Real-Time Evaluation as a Program Development Tool for Nonprofits

Experiences from Juma Ventures and the CollegeSet Program

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harder+company
community research

JUMA

About us

Juma Ventures is an innovative and award-winning youth development program that combines employment in social enterprises, college preparation, and financial asset building to create a safe, supportive community where under-resourced youth can achieve their dreams of a college education.

Harder+Company Community Research is a comprehensive social research and planning firm with offices in San Francisco, Davis, San Diego, and Los Angeles, California. Our mission is to help our clients achieve social impact through quality research, strategy, and organizational development services.

Overview

COLLEGESET
A JUMA VENTURE

+ Background and Context:
  Juma's CollegeSet Program

+ Opting for a Real-time Evaluation Approach

+ CollegeSet's Real-time Evaluation Story

Background and context:
Juma's CollegeSet Program

Background

+ Since 1993, *Juma* has served 2,500 teens across three California cities with programs in:
  - Job training & placement
  - College preparation
  - Financial training
  - Match-savings accounts for college

Breaking the cycle of poverty

Beliefs

Youth from low-income families as less likely to enroll in post-secondary education.

Financial capability education and college savings programs increase the likelihood that low-income youth will enroll, afford, and successfully complete post-secondary education.
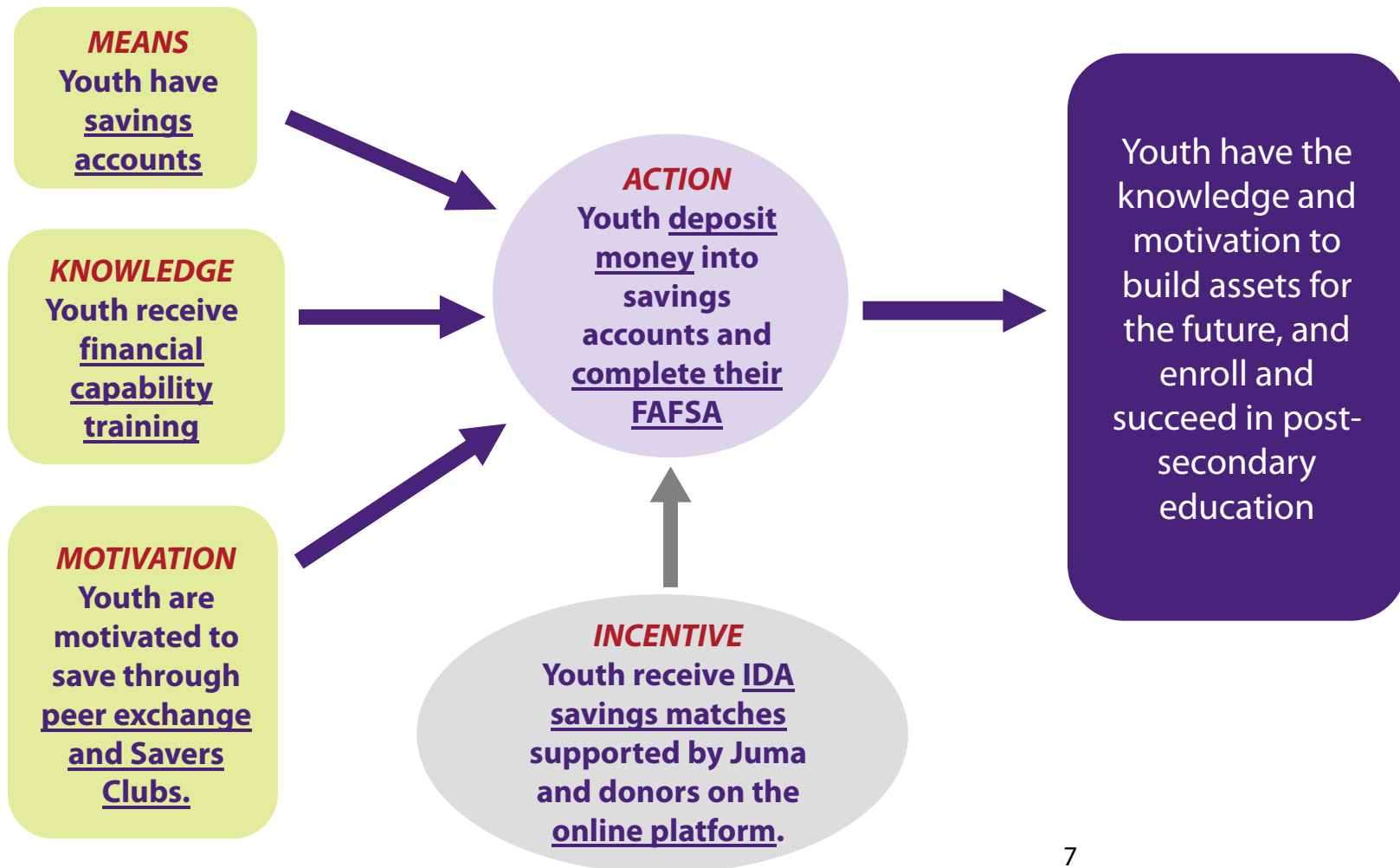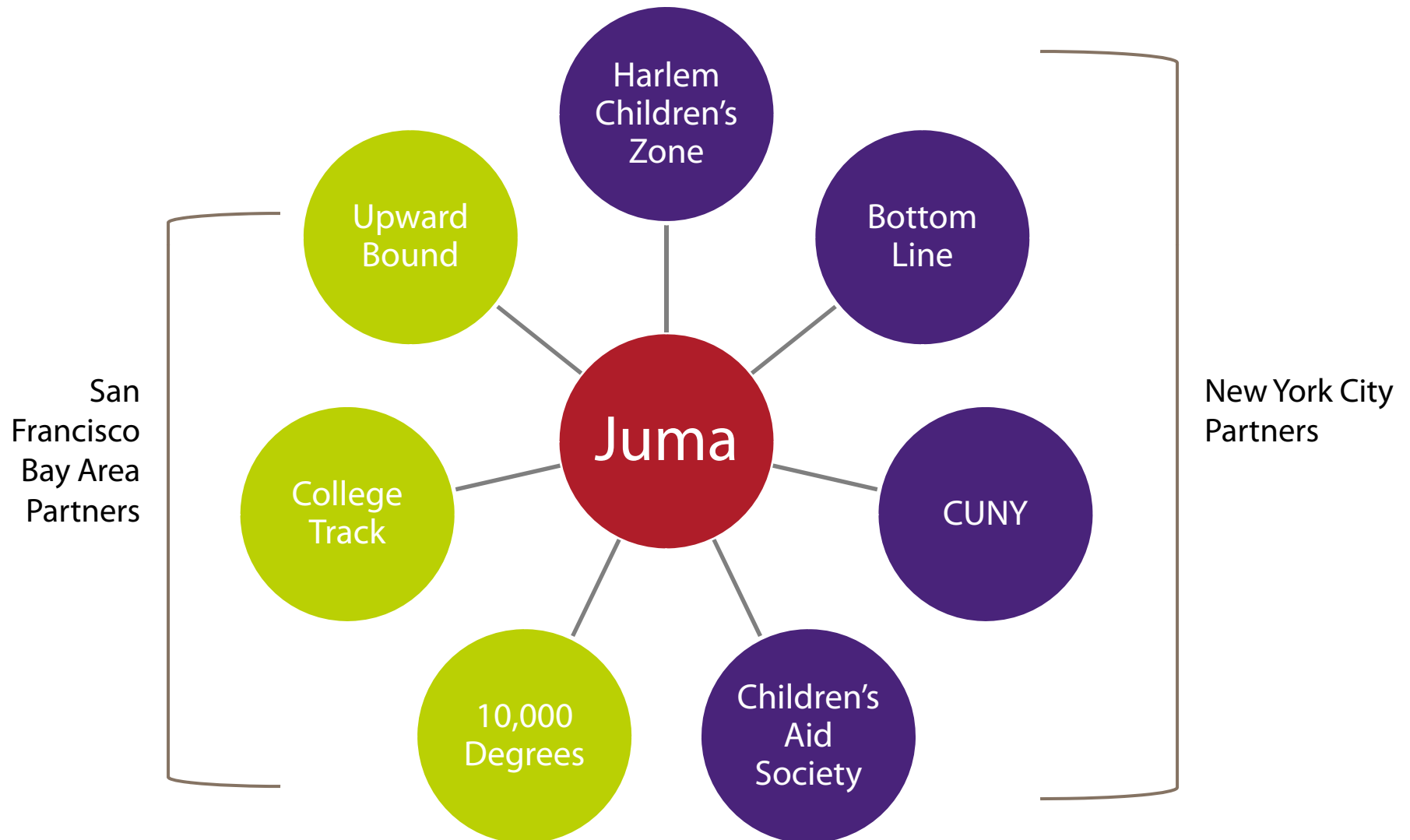
Goal

Through CollegeSet, low-income youth…

+ Build assets for their future.

+ Graduate high school.

+ Enroll, persist, and complete post-secondary education .

+ Break the cycle of poverty.

CollegeSet Program

MEANS
Youth have savings accounts

KNOWLEDGE
Youth receive financial capability training

MOTIVATION
Youth are motivated to save through peer exchange and Savers Clubs.

ACTION
Youth deposit money into savings accounts and complete their FAFSA

INCENTIVE
Youth receive IDA savings matches supported by Juma and donors on the online platform.

Youth have the knowledge and motivation to build assets for the future, and enroll and succeed in post-secondary education

7

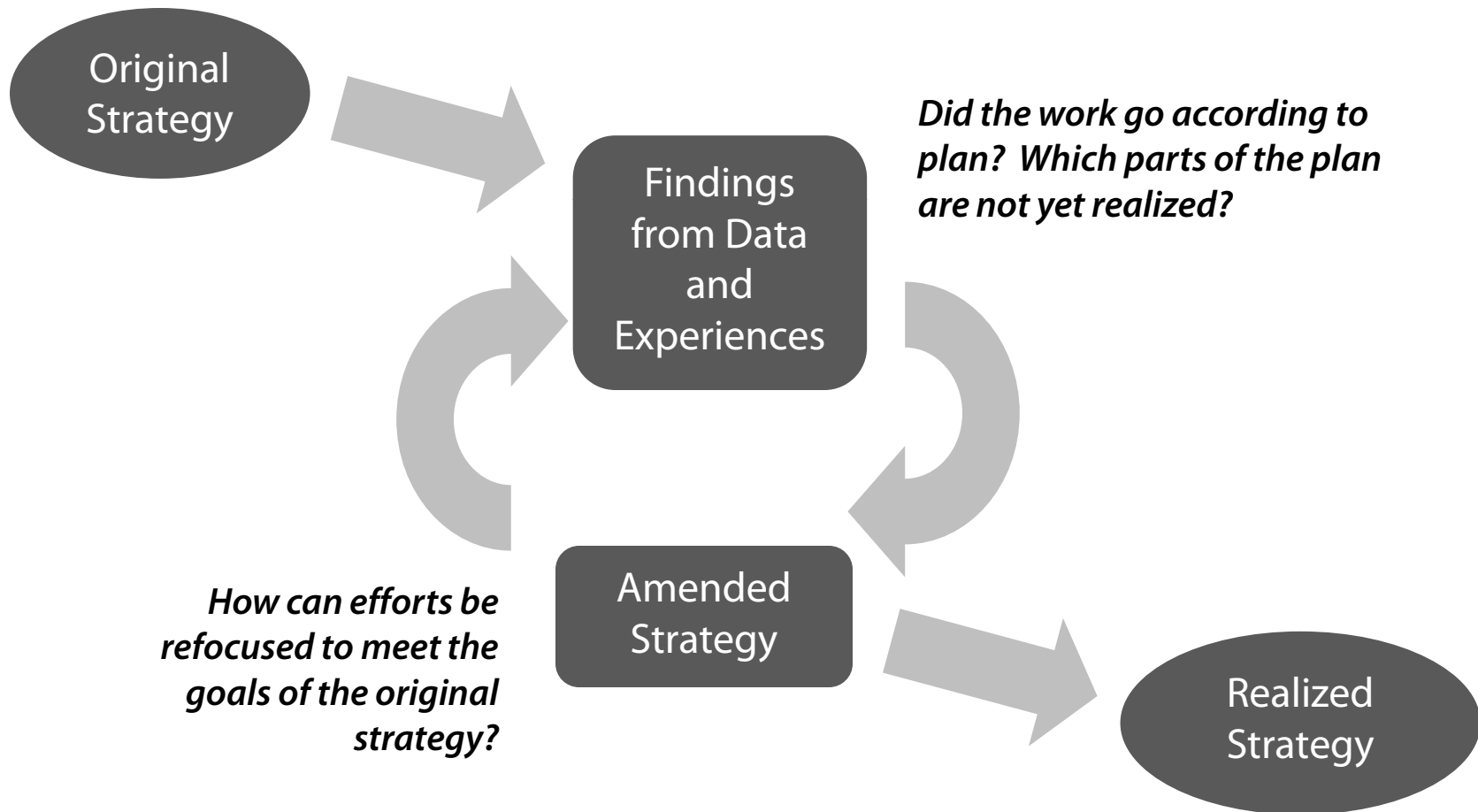# CollegeSet Pilot Year Partners

Year 1 Evaluation Questions

1) What components of the CollegeSet program are the most critical to students' success?

2) Did Juma Ventures select the right partners and prepare them adequately to implement these components?

3) How was the pilot program implemented by each partner organization?

4) What have been the lessons learned from this initiative relevant to future program replication and evaluation?

9

Opting for a real-time evaluation approach

Real-time evaluation (RTE) approach

Original
Strategy

Findings
from Data
and
Experiences

Did the work go according to plan? Which parts of the plan are not yet realized?

Amended
Strategy

How can efforts be refocused to meet the goals of the original strategy?

Realized
Strategy

Based on Mintzberg (2007)

Characteristics of RTE

- Getting the program to work as efficiently as possible, as soon as possible
    - In-the-moment feedback at critical decision points
    - Frequent in-person meetings and summaries of findings
- Can be a bit more costly than traditional evaluation
- RTE may not allow the same degree of rigor as traditional evaluation

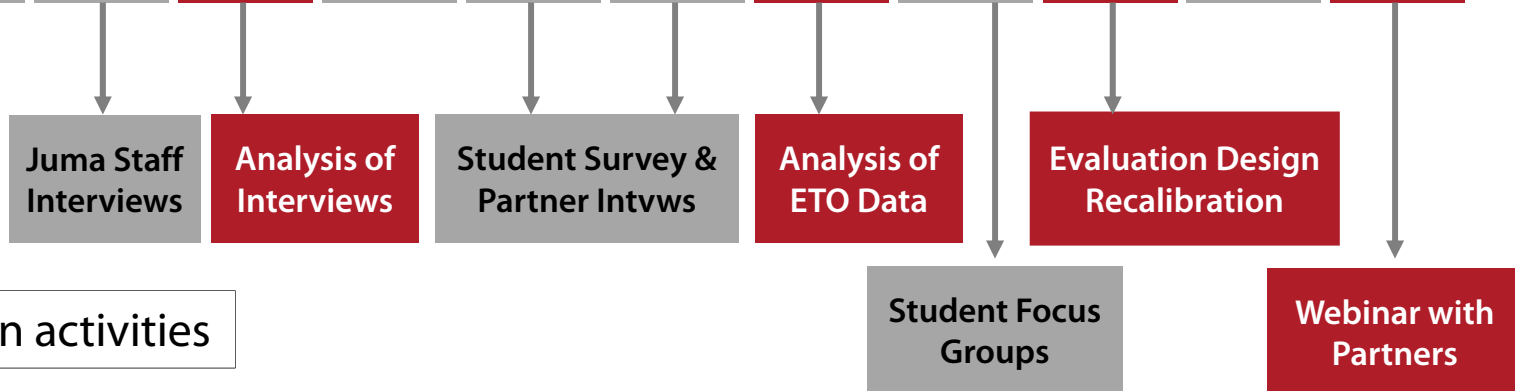*CollegeSet's*
Real-Time Evaluation Story

CollegeSet Pilot Year Timeline

Program activities

Year 1 Launch		FAFSA Event			Recruit Year 2 Partners		Year 2 Planning		Year 2 Launch	

Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sep 2012

Juma Staff Interviews	Analysis of Interviews	Student Survey & Partner Intvws		Analysis of ETO Data		Evaluation Design Recalibration	

Student Focus Groups

Webinar with Partners

Evaluation activities

What does RTE actually look like?

To illustrate, let's talk through each of these RTE moments…

Year 1 RTE Moments

January
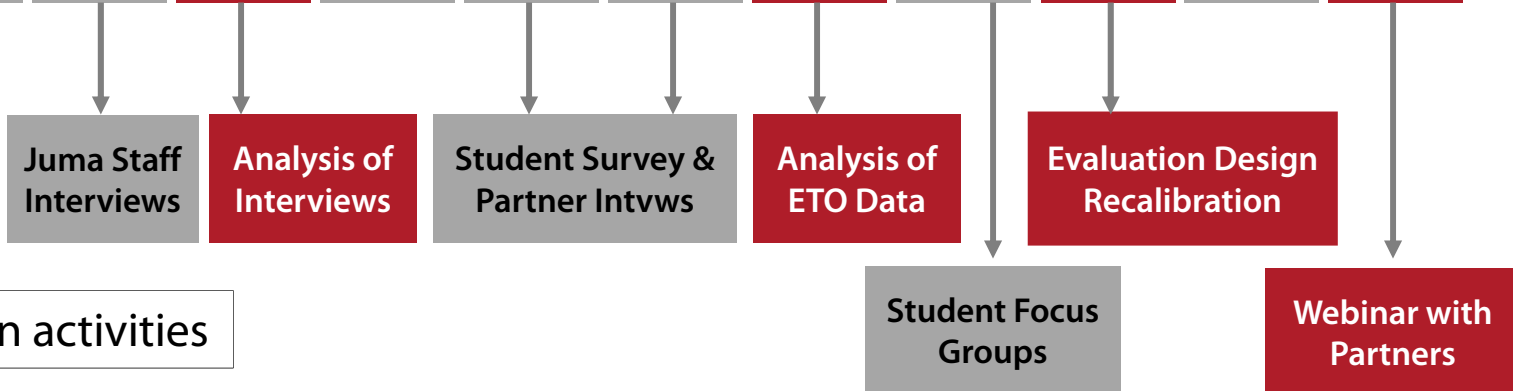Evaluation Meeting #1

May
Evaluation Meeting #2

July
Eval Design Recalibration

September
Webinar with partners

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Lessons + Insights from Juma Ventures

Real-Time Evaluation…

Helps get feedback from stakeholders to shape program design.

Provides insight into program structure and how to improve it (such as communications and timeline).

Consolidates and draws connections between lessons learned.

Facilitates sharing of best practices across all program partners.

Lessons + Insights from Harder+Company

Real-Time Evaluation…

Can be a useful tool for programs looking to work as efficiently as possible, as soon as possible.

Works best with close coordination and communication between evaluation and program teams.

Reports are not just deliverables, but tools for conversation. Who needs to be part of that conversation? What types of decisions are the clients seeking to inform?

RTE evaluation plans are not static. They need to flexibly adapt to the information needs of the client.

Article on RTE

+ Check out a recent real-time evaluation article by Harder+Company in the Blue Avocado featuring Juma Ventures:

"Getting Real about Real-Time Evaluation" by Clare Nolan and Fontane Lo. (http://www.blueavocado.org/node/740)

Questions and comments?

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Thank you!

Thank you for participating today.

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Let's keep this conversation going! Contact us via:

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