competences in one organisation or team has proven to be particularly fruitful.

### **Competence and qualification for cooperation**

It is crucial that the adults involved are properly qualified to undertake their roles and responsibilities in their work for

and with children and young people – be it in the fields of art or creativity, organisation or management, education or mediation. Non-educators should be able to understand the specific conditions of education, both in terms of content and method. Qualified educators should be prepared for the self-understanding and general requirements of artistic processes.

All protagonists should be competent collaborators. Therefore, the various professionals involved in cooperation programmes – teachers, principals, artists, cultural and media educators, cultural mediators and managers etc. – should not only know more about and appreciate one another but should also be prepared for cooperative projects and the delicate interaction between professionals and volunteers through adequate, continuous and further training schemes.

In addition, the positive influence, extensive knowledge and the (cultural) competences of parents, peers, volunteers, youth and social workers and other school staff shall be valued and incorporated.

### **Endorsement by management and the entire team**

For the cooperative frameworks and development processes to be sustainable, they must be supported and coordinated by the senior management of the institutions involved. They should regulate the partnerships, make available the resources required, install and ensure quality controls and support communication within the team. Successful cooperation requires human, temporal and financial resources – and a team that shares goals and methods.

### **Awareness of diversity and inclusion**

The design and focus of all structures, processes and practices should encourage diversity and support the inclusion of all. This does not only mean that the educational programmes for children and young people meet these objectives but also that the composition of teams and decision-making bodies reflects the heterogeneous nature of our society.

### **Participation and scope for development**

Through cooperation, education providers offer opportunities for participation and scope for development to children and young people. They promote and value children and youth cultures. They must be responsible advocates of children's and young people's interests, which means, that programmes are developed not only for but first and foremost by children and young people themselves. •

**Interlinked programmes that build content-related, methodical and spatial bridges to other areas of life and education make it easier for children and young people to partake in cultural education.**





## **Improved framework for areas of cooperation**

Public providers of cultural youth education and cultural institutions, private and civil society providers, free-lance cultural educators and artists, day-care centres and schools, families and youth groups etc. are not able to cope with the challenges described above on their own. They need favourable overall conditions and resources. The public sector is responsible for ensuring that children and young people have equal opportunities to participate and equivalent conditions when participating.

Consequently, youth, education and cultural political players need to make the living conditions and needs of children and young people the focus of their activities. This does not mean that socialisation and education are managed and controlled by the public sector, but politics and administration create a framework in which school and extracurricular education players are able to successfully operate in unison.

### **Cultural education needs attention and sustained protection at all levels and by all departments.**

Independent providers of cultural education, public children's, youth and cultural institutions as well as schools need to have adequate resources to deliver the required quality and quantity of work.

This requires continuous financial support to institutions as well as incentives through projects and programmes. To this end, it is necessary to develop viable and sustainable funding strategies – taking into account the limitations imposed by budget cuts in all public programmes. The response of the public sector must

also recognise the independence, plurality and specific needs of extracurricular and school providers of cultural education and promote their cooperation.

Promoting cooperation between different institutions, disciplines and levels does not only require adequate funding of specific programmes as well as qualified, adequately paid and protected creative and educational staff. It also requires resources to develop concepts, mediation processes and institution-building. There must be places to go with adequate resources and assets that can provide consultants, facilitators and process supervisors for practical cooperation. In addition, competent contact persons for cooperation within each institution are required. Moreover, investment is required in the development of specific disciplines, in the continuous and further training of protagonists, in science and research, in exchange and networking, in the development and transfer of models as well as in the development and establishment of quality assurance measures.

### **Cultural education requires cooperation between different levels and departments.**

Generally, politicians and public administrators need to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the areas of youth, education and culture when developing strategies, financing concepts and implementing programmes for cultural education. Local authorities, the Federal States and the Federal Government should not only communicate with each other but exploit every opportunity available, despite restrictions imposed by the German constitution, for cooperation in education and cultural matters. This requires constructive approaches where every department and every level assumes responsibility for meeting its specific mandate

in a way that ensures that cultural education receives appropriate assistance and support. In addition, it is necessary to overcome silo mentalities and to share responsibility in order for providers of cultural education to enjoy funding conditions that facilitate cooperation on a practical level.

### **The federal government has an important role to play in promoting and protecting cultural education.**

It is essential that the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media each obtain and develop their own funding profile for cultural education. In addition, models need to be developed to improve cooperation between these departments taking on board civil society organisations (e.g. Federal associations) as well as the Federal States and local authorities. Their activities should be rooted in a shared Federal education policy and an agreed set of objectives on how the policy should be implemented. Cultural education that creates and supports interaction between non-formal, formal and informal education should be an integral part of the German vision for a society that meets the needs of all its children and young people.

It is the Federal Government's primary responsibility to ensure that tasks in the interest of the central federation are performed, that supra regional and international networks and exchanges are established and that the work of qualified Federal structures is sustainably secured. Its role is to drive forward improvements in quality and professional qualification in cultural education. It should raise the profile of extracurricular and school cultural

education by sponsoring competitions and developing other public relations activities.

The Federal Government should support the creation of nationwide local and regional education landscapes which have cultural education at their heart. It should also promote continuous cultural education programmes in individual Federal States and local communities, which should incorporate the content-related and structural competences of local players and associations of cultural education. The local findings need to be discussed on the Federal level to ensure an exchange of experience and a transfer to other regions as well as from and to other German Federal States and foreign countries.

### **The federal states have the central responsibility for school and extracurricular cultural education.**

The Federal States are responsible for establishing artistic subjects in the timetables in all forms and levels of school as fundamental, autonomous and adequate elements, and that sufficient qualified teachers, both male and female, are available for these subjects. Establishing cultural and aesthetic content in school curricula as well as media education as a cross-functional task is another important goal that needs to be embedded in education at Federal State level and implemented through the development of adequately qualified teachers.

The German Standing Conference of Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education which detailed its recommendations on cultural education in 2013 needs to extend its action plan and to develop suitable strategies and activities to support the Federal States

in meeting their responsibilities. It should also participate in an international exchange of experience. In addition, it is necessary to establish and evaluate how the Federal States implement their agreements and to what extent it might be necessary to make adjustments.

School laws and directives have already established commitments, framework conditions and defined ways through which extracurricular cultural youth education and creative and cultural partners can be incorporated in formal education. They have also detailed how cooperation can be designed, all-day models implemented and cultural school concepts developed. Processes of cultural school development and the advancement of schools towards a cultural or media concept should be promoted. Schools need adequate funding and authorization to be able to implement integrated and supplementary cultural projects on their own responsibility and by their own choice.

The Federal States are responsible for ensuring that infrastructure development and projects of extracurricular cultural education are sponsored by youth welfare, cultural and education policy funds in line with the German Child and Youth Welfare Act (SGB VIII) and their jurisdiction in cultural and educational matters. Cooperation and pilot projects should be supported to explore specific aspects of cultural education, and the results should be incorporated in infrastructure development. These approaches should always include an international dimension – e.g. by promoting the exchange of qualified staff, students and young people.

In addition, the Federal States should ensure basic, continuous and further training of qualified staff (cultural educators, artists and cultural mediators etc.) for cooperation projects. The subject of cooperation should also be firmly embedded in qualification

programmes of basic, continuous and further training for teachers. There is also a need for joint part-time further training for school and non-school staff as well as free-lance providers. The qualification of consultants and facilitators who supervise cooperation and institution-building processes is becoming increasingly important.

## **Local authorities are responsible for cultural education on the ground.**

Local authorities have a particularly important part to play when it comes to promoting art and culture in the youth work sector and cultural education in the cultural sector. The German Association of Cities and Towns professed in its declarations of Aachen and Munich that cultural education is a key responsibility of the local level. Consequently, there are funding commitments that need to be met. Cultural youth work is a mandatory task for local authorities as part of the German Child and Youth Welfare Act (SGB VIII) and cultural provision is a mandatory task as a public service for local authorities.

Local authorities as sponsors of schools need to ensure that all-day schools are extended and local education landscapes developed. They must develop and implement appropriate strategies and secure adequate resources. Cultural education needs to be strongly represented in these strategies and approaches to implementation. To this end, school development plans, as well as promoting networking and the cooperation of youth, cultural and education institutions are important.

Local authorities should support youth and cultural work, socio-cultural, civil society and inter-cultural initiatives, multi-generational houses and community centres as well as day-care centres

and schools open to all sectors of society. In so doing, they will promote inclusion-oriented, diversity-conscious and cross-generational approaches.

The public sector is tasked with creating the general framework that enables players in extracurricular and school education to cooperate successfully.

Local authorities, federal states and the federal government as well as individual departments need to overcome their silo mentality and exploit all options for cooperation provided by the German constitution.

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# Imprint

**Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung e. V. (BKJ)**  
Küppelstein 34, 42857 Remscheid  
Greifswalder Straße 4, 10405 Berlin  
Telefonnummer (030) 48 48 600  
[info@bkj.de](mailto:info@bkj.de)

[www.bkj.de](http://www.bkj.de)

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# In the mood for more cultural education?

In its publications, the BKJ sets out basic principles, concepts, reflections and suggestions for the theory and practice of cultural education.

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**By working together, the different areas of education can provide reliable and accessible cultural education opportunities for all children and young people. In the light of this, cultural education must be understood as coproduction.**



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