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## Cover Page

Title: Internationalisation at Home in Finnish HEIs

Subtitle: A Comprehensive Approach is Needed

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Biography: Dr Leasa Weimer is the Assistant Director for Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives at the Fulbright Finland Foundation and a researcher for the Finnish Institute for Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. She has been active in the field of international education as a Fulbright scholar, president of the Erasmus Mundus Association and is an expert consultant/researcher for numerous international comparative and European projects. Her passion bridges research with practice; she has published international peer-reviewed articles and book chapters as well as policy papers.

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[Add side text to this first paragraph: **What's an alternative to international mobility?**]

International mobility continues to be a priority focus area for internationalising higher education. According to the European Association for International Education (EAIE) Barometer survey, the most common international priority activities included international student mobility, international student recruitment and international staff mobility (Sandström & Hudson, 2018). However, there is rising awareness that international mobility only serves a small percentage of students and there is a need for non-mobile students and staff to gain international and intercultural competencies. This article highlights and explores the findings of a Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture funded project aimed at investigating the current state of internationalisation at home in Finnish higher education and research institutes.

## **Introduction**

More than two decades ago, 'internationalisation at home' was developed as a concept and since then has evolved with the times. In 1998, Sweden's immigrant population was on the rise, and Bengt Nilsson, while working as the vice-rector for International Affairs at Malmö University, brought the concept of internationalisation at home to life as he recognised the growing need for intentional intercultural learning between domestic and international students (Nilsson, 2003). During the 1999 European Association for International Education (EAIE) conference in Maastricht, a Special Interest Group (SIG) was created to further develop internationalisation at home (Wächter, 2003). At that time, scholars realised that the initial Erasmus programme (1987) was limited to only a small percentage of European students spending a study period in another European country. This led to a new innovation focused on internationalising the domestic or 'home' education and environment as a way to provide the vast majority of students, who do not participate in international mobility, opportunities to develop their international/intercultural competences (Wächter, 2003). In 2000, the EAIE SIG steering group published a position paper that defined the concept of internationalisation at home as: "Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility" (Crowther et al., 2000, p. 6).

The most recent definition of internationalisation at home focuses on both formal and informal curriculum, "the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 69). Although the literature in the field offers "no recognized strategy, formula or approach [...] important elements have been identified" (Robson et al., 2017, p. 20).

### **Internationalisation at home core elements (Jones & Reiffenrath 2018):**

- offers all students global perspectives in their programme of study;
- internationalisation at home elements are systematically integrated into the compulsory curriculum;
- international and/or intercultural perspectives are included in learning outcomes;

- classroom diversity is integrated into learning;
- opportunities for informal co-curricular activities to engage with international perspectives (both on campus and in the local community);
- opportunities for international virtual mobility;
- purposeful engagement of and with international students;
- all staff (including international officers, teachers, administrative staff and university leadership) support internationalisation at home practices.

## Context

[Add side text to this paragraph: **Internationalisation at home in Finland**]

In Finland, internationalisation at home seems to be a newer concept, especially for academics (Weimer et al., 2019). In recent years, though, there has been growing interest in internationalisation at home at the Finnish national policy level. In 2017, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture policy to promote internationalisation of higher education institutions and research, stated that all students should have the opportunity to develop their intercultural competences:

*“Students graduating from Finnish higher education institutions should have the ability and willingness to be involved in international, multicultural environments and understand diversity, global challenges and the principles of a sustainable society”* (OKM, 2017).

However, only a relatively small number of domestic Finnish students experience international mobility. In 2017, three percent of the total student population (9,551 students) in Finnish higher education institutions participated in mobility outside Finland (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018a; 2018b).

[Add side text to this paragraph: **Internationalisation at home in Europe**]

Perhaps one of the reasons that internationalisation at home has gained interest at the Finnish national level is through influence by other European initiatives. In Germany, the Rectors’ Conference, in 2017, adopted a recommendation to integrate an international dimension into all curricula.

*“Intercultural understanding and global perspectives should be delivered through the curriculum for all students in Germany”* (German Rectors’ Conference, 2017b).

The recommendations included:

- a redesign of existing curriculum to embed international and intercultural elements into the core curricula in all disciplines;
- inclusion of international students’ perspectives in teaching;
- assessment to measure competences developed in an internationalised curriculum;

- targeted support for teachers to develop and implement international curricula;
- integration of digitalisation in teaching methods and international internships for students (German Rectors' Conference, 2017a; 2017b).

In 2014, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation of education, Nuffic, conducted a two-part national study on internationalisation at home. The first study explored central level institutional policies aimed at supporting and developing international and intercultural skills of students (Galen et al., 2014a). The second study explored what internationalisation at home looks like in practice at three higher education institutions (Galen et al., 2014b). Overall, the findings suggested that the implementation of internationalisation at home lagged behind policy ambitions.

What set the stage for these national initiatives was the discourse at the European level. In 2013, the idea of internationalisation at home was included in the European Union's strategy for higher education internationalisation, "European Higher Education in the World". The strategy set out three key priorities for higher education institutions and member states. One of the key priorities focused on internationalisation at home by acknowledging that the majority of higher education students are not internationally mobile and there was a need for all students to develop international skills required for a globalised world. More specifically, the strategy stated:

*"Higher education policies must increasingly focus on the integration of a global dimension in the design and content of all curricula and teaching/learning processes"* (European Commission, 2013, p. 6).

### **Ministry of Education and Culture Project**

After a competitive bid process in 2018, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture commissioned the Finnish Institute for Educational Research to investigate the state of internationalisation at home in Finnish higher education institutions and research institutes. The study was designed and implemented in the spring of 2019 and explored two stated aims:

- 1) the development of international/intercultural competencies of those who do not actively participate in international mobility and
- 2) the role of foreign students and staff members in internationalisation at home practices.

Likewise, the study explored the most interesting potentials, utility and unique forms and critically examined the relevance, limitations and challenges of internationalisation at home in Finland.

### **Methodology**

The research design was based on a concurrent mixed-methods approach. Data were collected via an online survey and targeted interviews at three higher education institutions/consortium.

Overall, 889 respondents (see Table 1) completed the survey and 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted in three higher education institutions/consortium.

Table 1. Final survey response numbers<sup>1</sup>

Target Audience	Responses
<b>Academics</b>	764
<b>Intl Officers</b>	85
<b>Student Union</b>	19
<b>Research Institutes</b>	21 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	889

Descriptive analysis of survey data, interview transcripts, field notes and policy documents were analysed using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Codes were created during the initial analysis phase and then modified after further analyses. Methodological triangulation facilitated the validation of claims and overall interpretation of the data (Denzin, 2006). As this study was executed in a very short period of time (December 2018–March 2019), the effort—overall—could be most accurately characterised as an exploratory-level mixed-methods pilot study of internationalisation at home.

Data protection, according to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679, was incorporated throughout the study according to the University of Jyväskylä's privacy notice and consent form.

**[Add side text to this section: A bird's eye view: survey]**

Based on the literature in the field, survey questions were designed to collect data on the current state of internationalisation at home practices and policies as well as to gain a better understanding of how it is perceived by academics, international officers, student union representatives and research institute leaders.

Four distinct surveys were designed for the target audiences:

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<sup>1</sup> Official response rates are not available due to how the surveys were distributed. The surveys were not linked to individual invitations; therefore, a definite response rate cannot be given. Due to a limited amount of time, the research design was expedited resulting in open survey links sent to listservs and email addresses.

<sup>2</sup> Although 12 publicly-funded national research institutes attached to Ministries (such as the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Finnish Food Authority, Finnish Meteorological Institute, etc.) were included in the original study at the request of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the author considered them to be out of the scope of this particular article since they are not embedded in higher education institutions. Therefore, national research institutes were not included in the analysis of this article. A full analysis, including the national research institutes is available in the final report: <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161606>.

1. academics (faculty leaders and department chairs/unit heads in all Finnish higher education institutions);
2. international officers (designated heads of internationalisation in all Finnish higher education institutions);
3. student union (student union representatives in all Finnish higher education institutions);
4. research institutes (leaders and designated heads of international efforts in 12 national institutes).

All surveys were administered in English or Finnish, according to the survey participant's preference. The survey instruments were designed to take no more than 10 minutes of the participant's time to complete. Most of the survey questions were multiple choice answers allowing for quick responses. However, a few open-ended questions allowed for more in-depth descriptive data collection.

**[Add side text to this section: Diving deeper: multiple-case study]**

To investigate the phenomenon of internationalisation at home in-depth and within a real-life context, we employed a multiple-case study design (Yin, 2014). The interview data added detailed accounts and lived experiences of how internationalisation at home is strategically organised and implemented. At the same time, interviews allowed for deeper exploration of attitudes, promising practices as well as challenges and unquestioned assumptions.

Three higher education institutions/consortium were selected as case study locations based on an analytically-driven purposeful selection (see Hoffman et al., 2016; 2013; 2008). When selecting the case-study institutions and settings within institutions, specific characteristics were considered ensuring a diverse representation of institutions, for example: geographical diversity, size of institutions, multi/single disciplinary, merged/non-merged, university/university of applied science/research institutes. The case study consisted of the following institutions:

1. a large university located in the capital,
2. a medium-sized university located in Central Finland and
3. a small university and University of Applied Sciences (UAS) located in Northern Finland.

A total of 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, Finnish and international academics as well as heads and administrative staff of internationalisation offices. Due to the funder's timeline, a decision was made to focus on interviews with academics and international officers and to only interview a small number of students. This limits the students' perspective analysed in this article. For this reason and the nature of case study research design,

interview data cannot be used for more generalised findings. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and then transcribed to ease data analysis. To supplement interview data, texts, documents and observations at national events focused on the internationalisation of higher education were also used to contextualise the interview data.

Based on literature in the field, the following definition was created during this project and used in the survey to explain the ‘internationalisation at home’ concept:

*The proponents of ‘internationalisation at home’ define this idea or concept as: the international/intercultural dimensions, processes and actions implemented across higher education (teaching/learning, research, societal engagement and the management of higher education missions) contributing to the development of international/intercultural competencies for all students and personnel. Internationalisation at home particularly focuses on students and personnel in academic communities who have not participated in mobility programmes, international or interculturally-focused degree programmes or other forms of conventional or traditional internationalisation.*

### Six<sup>3</sup> Key Findings

[Add side text to this section: **Finding #1: (Un)familiarity with internationalisation at home**]

First, the interview data highlighted a clear division between who is familiar and who is unfamiliar with the concept of internationalisation at home. Most international officers, the individuals responsible for driving international efforts in Finnish higher education institutions, knew of, understood and could articulate the meaning, purpose and practices of internationalisation at home. However, academics, who clearly have a significant role in implementing internationalisation at home practices into curriculum and teaching, were largely unfamiliar with the concept. For the most part, academics had either never heard of the terminology ‘internationalisation at home’ or they had heard about it, but it was rarely discussed during academic meetings or curricular planning:

*“... it’s a term that pops up every once in a while, but we’ve never consciously discussed it” (University teacher in Northern Finland).*

One international officer in Central Finland pointed out how internationalisation at home may be understood differently, depending on who you ask:

*“I think maybe as a theoretical or scientific concept, it’s maybe not that familiar to people, but it’s something that we talk about. We talk about internationalisation at home and people understand it in different ways I think. For some people, I think it’s a very*

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<sup>3</sup> In the final report, seven key findings were highlighted. Due to the international nature of this journal and the limited space, the key finding ‘regional differences’ was not included. For a detailed analysis of the regional differences see the final report.



*limited understanding that when we have a course that is attended by international students and domestic students, then this sort of internationalisation at home happens because it's something that they feel is literally happening. They're internationalising each other, which is not really true and then at the other extreme, we have people who really understand what it is and incorporate it in their teaching and in the way that they engage students to participate and use their individual backgrounds in the work that they do in the classroom. I think it varies who you talk to."*

All of these findings point to the reality that more work is needed to educate and empower academics about the value, content and inclusion of internationalisation at home elements into teaching and curriculum.

**[Add side text to this section: Finding #2: (Un)importance of internationalisation at home]**

The second finding highlights the perceived importance and unimportance of internationalisation at home by actors in higher education institutions. Table 2 shows that close to half of the academic and student union survey respondents regarded internationalisation at home as important, whereas a larger percentage (74.1%) of international officers regarded it as important. Approximately a quarter of international officers and academics responded that internationalisation at home is important in some areas but not in all, whereas close to half (42.1%) of the student union representatives selected this answer. This result is further explored in the third finding, “(un)equal opportunities”, as respondents discussed how some disciplines, programmes, teachers and courses offer more international curriculum and opportunities than others.

Table 2. Comparative survey results: Do you believe internationalisation at home is regarded as important in your department/unit/institution/institute?<sup>4</sup>

Do you believe internationalisation at home is regarded as important in your department/unit/institution/institute?	Academics N=760	Intl Officers N=85	Student Union N=19
Yes	50.4%	74.1%	52.6%
Yes and no, it's important in some areas and not in others	28.0%	23.5%	42.1%
No	6.5%	0%	0%
I don't know	12.5%	2.4%	0%
Other	2.6%	0%	5.3%

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<sup>4</sup> Respondents were asked to select one answer.

In addition to the survey findings, the interview data revealed several narratives that respondents used to explain the (un)importance of internationalisation at home.

**Narratives of the (un)importance of internationalisation at home in Finnish higher education:**

- important to develop language and intercultural skills for an international working life;
- important/not important because research/science is international;
- important for students who cannot participate in international mobility during their studies;
- important because Finland is becoming more diverse and the demographics are changing;
- important to develop intercultural skills to reduce prejudices, misconceptions and ethnocentrism;.
- not important because the institution does not emphasise its importance with support structures, resources, strategy and action.

These narratives highlight multiple rationales, from working life needs to the international nature of science to social inclusion in society to the lack of institutional support of internationalisation at home. As the Finnish society becomes more diverse and working life becomes more internationally connected, respondents discussed how internationalisation at home becomes increasingly important. An international officer explained:

*“Internationality should cover the university holistically. Internationalisation at home contributes to the integration of foreign staff and students, the development of the internationalisation capabilities of Finnish personnel and the readiness of students to work successfully after graduation in the increasingly international labour market.”*

At the same time, academics addressed the international nature of science and academia in the light of internationalisation at home efforts. For example, two academics illuminated the (un)importance of internationalisation at home from different perspectives. One academic explained why internationalisation at home is important for science and research:

*“Science and research are an international exchange of ideas that requires extensive and in-depth language skills and cultural knowledge.”*

On the other hand, this academic explained that internationalisation at home efforts were not important due to the international nature of their discipline and department:

*“The research field and unit are so international that there is no need for artificial ‘superstructured’ internationalisation.”*

**[Add side text to this section: Finding #3: (Un)equal opportunities of internationalisation at home]**

The third finding showcases how promising practices are fragmented throughout higher education institutions, most often lacking strategic or coherent insights, resulting in unequal opportunities for all students to develop international/intercultural skills. From the perspective of academics, table 3 shows the stratification of internationalisation at home practices. While many survey participants reported the integration of international perspectives and literature in research (77.9%) and that foreign language studies are part of the compulsory curriculum (71.4%), a smaller percentage (49.2%) reported that all students have the opportunities to develop their intercultural competencies in a compulsory curriculum.

Table 3. Academics' response: What internationalisation at home practices and support structures does your department/unit currently employ?<sup>5</sup> N=748

<b>What internationalisation at home practices and support structures does your department/unit currently employ?</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Integrates international perspectives/literature in research	583	77.9 %
Foreign language studies are part of the compulsory curriculum	534	71.4 %
Integrates international/intercultural perspectives and content in compulsory curriculum	484	64.7 %
Offers international virtual mobility opportunities (virtual international guest lectures, virtual classroom collaborations, e-learning, etc.)	383	51.2 %
All students have the opportunities to develop their intercultural competencies in a compulsory curriculum	368	49.2 %
Integrates international/intercultural learning outcomes in the compulsory curriculum	365	48.8 %
International academic personnel teach one or more courses in our mainstream Finnish/Swedish degree programmes	344	46 %
The department/unit articulates the value of internationalization at home to students	341	45.6 %
Connects Finnish students with internationally diverse communities in the local community and region	290	38.8 %
Academic personnel integrates international student backgrounds purposely into teaching and learning practices	286	38.2 %
Other	81	10.8 %
The department/unit does not employ any internationalisation at home practices/support structures	37	5 %

<sup>5</sup> Respondents were instructed to select all answers that apply.

One academic respondent summed it up and explained the unequal practice of internationalisation at home:

*“Holistic and strategic perspectives are missing. Internationalisation at home isn’t integrated everywhere and depends on a few individuals.”*

**[Add side text to this section: Finding #4: Promising practices]**

According to the first three findings, there is much work to be done to consistently embed internationalisation at home practices into Finnish higher education. However, the fourth finding, based on interview and survey data from international officers and academics, illuminates a variety of promising practices both within formal and informal curriculum. These practices can serve as a foundation for further development.

**Formal curriculum practices:**

- Finnish students must take one or two courses with international exchange students as part of the core curriculum and teaching methods are employed to facilitate intercultural interaction among the students;
- language and communication modules are embedded in the core curricula;
- pedagogical training for teachers to develop teaching methods for a multicultural classroom;
- promotion of an international learning environment that emphasises multinational study groups in courses;
- integrating global topics into the core curricula;
- virtual course: home students and students from other countries take a course together and build joint task reports and meet each other in joint video conferences;
- students often study in mixed groups where the language of interaction is constantly changing depending on the background of the students; in practice, no domestic student can avoid contact with international students;
- well-defined international opportunities (mobility and international courses) are offered in degree programme study plan; if mobility is not possible, alternatives at home are substituted (e.g. taking a course in intercultural communication, taking a course with international exchange students, etc.);
- training for support staff who are guiding students in educational planning—how to integrate IAH into the education plan;
- international guests and partners (via virtual mobility) are invited to lecture in courses in core curriculum.

**Informal curriculum practices:**

- Café lingua, where local and international students can meet and learn different languages;
- international summer school offered by Finnish degree programme, all students in the programme are encouraged to participate with international guests;
- family friendship programme: matching international students with local families;

- positive marketing/communication of IAH opportunities and value;
- students are invited to participate in international research projects;
- certificate programme developed for administrative staff (who work with international staff and students) consisting of language and intercultural courses;
- when an international opponent participates in a dissertation defence, in addition to the defence they are invited to give a public presentation or workshop on their research;
- Finnish students are tutors for international students.

**[Add side text to this section: Finding #5: The role of international staff and students in internationalisation at home]**

One aim that the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture was particularly interested in was the role that international staff and students play in internationalisation at home efforts. Finding number five illuminates how respondents (international officers, academics and student union representatives) found it easier to identify the role of international staff than students. The interview and survey data show that respondents consistently identified the role of especially the international teaching staff for bringing their unique pedagogical styles and international curriculum and literature into the classroom. On the other hand, a majority of the respondents mentioned how students were most often segregated from Finnish students, thus resulting in an unclear perception of the role international students have in internationalisation at home. One academic staff member discussed the missed opportunity to mix international students with domestic students:

*“Students of the English curriculum are separate from other students and aren’t integrated or utilised in internationalising other students.”*

**[Add side text to this section: Finding #6: Significant challenges, tensions and obstacles preventing internationalisation at home]**

Four broader challenges to implementing internationalisation at home were identified in the survey and interview data:

1. The unquestioned assumption that use of the English language (in courses, programmes, teaching, etc.) and the mere presence of international staff and students was a proxy for internationalisation at home.
2. Unclear language policies resulted in tensions in the working environment, especially for international staff members. For some Finnish staff members, with the increasing use of English, there was fear that the Finnish academic language would lose its position in higher education.

3. Integration of international students and staff is challenging and was viewed (by some respondents) as a missed opportunity for internationalisation at home.

**[Add side text to this section: A comprehensive approach to internationalisation at home is needed]**

### **Recommendations and next steps**

Overall, a comprehensive approach is needed from the national level all the way to the individual student level (Garam, 2012) that embeds internationalisation at home into wider national and institutional strategies. Since there are multiple key stakeholders implicated in realising these recommendations, it is important that an open dialogue develops between and among stakeholders in order to ensure a more comprehensive approach. Below are the final recommendations that were included in the last version of the report.

### **Recommendations**

**National level:** include internationalisation at home (measurable) indicators in institutional performance agreements and financing.

**Institutional level:** incorporation of internationalisation at home in wider internationalisation strategy and top down support.

- Support the faculty and programme level curriculum development process;
- support the professional development of teachers as well as the training for administrative staff to understand and implement internationalisation at home practices;
- communicate the value of internationalisation at home in policies and strategy documents;
- create opportunities to communicate and discuss the value and benefits of international/intercultural skills development with all staff and students (value of internationalisation at home for international working life and social cohesion);
- include internationalisation at home teaching methods into the teacher training evaluation process;
- include international at home criteria in teachers' career models, job descriptions and performance evaluations.

**Faculty/department/discipline level:** embed internationalisation at home in the curriculum development process.

- Design well-defined learning outcomes to develop international/intercultural competences;
- integrate intercultural communication and language studies into core curricula;
- include international literature, texts and research in core curricula;

- integrate Finnish and international students in joint courses and facilitate intercultural learning;
- implement measurement tools to assess the international/intercultural competences gained in core curriculum;
- reward academics for innovative internationalisation at home practices through existing institutional infrastructure.

**Teaching and administrative level:** develop teaching methods and assess international/intercultural competences.

- Develop teaching methods and intercultural pedagogy for a multicultural classroom;
- include diverse students' perspectives in the classroom;
- require new recruitments to have a defined set of language and intercultural communications skills.

**Administrative level:** develop intercultural skills to facilitate working with and supporting international students and staff.

- Offer language courses and intercultural training to administrative staff;
- require new recruitments to have a defined set of language and intercultural communications skills.

**Student level:** build internationalisation dimensions into personal study plans.

- Mobility opportunities built into degree programmes;
- mandatory course(s) in intercultural communication in the core curriculum;
- include joint courses with international students in core curricula (intentional internationalisation at home teaching methods used to promote intercultural learning);
- include core courses in foreign language other than English/Finnish;
- at least one course/module where a personal portfolio is designed highlighting all skills learned in coursework, including international/intercultural skills.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

As Finland engages with an increasingly multipolar global higher education community, demographics of the country grow more diverse, and only a small percentage of Finnish students participate in international mobility. Developing internationalisation at home practices has the potential to strengthen, in part, and to increase intercultural sensitivity within higher education. Progress in this regard allows higher education institutions—as crucial social institutions—to play more of a critical and constructive role with regard to the most serious demographically-driven challenges faced by Finland, the Nordic countries, Europe and globally. The findings of this study highlight how internationalisation at home in Finnish higher education needs far more

critical thought, fewer unquestioned assumptions, new types of dialogue and both strategy and intentional processes.

In exposing the fragmented nature and challenges of the current practice of internationalisation at home in Finland, this study serves as a 'call to action' for a larger national dialogue and more intentional institutional efforts to embed the international in teaching, the classroom and study plans. The promising practices highlighted in the findings offer a foundation for future development. As internationalisation at home efforts continue to evolve in Finland, some fundamental discussions need to occur. For example, the following topics/questions need deeper discussion and agreement: What are international/intercultural skills and how can these skills be measured by accurate and target-aimed indicators? How to ensure all students have equal opportunities to develop their international/intercultural skills? How to problematise and reframe current assumptions (e.g. internationalisation at home is occurring in English language spaces of engagement and with/among the international community)?

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