



IHVN NEWS

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMAN VIROLOGY, NIGERIA



Roving Midwives take HIV Services to Communities in Katsina State *by Blessing Ukpabi*

“In the past three years, I have lost two babies, a boy at seven months and a girl at five months. I did not know my HIV status neither did I know theirs until some midwives came to my community in Modoji, Katsina for an outreach in August 2025. They spoke to pregnant women about antenatal care, counselled us and carried out HIV tests.

When I tested positive to HIV. I was seven months pregnant at the time. I was sad and did not know anything about preventing my baby from having HIV until they guided me on what to do,” said Khadija Ishaq, a 23-year-old woman who benefitted from the “roving midwives” program implemented by the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) in Katsina State.

IHVN started the roving midwives' program in Katsina State in 2022 to increase access to HIV services especially prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) in communities. Trained Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) and midwives schedule weekly visits to communities in the 34 local government areas in the state to sensitize pregnant women about HIV, provide antenatal care services and HIV testing. HIV positive women are then taken from the community to the hospital for life saving medications and care for mother and child.



PMTCT Beneficiary Jemila A, takes her baby for an Early Infant Diagnosis Test at IHVN supported General Hospital Katsina

Khadija received free HIV services for herself and baby before, during and after pregnancy and is delighted that the second early infant diagnosis test shows that the baby is HIV free. She is one of the 77,848 women screened across the state due to the strategy and one of the 11 new HIV positive women linked from the community to health facilities to receive PMTCT services through the program.

One of the services she received is peer guidance and counselling by mentor mothers. Mentor mothers have gone through the PMTCT program and provide

guidance to newly enrolled women who are unsure of next steps.

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Roving Midwives take HIV Services to Communities in Katsina State

"When one of the roving midwives brought me to General Hospital Katsina after the outreach, the mentor mothers here welcomed me like a friend. They counselled me about adhering to HIV medications and I decided to take my medicines at 8am daily. The mentor mothers and other healthcare workers told me about the importance of telling my husband about my status and encouraging him to come to the hospital for a test.

My husband supports me. The mentor mothers also call me to check on my welfare and guided me to take a viral load test. I'm told that the virus is suppressed because I am adhering to treatment. I have been exclusively breastfeeding my baby. I feel happy every time I come to the hospital because I know that there are people here who care for me," Khadija added.

IHVN Senior Program Officer Prevention Care and Treatment, Mrs Salisu Faridah Maiadua said that the program was birthed to reach women in communities



Mentor Mother Nuratu Sani assisting a PMTCT beneficiary with required hospital tests during her visit to IHVN supported General Hospital Katsina

who may hardly ever go to the hospital for antenatal care due to security challenges, distance from their houses to the nearest functional public facility, transportation costs, lack of spousal or family consent, cultural peculiarities amongst other reasons.

"We considered working with traditional birth attendants to reach women in communities, but this did not suit our cultural reality. Traditional birth attendants are utilized only for delivery of children and not for antenatal care of women. We therefore decided to collaborate with the State Primary Health Care Development Agency to enlist



Katsina State MNCH Focal Person, Zainab Sherrif Abdulkadir and IHVN Katsina Maternal Neonatal Child Health (MNCH) Lead, Farida Salisu Maiadua

midwives, nurses and community health extension workers - there are many of them here due to the good number of health colleges in the state. These health workers reside in the different local government areas and are the best hands to create awareness and provide HIV services to their people. We trained the local government MNCH Focal Persons and the roving midwives to carry out HIV counselling and testing and they work with us closely to provide these services in all the local governments" Faridah said.

She explained that the state government has shown great interest and support for the program which gives room for

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From the Chief Executive Officer

One of the approaches that the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has adopted in the provision of prevention, care and treatment services is a client-centered approach which focuses on the needs of the patient. The roving midwives initiative is an innovative, collaborative and culturally sensitive approach to improve access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV services (PMTCT) in communities in Katsina State.

Other strategies such as the Mothers' Love Party (MLP), the Congregational Approach to PMTCT (CAP) such as baby shower/ Faith based CAP where we work with community leaders and faith-based leaders to sensitize pregnant and breast feeding women in communities about HIV, provide HIV counselling, testing and other health services are also being implemented in the Nasarawa and Rivers State as well as the Federal Capital Territory.

This edition of IHVN News features a report of this initiative and successes in PMTCT from Katsina State, a new project to foster food security and malaria prevention, World AIDS Day commemoration amongst other activities. Enjoy your reading!



Yours truly,
Dr. Patrick Dakum
Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria

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Roving Midwives take HIV Services to Communities in Katsina State

sustainability of community activities to reach women and children.

MNCH Focal Person for Batagarawa Local Government Area, Binta Rabo, goes out with the roving midwives for outreach activities. They conduct advocacy visits to the village heads and agree on a suitable date before going for an outreach. Thereafter, a town crier goes round the community to inform women about the date and the need to participate.

"I love the work, more women in the communities are becoming aware about their health and HIV testing. In fact, some of them who did not go to the hospital before are now going to the hospital. With the outreaches, we have been able to identify HIV positive women and even notice other diseases and guide the women appropriately on how to access health services," Mrs. Rabo said.

The State MNCH Focal Person, Mrs. Zainab Sherrif Abdulkadir applauded the strategy and expressed the state's willingness to partner with IHVN for the well being women in the state. "We always welcome ideas that help the community. The strategy has identified women in the community with HIV that might not have been identified in health facilities. Our women don't like going to health facilities because of economic, insecurity issues, religion, culture and the hard-to-reach areas where they reside. The roving midwives go to remote areas to tell them the benefit of antenatal care and PMTCT."

Halima Saidu, a midwife and Jamila Ibrahim, a Community Health Extension worker are part of the "roving midwives" in Batagarawa Local Government Area. They go to every community at least twice to provide antenatal care and HIV prevention services. The midwives have also integrated other health services like

checking vital signs, blood pressure, provision of malaria prevention for pregnant women and routine drugs supported by the government and other stakeholders. They also give health talks on personal hygiene, nutrition and the need for antenatal care.

"More than 60 women show up for each outreach. Our community activities are leading to more acceptance of the need to go to the hospital. "Taking these services to hard-to-reach areas gives me joy. We see women who don't go to hospital because of lack of awareness about its importance and we educate them. The prayers and happiness of these women is all the motivation I need," Halima Saidu said.

In Katsina Local Government Area, Roving Midwives, Hussaina Abdullahi and Halima Abubakar say that the program has addressed the need of many women who have poor health seeking behaviour. "They only go to the hospital when their health situation is dire. Reaching them in the community has been more effective. We counsel them and create awareness about the need to go to the hospital and we notice that they are more receptive to us when we are among them than in the hospital," said Halima Abubakar.

26-year-old Aisha Shehu received counselling at one of the outreaches in Katsina Local Government Area. She is four months pregnant for her first baby and was unwilling to go to the hospital because she could not afford transportation costs. However, when she discovered her positive status during the outreach, she was taken to General Hospital Katsina for follow up tests and life saving medications.

"I cried and wanted to die because I thought that death was better than living with HIV. I have been hearing about HIV, but I didn't know that I am HIV positive. In the hospital, the adherence counsellor and mentor mother calmed me down with their kind words. Today, I am assured of my health and that of my baby



because of the services I received here," Aisha said.

IHVN Program Lead Maternal, and Child Health, Dr. Victoria Igbinomwanhia explained that the strategy is one of the community initiatives adopted by the Institute with funding support from the US Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through Centers for Disease Control (US-CDC).

"In the four supported States where HIV services are provided, we have utilized strategies such as the Mothers' Love Party (MLP), the Congregational Approach to PMTCT (CAP) such as baby shower/ Faith based CAP where we work with community leaders and faith-based leaders to sensitize pregnant and breast feeding women in communities about HIV, provide HIV counselling, testing and other health services," she said.

NORA 2025 Summer School Focuses on Strengthening Capacity for Cancer Research and Control

by Luret Dakum



Coordinator African Cancer Registry Network (AFCRN), Dr. Max Parkin addressing participants at the 2025 NORA Summer School.



NORA Summer School participants engage in plenary sessions, workshops, and hands-on training to explore innovative solutions to the challenges of early detection, treatment and control of cancer in low-resource settings.



L-R Director General, National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT), Prof. Usman Malami, Special Adviser on Research and Innovation to the Minister of State for Health, Dr. Lolade Adeyemi, Executive Director, International Research Center of Excellence (IRCE), Prof. Alash'le Abimiku, First Lady of Imo State, Barr. Chidinma Uzodinma, NORA Nigeria Principal Investigator, Dr. Elima Jedy-Agba and President of National Cancer Society, Dr. Omonisi Abidemi at the NORA 2025 Summer School in Abuja.

Cancer remains a major public health challenge in Africa, responsible for an estimated 533,000 deaths annually, with breast and cervical cancers accounting for the majority of cases among women.

To reduce cancer mortality through improved prevention, diagnosis, and care across Sub-Saharan Africa, the Network for Oncology Research in Sub-Saharan Africa (NORA) Consortium has hosted a five-day summer school in Abuja.

The event was hosted by the International Research Center of Excellence (IRCE) at Institute of Human Virology Nigeria in collaboration with the African Cancer Registry Network (AFCRN) and the National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT). It attracted participants from NORA partner institutions in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, and South Africa.

IRCE, which is one of the NORA partner institutions, welcomed researchers, clinicians and policy makers to the event, themed "Building Capacity for Cancer Research and Control in Africa,"

Through plenary sessions, workshops, and hands-on training, participants explored innovative solutions to the challenges of

early detection, limited treatment access, and inadequate data for cancer control in low-resource settings.

Speaking at the Summer School's Opening Session, NORA Nigeria Principal Investigator, Dr. Elima Jedy-Agba explained that the program comprises five African countries working collaboratively to reduce cancer morbidity and mortality through research and innovation.

She noted that the event convened 155 delegates from 25 countries, including experts from Germany, the United Kingdom, Scotland, and the United States.

"Our aim is to produce evidence that shapes public health policy and enhances cancer outcomes for women across Sub-Saharan Africa. Since NORA Consortium began in 2023, it has supported the establishment and strengthening of cancer registries across partner countries, enhancing data quality and comparability. It has also trained over 100 early-career researchers, clinicians, and data officers in cancer epidemiology, implementation science, and data management. NORA continues to generate multi-country data on breast and cervical cancer incidence, stage at diagnosis, and treatment outcomes, informing national policy dialogues," Dr. Jedy-Agba stated.

IRCE Executive Director, Prof. Alash'le Abimiku said that cancer registries are key in addressing cancer in the country.

"We have done a good job in moving data forward but what we have not done is have quality data across the continent that really shows what the problem is and what our intervention is doing to tackle the problem, now through the cancer registries, we have been able to improve that situation across the country," Prof. Abimiku said.

Also at the program, the Honorable Minister of State for Health, Dr. Adekunle Salako, said the event demonstrates a collective commitment to strengthening cancer control systems in Nigeria and across Africa.

Dr. Salako was represented by his Special Adviser on Research and Innovation, Dr. Ololade Dosunmu-Adeyemi. He said that through partnerships such as NORA and AFRCRN, Nigeria is moving closer to a future where every citizen, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, can benefit from timely detection, diagnosis, and care informed by real data.

Photo Gallery



IHVN Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director, Dr. Charles Olalekan Mensah advocating for institutionalization of research integrity in universities during a courtesy visit to the Chief Medical Director Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, Prof Reuben Agbons Eifediyi in Benin, Edo State as part of activities for the Excellence in Collaboration, Ethical Conduct, and Leadership for Research Integrity Through Empowerment (EXCEL RITE) Project.



Participants of the Network of Oncology Research in Africa (NORA) five day summer school take a guided tour of the IHVN Campus in Abuja.



Students of Yangongwo College of Nursing Students at the IHVN Campus to present an award of recognition to IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum.



IHVN Staff done the red carpet during the Dimas Experience Event which honors women from diverse backgrounds all over Africa, recognizing their contributions and promoting a positive societal impact.

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IHVN Supports 1,200 Households with Food Security and Malaria Prevention Initiatives *by Blessing Ukpabi*

"In partnership with the government, we have trained community workers and will continue supervising farming activities and teaching new farming techniques for better yield."

She said that the project is also collaborating with 13 health facilities for easy referral of malaria and severe malnutrition cases.

Community worker, Oluwayemisi Adeniji said that she has high expectations that the knowledge gained by the beneficiaries will improve the health and nutrition of all the households involved.

"We are expecting that the empowered households will share the knowledge and skills gained with their community members. Learning is a continuous process. We will be following up with them to ensure that they put their skills to practice.

Project beneficiaries, 35-year-old Marakisiyya Yusuf and 42-year-old Sulieman Mashi from Daura Local Government Area in Katsina State said that the skills gained from the kick-off training have been beneficial.

"I have learned how to use the Village Savings and Loans Association to save for the future. I will start a savings group in my community with my friends and neighbors at Tudun Wada," Marakisiyya said.

Sulieman is also eager to start a savings group and teach his wife how to cook balanced nutritional meals with the knowledge gained from the food demonstration activity. The project is being implemented by IHVN with funding support from BMZ/Gesundes Africa.

E-learning Platform Equips Over 2,000 Health Workers with TB and HIV Skills

by Blessing Ukpabi

More than 2,100 health care workers across Nigeria have utilized a virtual training platform (VTR) set up by the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) and InStrat, to expand their knowledge on HIV and tuberculosis.

According to IHVN Program Manager, Dr. Adekola Adekunle, the platform was repurposed and launched in August 2024 with funding support from the Global Fund TB-HIV Reach Integration and Impact Project (N-THRIP) in collaboration with the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme (NTBLCP).

Dr. Adekunle said that the e-learning platform is active with enrolled participants from 363 local government areas and was put in place to equip doctors, nurses and community health workers from private hospitals.

“Challenges such as high staff turnover, and constant need for capacity building necessitated this innovation.” With this system health workers are being equipped with essential skills to effectively manage and report tuberculosis cases.

The platform has proven to be cost effective, efficient and easily accessible by health care providers in hard-to-reach areas. Health workers train without disruption of their duties and it has boosted their understanding of the role of the private sector in the identification, screening, diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis,” he said.

Dr. Adekunle explained that the mobile learning platform can be accessed on smart phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers.

“We utilized text, audio and video-based trainings to build the capacity of trainees on the epidemiology, identification and diagnosis of tuberculosis, tuberculosis in children, administering treatment and management of tuberculosis contacts. There are also modules on monitoring tuberculosis treatment, management of treatment interruptions and drug-resistance tuberculosis,” he said.

Prior to the set-up of the platform, a needs assessment on relevant TB and HIV training topics was conducted. Regular feedback on program content and delivery has also been received to improve program structure. Training sessions are currently available online alongside simulated classroom interaction and certificates upon successful completion.

Augusta Kalu, VTR Senior Manager InStrat added that measures such as engagement of linkage coordinators to follow-up with healthcare workers in private hospitals, personalized interaction with inactive participants and working with state sub-recipients and the government have been adopted to encourage completion of the courses.

She noted that initial challenges such as severe network challenges, difficulty in

navigating the app, log in issues are being addressed.

“So far, more than 95% of the participants have indicated satisfaction with the quality, relevance, effectiveness and course structure of the training program,” Augusta said.

Participants say that the training has been beneficial. Olushola Deborah, a nurse from Ondo State is currently going through the modules. She says that the sessions “have broadened her knowledge about tuberculosis and the best way to care for patients.”

Ogbono Linda, a participant who has completed the training modules said that the modules have improved her knowledge in HIV and TB and management of co-infections. “I learned about the TB treatment regimen and patient management. This has equipped me to provide targeted intervention to patients and has boosted my confidence.”

As the Principal Recipient of the Global Fund Grant Cycle 7 project, IHVN is working with guidance from NTBLCP to increase the testing and identification of all forms of TB in the private sector and the communities across the thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory. Capacity building of health care workers remains critical to ending tuberculosis in Nigeria.



IHVN Participates in HIV Testing, Sensitization Activities to Mark World AIDS Day 2025

by Ritnen Gomwalk

The Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria (IHVN) joined the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) and other stakeholders to commemorate World AIDS Day 2025, themed “Overcoming Disruptions: Sustaining Nigeria's HIV Response.”

This year's observance highlighted the collective responsibility of stakeholders to safeguard progress made in the national HIV response, strengthen resilience amid ongoing disruptions, and advance efforts toward achieving an AIDS-free Nigeria.

Activities to mark the day in Abuja included a press conference, community outreaches in areas such as Jaji, Apo Dutse, Wuse to provide free testing for HIV and other diseases, a basketball tournament, religious services at the National Mosque and the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, a candlelight memorial, and a commemoration event at the banquet hall of Aso Villa in Abuja.

At the commemoration event in Abuja, the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON, urged Nigerians to support the Renewed Hope Agenda. She emphasized that “we must work together to achieve a HIV-free Nigeria by 2030.”

In her keynote remarks, the Director General of NACA, Dr. Temitope Ilori, reaffirmed the nation's commitment to sustaining gains in HIV control. She stated: “On this World AIDS Day, we renew our resolve to sustain the Nigerian HIV response. Nigeria's HIV response is

stronger than ever; we have achieved 87-98-95 progress toward global targets and cut new infections by 46% in a decade.”

She further called on government institutions, civil society, implementing partners, and communities “to unite in purpose and action for an AIDS-free generation.”

IHVN featured in a panel discussion on “HIV Prevention as a Frontier for Health Security.” During this session, IHVN Program Manager Prevention, Mr. Ngozi Ajaero, highlighted the institute's achievements and ongoing efforts, including implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies, community-led interventions, and adoption of innovative biomedical tools such as Lenacapavir.

Mr. Ajaero emphasized that these innovations are critical in addressing persistent gaps, particularly among young people and People at High Risk of HIV Acquisition (PHRH).

Earlier during the national flag-off of World AIDS Day activities at NACA Headquarters in Abuja, IHVN Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Patrick Dakum, reiterated the Institute's commitment to innovation, partnership, and quality service delivery.

IHVN also supported NACA in the weeklong provision of free HIV Testing Services and awareness creation efforts through the media.



L-R, IHVN FCT Community Lead Mr. Yaro Oyinloye, NACA Director General, Dr. Temitope Ilori; and IHVN Communications Lead, Ms. Uzoma Nwofor, at a HIV testing venue during the World AIDS Day flag-off event in Abuja



Picture One: IHVN FCT Community Lead, Mr. Yaro Daniel Oyinloye sensitizing the public on how to use the HIV Self Test Kits during a symposium to mark World AIDS Day in the Federal Capital Territory.



IHVN Prevention Manager, Mr. Ngozi Ajaero participating in panel discussion on “HIV Prevention as a Frontier for Health Security” at the World AIDS Day commemoration event at the Banquet Hall of Aso Villa in Abuja.



(L-R) FCT Strategic Information Lead, Chiagozie, FCT Regional Manager, Dr. Tangkat Hosle, Director Administration and Finance, Dr. Olu Alabi, FCT Community Lead, Mr. Yaro Daniels and FCT Pharmacy lead, Pharm Rinret Adamu, pose for a picture during the World AIDS Day FCT stakeholders meeting

IHVN Supports 1,200 Households with Food Security and Malaria Prevention Initiatives

by Blessing Ukpabi

The Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) has launched a five-year project aimed at empowering 1,200 vulnerable households in Katsina and Nasarawa States by promoting sustainable agriculture, malaria prevention, and healthy nutrition practices.

At the launch which held simultaneously in the two states, project beneficiaries received livestock such as pigs, goats and chickens, along with tools, seeds and capacity building for livestock and crop farming. The households were also trained on nutrition, financial management through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) and malaria prevention activities.

According to the Project Director at IHVN, Dr. Victoria Igbinomwanhia, the Institute is collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, the Ministry of Health, community-based organizations and community leaders to equip, guide and supervise the benefitting households for sustainable agricultural and health practices.

“This project builds on our years of public health project implementation and care



Project beneficiaries learn soap making in a training session in Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria

for people infected and affected by HIV, including orphans and vulnerable children. We are currently providing HIV services in four states. We picked two out of the four states as the focus states for this project based on empirical evidence of vulnerability of the households. Some of our considerations were the poverty index, malaria and HIV prevalence. We conducted a vulnerability assessment and picked the most vulnerable homes – 400 in Katsina and 800 households in Nasarawa State.”

Dr. Igbinomwanhia added that the project aims to improve the resilience of the households.

“We will be conducting food demonstration trainings using locally



Food Security and Malaria Prevention Project Director, Dr. Victoria Igbinomwanhia presenting livestock to households in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

available food items. Community workers will be supporting this activity from house to house after the flag-off training. The beneficiaries will also be taught soap making to support water, sanitation and hygiene practices.

The households have been categorized into three agricultural groups, 200 households for livestock farming, 400 for home gardening and 600 for community farming to grow vitamin and protein rich crops to promote healthy nutrition.”

She explained that in addition to the livestock and seeds, beneficiaries are also being given pots for planting, animal shelter, medications for livestock and fertilizer.

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Contact Address

Head Office

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN), Plot 62 Emeritus Umar Shehu Avenue, Cadastral Zone, C00, Abuja, FCT, P. O. Box 9396, Garki, Abuja - Nigeria

Delta State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)
9, Sir Austin Nwaeze Avenue, Off Isala Avenue,
Off Okpanam Road, Core Area, G.R.A, Asaba, Delta State

Kano State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)
No 14, UDB Street, Hotoro G.R.A, Kano State

Katsina State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)
165 IBB Way, Beside TAJ Bank, Katsina, Katsina State

Lagos State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)
Lagos State Office 59A, Adekunle Fajuyi Road, G.R.A, Ikeja,
Lagos, Nigeria. No 2A, Herbert Macaulay Crescent GRA, Ikeja

Nasarawa State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria Office (IHVN)
C/O Nasarawa State Ministry of Health,
Bukkan Sidi, Jos Road, Lafia

Rivers State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)
Rivers State Project Office, C/O University of Port Harcourt
Teaching Hospital, Choba, East-West Road, Port Harcourt,
Rivers State

Plateau State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN)
Plateau State Human Virology Research Center, Plateau State
Specialist Hospital, No.13 Old Bukuru Road, Jos, Plateau State

Ogun State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria, (IHVN)
Chalet 10, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library
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Oyo State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria, (IHVN)
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Osun State

Institute of Human Virology Nigeria, (IHVN)
TB LON 3 Project, No 30, Raji Oke Street, Opposite
Osun State Property Development Corporation Zonal Office,
Oroki Estate, Osogbo, Osun State

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