



water for people
UGANDA



ACCESS FOR ALL: **BUILDING SYSTEMS FOR** **A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

Targeted resource mobilization efforts further focused on priority areas such as climate change and health, urban WASH systems, healthcare waste management, and private sector engagement in faecal sludge management.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

FORE WORD

The year 2025 has been a defining moment for Water For People Uganda. It marked a deliberate shift from delivering projects to strengthening systems recognizing that sustainable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is not achieved through infrastructure alone, but through resilient institutions, inclusive markets, and accountable governance.

Across Uganda, we are still confronted with significant challenges. Too many communities particularly in rural and underserved areas continue to rely on basic or unimproved services. Rapid urbanization is placing increasing pressure on sanitation systems, while climate change threatens the reliability of water resources. These realities demand that we move beyond short-term solutions and invest in approaches that are scalable, sustainable, and inclusive.

In response, our work in 2025 focused on building strong systems at every level. At the national level, we contributed to strengthening the enabling environment through policy development, improved monitoring systems, and innovative financing approaches. At the sub-national level, we supported districts to integrate climate resilience into planning and service delivery, while advancing water resources management and piloting innovations that improve utility performance. At the local level, these efforts translated into tangible improvements in access, dignity, and livelihoods for communities.

One of the most encouraging developments has been the growth of the sanitation market, with households increasingly investing in improved facilities and local enterprises driving service delivery. This signals a shift toward sustainable, demand-driven solutions that can be scaled beyond project boundaries. At the same time, our investments in schools have reinforced the critical role of WASH in advancing education outcomes



and gender equality, ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to learn in a safe and dignified environment.

None of this progress would have been possible without strong partnerships. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Uganda, our development partners, private sector actors, and the communities we serve. Your collaboration, commitment, and shared vision continue to drive meaningful change across the sector.

As we look ahead, we remain guided by a simple but powerful ambition: to ensure that every person has access to reliable, safe, and sustainable WASH services Forever. Achieving this will require continued innovation, stronger systems, and unwavering commitment from all stakeholders.

I invite you to explore this report and join us in advancing solutions that not only expand access but ensure that services last for generations to come.

Brenda Achiro Muthemba
Country Director
Water For People Uganda



Executive Summary

In 2025, Water For People Uganda transitioned from project-based interventions to a systems-strengthening approach at scale, advancing sustainable WASH access through coordinated investments in infrastructure, markets, governance, financing, and data systems. Guided by the Destination 2030 strategy and aligned with SDG 6, the organization emphasized sustainability, climate resilience, and inclusivity.

At the national level, efforts strengthened the enabling environment through improved policies, data systems, and innovative financing. At the sub-national level, district capacity was enhanced through climate-responsive planning, water resource management, and operational innovations. At the local level, these efforts translated into expanded

access to sanitation and hygiene, stronger sanitation markets, improved urban services, and inclusive WASH infrastructure in schools and healthcare facilities.



Overall, the year demonstrated that integrated, systems-based approaches are key to delivering sustainable and scalable WASH impact.

2025 Impact At A Glance



198,639

People with basic Sanitation



400,240 m³

Faecal Sludge Safely Managed



USD 10M+

Household Sanitation Investment



66,223

Safely managed Sanitation



2,494

Sanitation enterprises supported



180,883

Hand washing Access



USD 272,353

Household Loans Utilized



5,290

Jobs Created



45 Districts

Served by WASH Call centers

Country Context and Sector Landscape

Uganda continues to face systemic and structural challenges in achieving universal access to safely managed water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. Despite ongoing sector investments, progress toward Sustainable

Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) remains uneven and insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population.

Nationally, access to safely managed services remains limited:

Country Context and Sector Landscape

Service	National Coverage
Safely managed drinking water	18%
Safely managed sanitation	20%
Basic hygiene services	25%

These trends highlight persistent gaps in the quality, reliability, and equity of WASH services in Uganda. A significant proportion of the population continues to rely on basic or unimproved services, exposing communities to health risks and limiting broader socioeconomic development.

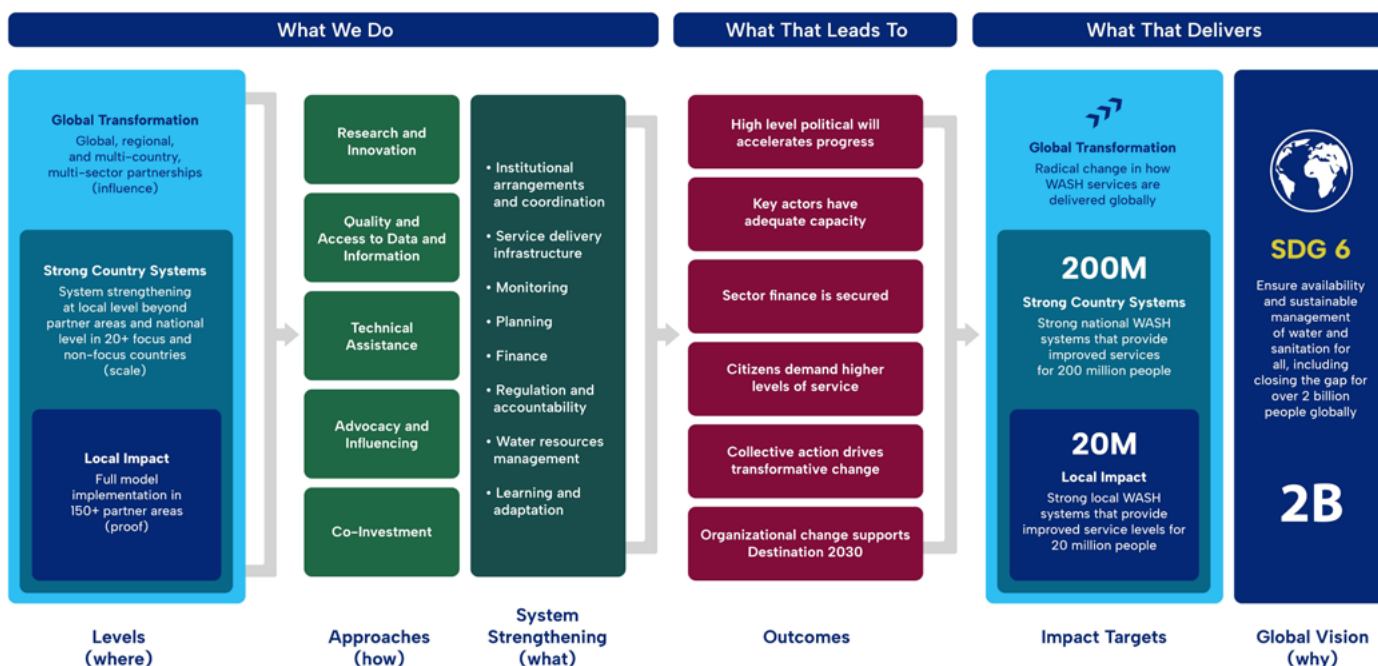
The disparities are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where structural barriers such as limited infrastructure, weak supply chains, and affordability constraints continue to hinder access. Many rural households rely on unimproved sanitation, experience ongoing open defecation, and lack access to basic hygiene facilities.

At the same time, rapid urbanization is placing increasing pressure on sanitation systems, especially in informal settlements. In many urban centers, faecal sludge management remains inadequate, leading to unsafe waste disposal, environmental degradation, and heightened public health risks.

These challenges are further compounded by broader systemic constraints, including fragmented governance, insufficient and unpredictable financing, weak data and monitoring systems, and limited integration of climate resilience into infrastructure and planning.



Theory of Change



Key Achievements

National Impact: Strengthening the Enabling Environment

In 2025, Water For People Uganda played a catalytic role in advancing national-level systems, policy frameworks, and strategic partnerships to create an enabling environment for sustainable WASH service delivery.





UWASNET

**THE
SDG PROGRAM**



The 15th Annual WASH CSOs Forum, convened by the Uganda Water and Sanitation Network (UWASNET) under the theme “WASH Innovations for Sustainable Development.”

Water For people Uganda participated in the WASH CSOs Forum. This forum brought together government, civil society, academia, private sector actors, cultural institutions, and community leaders to chart pathways towards universal access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in Uganda. It is a platform for knowledge exchange, innovation showcasing, and policy advocacy, ensuring that no one is left behind in the journey to achieve sustainable WASH solutions.

As stakeholders, we recognized the urgent need to address persistent challenges, including climate change impacts, infrastructure gaps, and inequitable access particularly in rural, peri-urban, and emergency contexts such as refugee settlements. This year’s focus highlights the transformative role of youth and women entrepreneurs, whose innovations are bridging gaps and driving solutions that are scalable, climate-resilient, and community-centered.



We added our voice to the call for stronger partnerships, increased investment, and actionable policy reforms aligned to Uganda’s National Development Plan IV



Uganda strengthens multi-sector coordination for sustainable WASH.

In 2025, Water For People Uganda contributed to strengthening Uganda's WASH sector at the national level through enhanced multi-sector coordination, policy development, system strengthening, and investment innovation. These efforts have reinforced the enabling environment required for sustainable, scalable, and resilient WASH service delivery.

A key milestone during the year was the advancement of multi-sector coordination mechanisms, bringing together government ministries and development partners to align priorities, harmonize interventions, and strengthen collective accountability. This coordination has played a pivotal role in steering improvements in the policy and legal framework, including the

development and refinement of critical national instruments such as the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy, the Healthcare Waste Management Strategy and Guidelines, the WASH Indicator Monitoring Guide, and the Sanitation Design Manual. These frameworks provide standardized guidance for service delivery, strengthen regulatory oversight, and enhance sector-wide coherence.

At the core of national impact was the strengthening of planning, monitoring, and accountability systems. The development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Environmental Health Workers, supported by a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework, has improved performance tracking and accountability at all levels. Complementing this, the rollout and operationalization of digital platforms including the WASH Management Information System (WASH-MIS) and the electronic Community Health Information System (e-CHIS) have enhanced real-time data collection, reporting, and evidence-



based decision-making across the sector.

These systemic improvements were matched by continued investments in WASH infrastructure development, contributing to expanded service coverage nationwide.

Key Achievements included



102

New construction piped water systems



462

Drilled Boreholes



54

Public Sanitation facilities within district local gov'ts

and the development of climate-resilient sanitation facilities in 20 healthcare facilities and 30 schools. In addition, the construction of regional incinerators strengthened healthcare waste management systems, addressing critical public health and environmental risks.

To address financing gaps and unlock sustainable investment, Water For People Uganda supported the advancement of innovative financing mechanisms. The WASH Cost of Inaction Study was finalized, providing a strong evidence base to inform advocacy, influence policy, and mobilize increased investment in the sector. In parallel, the introduction of results-based financing approaches for sanitation and hygiene demonstrated how performance-linked incentives can improve service delivery outcomes using existing resources.

Targeted resource mobilization efforts further focused on priority areas such as climate change and health, urban WASH systems, healthcare waste management, and private sector engagement in faecal sludge management. These efforts are expanding the financing landscape while strengthening the role of the private sector in delivering sustainable services.

The success of these initiatives was driven by strong collaboration between key government institutions, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Gender, Labour and

Social Development, and the Office of the Prime Minister, alongside development partners such as Water For People Uganda, IRC, World Health Organization, WaterAid, Pathfinder International,

and Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group. This multi-sector collaboration has strengthened alignment, reduced fragmentation, and enhanced collective impact.



Advancing WASH in Schools through High-Level Engagement

The 3rd Annual WASH in Schools Symposium held in Jinja brought together government leaders, development partners, civil society, and sector practitioners to advance dialogue on sustainable, inclusive, and accountable WASH systems within Uganda's education sector.

The symposium served as a critical platform for strengthening alignment across sectors, sharing evidence, and accelerating action toward ensuring that every learner has access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

Water For People Uganda played a

leading role by chairing a High-Level Panel on "Accelerating Investment and Accountability in WASH in Schools." The session convened key stakeholders, including representatives from the Parliamentary Forum on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Water and Environment, and UNICEF, to explore pathways for strengthening financing, accountability, and cross-sector coordination.

Discussions during the panel underscored the urgent need to move beyond fragmented interventions toward systemic, government-led solutions that can be sustained and scaled nationally.



Key priority actions emerging from the session included:

- Establishing dedicated budget lines for school WASH within national and subnational government frameworks
- Integrating WASH indicators into education sector performance monitoring systems
- Leveraging innovative financing mechanisms and transparent monitoring systems to ensure long-term sustainability

A central theme across the symposium was the recognition that achieving universal WASH access in schools requires stronger accountability mechanisms, reliable data systems, and coordinated multi-sector engagement.



Transforming Sanitation in Northern Uganda Through a New Partnership

In September 2025, Water For People Uganda and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) launched a EUR 532,643 partnership to improve access to safely managed sanitation in Kitgum Municipality and Pabbo Town Council. The two-year project, running from September 2025 to August 2027, was designed to benefit 39,280 people and 6 institutions by strengthening sanitation systems through sustainable, market-based approaches.

The initiative responds to persistent sanitation challenges in Uganda, where only 36% of urban residents have access to improved sanitation facilities and just 26% of excreta is safely managed. Northern Uganda faces even greater challenges, making targeted investments in sanitation critical to improving public health and advancing Sustainable Development Goal 6.

The project seeks to increase access safely managed household sanitation, improve WASH services in 6 primary schools through the construction of girl-friendly latrines and menstrual hygiene management facilities, and strengthen local sanitation markets by supporting masons, pit emptiers, and sanitation entrepreneurs. It also strengthens local planning and governance through the establishment of Sanitation Task Forces and the development of Town Sanitation Plans.

Implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Education and Sports, Kitgum Municipal Council, Pabbo Town Council, and private sector actors, the initiative lays the foundation for improved health outcomes, stronger local sanitation businesses, and more resilient sanitation systems in Northern Uganda



36%
urban residents have
access to improved
sanitation facilities

26%
of excreta is safely
managed

Sub-National Impact: Strengthening Systems and Planning

At the sub-national level, Water For People Uganda focused on strengthening district-level planning, coordination, and climate resilience integration.

Strengthening Water Resources Management in the Mpanga Catchment

Field Spotlight: Documenting Conservation Impact Across the Mpanga Catchment

In 2025, Water For People Uganda, in collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Environment and with support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, undertook a field documentation exercise to capture the impact of ongoing water resources management (WRM) interventions within the Mpanga Catchment.

The initiative forms part of a broader effort to strengthen sustainable water resources management practices in Kabarole District, including enhancing the knowledge management capacity of the Albert Water Management Zone and establishing a sustainable financing mechanism for WRM within the catchment.

Capturing Impact Across the Catchment



The documentation visit focused on collecting real-world experiences, stakeholder perspectives, and conservation outcomes across both upstream and downstream areas of the catchment, demonstrating how integrated approaches are improving ecosystem health and community livelihoods.

Upstream – Protecting Water Sources (Kabarole District)

In the upstream areas of River Mpanga, the team engaged stakeholders to document conservation practices that are safeguarding critical water sources. The findings highlighted how multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government, communities, and development partners is contributing to the protection of ecosystems that sustain water availability across the catchment.

Downstream – Linking Conservation to Livelihoods (Kamwenge District)

Further downstream in Kamwenge District, the documentation showcased how conservation efforts are being translated into sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

Key highlights included:

- Sustainable land management practices demonstrated by farmers in Busiriba, integrating soil and water conservation with climate-smart agriculture
- The successful restoration and regeneration of wetlands in Biguli Sub-county, particularly the Rwakasirabo wetland, which has improved ecosystem functionality and water retention
- Community-led livelihood initiatives emerging from restored ecosystems, including mud fishing, craft making, and wood carving demonstrating how conservation can directly support income generation

These interventions illustrate a critical shift from viewing conservation as a restriction to positioning it as an opportunity for economic empowerment and resilience.



Strengthening Systems for Sustainable Water Resources Management

The Mpanga Catchment initiative demonstrates how integrated water resources management (IWRM) can deliver both environmental and socio-economic benefits when supported by:

- Strong institutional coordination
- Community ownership and participation Sustainable financing mechanisms
- Knowledge generation and learning

By linking upstream conservation with downstream livelihoods, the approach ensures that water resources are managed as shared, interconnected systems.

Reducing Water Losses through the District Metered Area (DMA) Approach

From Reactive to Proactive Utility Management

Across many water supply systems, Non-Revenue Water (NRW) remains a major challenge, with nearly 30% of supplied water lost due to leaks, bursts, metering inaccuracies, and unauthorized use. This not only represents a significant financial loss for utilities but also undermines service reliability and sustainability.

In 2025, Water For People Uganda piloted the District Metered Area (DMA) approach as an innovative solution to improve utility

performance and reduce water losses. The pilot was implemented in two piped water supply systems in Biguli Subcounty, managed by the Mid-Western Umbrella of Water and Sanitation.

What the DMA Approach Changes

The DMA model introduces a data-driven, proactive approach to utility management, enabling utilities to monitor, detect, and respond to system inefficiencies in real time.

Key interventions under the pilot included:

- Zoning of hydraulic networks into 10 District Metered Areas (DMAs), allowing for localized monitoring of water flows and losses
- Installation of ultrasonic meters and data transfer units, enabling real-time remote monitoring of system performance
- Capacity building of utility staff, including training on operation and maintenance of meters and application of the DMA methodology

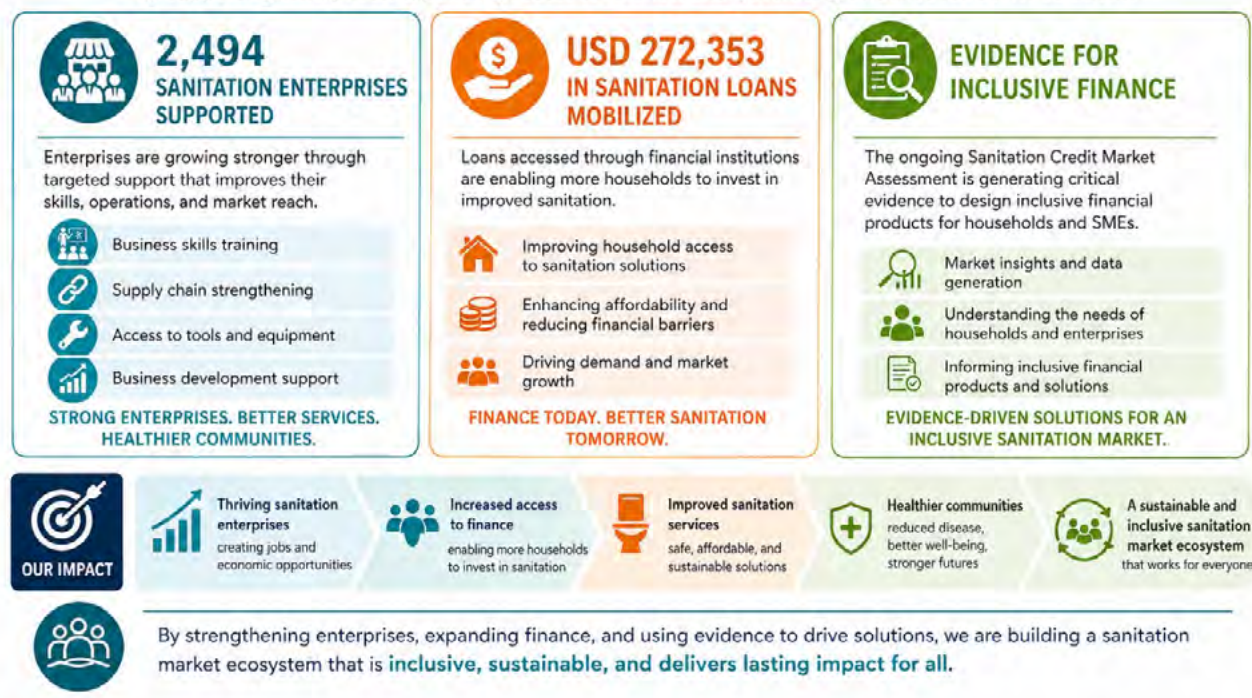
Early Impact and Expected Outcomes

By breaking down large, complex systems into manageable zones, the DMA approach allows utilities to:

STRENGTHENING THE SANITATION MARKET ECOSYSTEM

Building enterprises. Expanding finance. Driving access.

Water For People Uganda is strengthening a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable sanitation market by supporting enterprises, expanding access to finance, and generating evidence for better solutions.



- Quickly identify and isolate leaks and inefficiencies
- Improve water accountability and reduce losses
- Optimize system performance and operational decision-making

The pilot is expected to significantly reduce Non-Revenue Water, improve service reliability, and enhance the financial sustainability of water supply systems.

A Scalable Model for Uganda

Beyond immediate results, the DMA pilot represents a shift in how utilities manage water systems from reactive maintenance to proactive, data-driven management.

With promising early progress, the approach offers strong potential for replication and scale across Uganda, particularly in small-town and rural piped systems where NRW remains a persistent challenge.

Local Impact: Delivering Services and Driving Behavior Change

At the local level, Water For People Uganda translated systems strengthening into tangible improvements in service delivery and community outcomes.

Through integrated interventions:

In 2025, Water For People Uganda scaled one of the country's most comprehensive sanitation market interventions through the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF), demonstrating the power of market-based approaches to deliver sustainable sanitation at scale.

The program reached 198,639 people with basic sanitation services, while 66,223 people progressed to safely managed sanitation, reflecting not only increased access but improved service quality. In parallel, 180,883 people gained access to handwashing facilities, reinforcing critical hygiene practices at household level.

Beyond access, the program catalysed a broader economic transformation within the sanitation sector. Households invested over USD 10 million in sanitation improvements, complemented by USD 272,353 mobilized through sanitation



loans, signaling a growing shift toward sanitation as a household priority and financial investment.

At the supply side, 2,494 sanitation enterprises were supported, generating 5,290 jobs, including significant participation of women. This demonstrates a clear transition from subsidy-driven approaches toward self-sustaining, demand-led sanitation markets, where local businesses play a central role in service delivery.

School WASH and Gender Equity: Advancing Inclusive Learning Environments

In 2025, Water For People Uganda strengthened its commitment to inclusive, safe, and dignified learning environments by scaling investments in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) within schools. Recognizing the critical link between WASH, education outcomes, and gender equality, the program prioritized interventions that address the needs of girls, children with disabilities, and other vulnerable learners.

A total of 36 sanitation blocks were constructed, significantly improving access to safe and adequate sanitation facilities across targeted schools. These were complemented by the installation of WASHaLOT handwashing systems, promoting proper hygiene practices and reducing the risk of disease transmission within school environments.

Beyond infrastructure, the interventions were intentionally designed to be gender-responsive and inclusive. Facilities incorporated:

- Dedicated spaces for menstrual hygiene management (MHM), ensuring privacy, safety, and dignity for girls
- Disability-friendly designs, improving accessibility for learners with physical impairments
- Improved pupil-to-stance ratios, reducing congestion and enhancing usability

These investments have contributed to measurable improvements in the school environment, including:



Reduced absenteeism, particularly among girls during menstruation

Increased retention and participation of learners

Improved hygiene behaviors among students and staff

Importantly, the interventions also addressed behavioural and systemic barriers by promoting hygiene education and strengthening school-level management of WASH facilities, ensuring that infrastructure investments are sustained over time.

Driving Gender Equality Through WASH

School WASH interventions are a critical entry point for advancing gender equality in education. By addressing menstrual hygiene challenges and improving access to safe sanitation, Water For People Uganda is helping to remove barriers that disproportionately affect girls' education.

The integration of gender-responsive design within WASH infrastructure ensures that schools are not only functional, but also inclusive and empowering spaces where all learners can thrive.





Integrated Impact

Across all programmatic areas, 2025 demonstrates a clear evolution
 From delivering services to building systems that sustain those services.
Market-based approaches · Institutional Strengthening · Climate resilience
Digital innovation · Sustainable financing mechanisms

OUR PARTNERS



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