








## Stakeholder Communication and Its Impact on Participatory Development Planning in Rural Areas



Adhi Iman Sulaiman<sup>1</sup>, Shinta Prastyanti<sup>1</sup>, Tri Nugroho Adi<sup>1</sup>, Chusmeru<sup>1</sup>, Wiwik Novianti<sup>1\*</sup>,  
Rili Windiasih<sup>2</sup>, Sri Weningsih<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Communication Science Department, Jenderal Soedirman University, Purwokerto 53122, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Sociology Department, Jenderal Soedirman University, Purwokerto 53122, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Department of Education Management, Indonesia Open University, Purwokerto 53122, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: [adhi.sulaiman@unsoed.ac.id](mailto:adhi.sulaiman@unsoed.ac.id)

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### ABSTRACT

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*stakeholder communication, development planning, participatory approach, rural development, path analysis*

This study delves into the dynamics of stakeholder communication within the realm of Participatory Development Planning (PDP) in rural regions, which are predominantly marked by a potent patriarchal culture. Utilizing a quantitative explanatory survey approach paired with path analysis, data was compiled from 40 local stakeholders. These respondents included representatives from the village government, as well as members of socio-economic and cultural factions within the village community. Our research underscores that the stakeholder communication processes within PDP are of high intensity, though this intensity wanes when interactions with regional government organizations come into play. Further, the study finds that the unique characteristics and aspirations of stakeholders wield significant influence over the PDP communication process. These insights offer a valuable understanding of the complexities of stakeholder communication in rural development planning, with an emphasis on the necessity to bolster communication with regional government organizations. It is inferred from the study that the quality of development planning and programs, even at a grassroots level, hinges on the competencies of stakeholders, their ability to articulate interests founded on the real needs and challenges of the community, and their capacity to transform these interests into public policy through effective communication with government organizations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder communication within Participatory Development Planning (PDP) is an extensive process that commences at the village level and percolates upwards to the sub-district, district, provincial, and finally, the national level. This study narrows its focus to PDP activities at the village and sub-district stages, where they serve as a forum for stakeholder communication, representing village communities aiming to plan and dream up development programs. These programs take shape in the form of annual Regional Government Work Plans at the village and sub-district levels.

PDP is an annual deliberative forum, carried out in a participatory manner by village stakeholders who have a vested interest in resolving village issues. These stakeholders, who will be directly impacted by the outcomes of these deliberations, convene to agree on a plan of action for the following fiscal year.

The communication process between stakeholders is not just essential—it is the linchpin in the efficacy of PDP activities. The quality and clarity of communication shape the trajectory and structure of societal development.

Literature review findings confirm that communication is a vital conduit for the exchange of experiences and ideas, serving as a catalyst for change. Practices within development communication help to foster new programs and innovative

thoughts to bolster development. The pivotal role of communication in policy-making creates a path for stakeholders to construct and propel emerging developments [1-8].

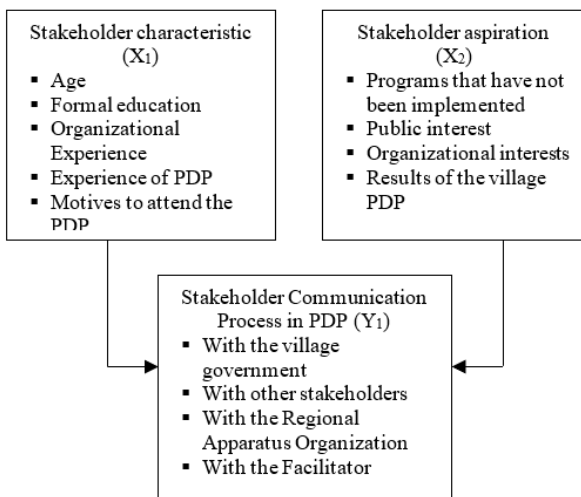
In evaluating the stakeholder communication during the 2022 Participatory Development Planning (PDP), several issues were identified through our research:

- 1) The planning focus is not rooted in the community's aspirations, issues, and needs, resulting in a lack of mutual trust and openness.
- 2) There is a noticeable deficiency in the stakeholders' sense of ownership, awareness, and cooperative attitude, particularly in voluntarily sharing data and information, and participating in PDP activities.
- 3) PDP fails to address all strategic issues at the local level.
- 4) There is a mismatch between development programs and the actual needs of the community.
- 5) The public's understanding of PDP implementation is limited and is perceived merely as a formality of annual routine activities.
- 6) Communication skills are weak, with inaccuracies in message delivery (development programs) and insufficient feedback intensity [9-16].

Based on these findings, the importance of the role of stakeholders as community representatives and their

communication process in advocating for their interests becomes evident. It is crucial for stakeholders to identify, analyze, and formulate participatory development programs that genuinely reflect community needs, local resource potential, and the issues the community faces.

Literature studies from various sources serve as a theoretical framework, highlighting the vital role stakeholder communication plays in participatory planning. This process is vital in producing development programs that are more dialogical, transparent, egalitarian, democratic, accountable, and constructive, in line with the community's challenges, potential, and developmental needs. The success of organizational program goals and implementation for the public, based on mutual understanding and agreement, is significantly influenced by the quality of stakeholder communication [17-26].



**Figure 1.** Stakeholder communication framework in the village development planning forum

Given the importance of stakeholder communication in the planning process of development programs that lead to public policies, as evidenced by research and literature studies, we have designed a theoretical framework as illustrated in Figure 1.

The framework (Figure 1) of this research shows that the dependent variable ( $X_1$ ) encompasses stakeholder characteristics, which include elements such as age, educational status, organizational experience, experience in PDP, and motives for participating in PDP. The variable  $X_2$  represents stakeholder aspirations, as indicated by unimplemented development programs, public and organizational interests, and the alignment with PDP outcomes at the village level. These independent variables ( $X_1$  and  $X_2$ ) influence the dependent variable ( $Y$ ), which is the stakeholder communication process with the village government, other stakeholders, regional apparatus organization, and the PDP Facilitator.

This research significantly underscores the role of stakeholders in formulating, implementing, and evaluating development programs within the PDP mechanism in the village region, particularly in Tegal Regency. As a unique and attractive tourist destination that offers herbal health tourism and Blerang hot springs nestled in the mountains of Central Java Province, Indonesia, the area warrants specific attention.

The study commences with an evaluation of stakeholder communication during the 2022 PDP period, offering up-to-

date recommendations. The results shed light on the characteristics of PDP participants, championed aspirations, and the communication process from stakeholders, which is vital in village Participatory Development Planning.

Employing a quantitative survey method with path analysis, the study explores the influence of stakeholders' characteristics and aspirations as community representatives on the communication process of local-level development planning.

The primary purpose of this research is to dissect the communication process in PDP implementation. More specifically, this study aims to:

- 1) Describe the characteristics of the participants in the village Participatory Development Planning.
- 2) Analyze the factors that influence the stakeholder communication process in the village Participatory Development Planning (PDP).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research applies an explanatory quantitative method with path analysis [27, 28]. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, with ordinal data then transformed into interval or ratio data using the Method of Successive Intervals (MSI). The process of converting ordinal data into interval data involves the following steps:

- 1) Calculate the frequency of each respondent's answer choice.
- 2) Divide each number in the frequencies by the total number of respondents to determine the proportion of each answer choice.
- 3) Based on these proportions, calculate the cumulative proportion for each answer choice for each question.
- 4) Determine the Z value (standard deviation score) for each answer choice category.
- 5) Calculate the Scale Value (SV)—the general interval value—for each answer choice using the suitable formula:

$$Scale = \frac{\text{density at lower limit} - \text{density at upper limit}}{\text{area under upper limit} - \text{area under lower limit}}$$

The research samples were selected from stakeholders who participated in the Village PDP. These stakeholders include village governments, non-governmental civil societies, community economic institutions such as small and medium enterprises, farmer groups, educational communities, community leaders, cultural leaders, Integrated Service Posts, Family Welfare Empowerment, and Youth Organizations. The research evaluated two village locations in the Balapulang District in Tegal Regency, Central Java Province of Indonesia.

Using a quantitative approach, quota sampling was applied to select 30 stakeholders or PDP participants from each of four selected villages, yielding a total sample size of 120 participants. The research locations were chosen considering that these four villages are the supporting areas for the most advanced and popular tourism objects in Tegal Regency: Balapulang Timur Village and Balapulang Barat Village in Balapulang Subdistrict, and Kalibakung Village and Karangjambu Village in Balapulang, Central Java Province of Indonesia.

Kalibakung District was chosen for its reputation as one of the most famous and advanced tourist destinations in the

Central Java Province of Indonesia, renowned for its unique health tourism, distinctive herbal drinks, sulfur hot springs from Slamet mountains, and Agro-tourism.

Proportional respondents from four locations were selected in terms of quantity and group classification. These stakeholders represented the community and were from non-governmental civil societies, community economic institutions such as small and medium enterprises, farmer groups, educational communities, community leaders, cultural leaders, integrated service posts, and family welfare empowerment.

Questionnaires were administered to selected stakeholders using the interview guide technique to fully control the validity of the responses. The questions pertained to stakeholder characteristics such as age, educational status, experience in organizing and participating in PDP, motives for participating in PDP, and the influence of stakeholder aspirations on communication processes with other institutions to develop programs.

The questionnaire distribution process received permissions from the campus and local government, ensuring respondents' freedom to answer and guaranteeing their anonymity.

The research used path analysis with the Lisrel 8.80 program and tested the hypothesis partially with the t-test (significance levels at  $\alpha$  5% = 1.978 and  $\alpha$  10% = 1.656). It also employed construct validity to measure the concept's ability. The validity test and reliability test process used the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) Version 21 application program with  $r$ -Table = 0.444. The Cronbach's Alpha method was applied, measuring based on the Cronbach's Alpha scale of 0 to 1 to yield instrument reliability. The effect testing was carried out with path analysis using the Lisrel 8.80 program and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structure) version 23.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

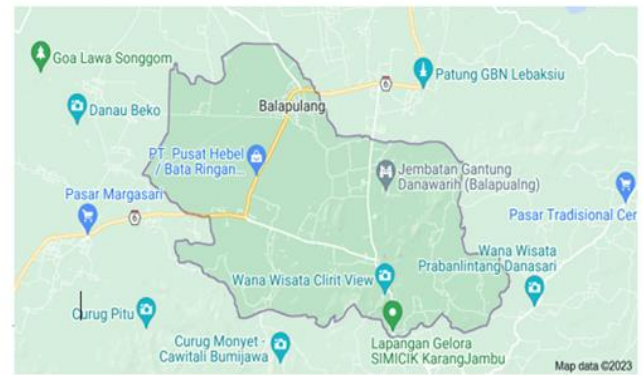
The research location was concentrated in Balupalang Subdistricts as the support area of top tourism in Tegal Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. The Statistic Bureau in 2022 mentions that Balupalang Subdistrict is situated 13km to the south of Slawi (the capital city of Tegal Regency) and its government center is at Balupalang Kulon Village, comprising an area of 74,91 km<sup>2</sup> or 8.52% of Tegal Regency and is inhabited by 82,040 people (40,547 men and 41,493 women).

Balupalang Subdistrict (Figure 2) is mostly lowland with an average altitude of 109 meters above sea level. Some of the southeastern parts are hilly (660m above sea level) and bordered by Kalibakung Village, Bukateja Village, and Bumijawa Subdistrict. Most of the communities in Balupalang Subdistrict are farmers, breeders, teak furniture manufacturers, traders, civil servants, and entrepreneurs.

Some of them have migrated to other big cities in Indonesia. The people of Balupalang Subdistrict speak Banyumas Javanese with Tegal dialect known as Ngapak in their daily life. Balupalang Subdistrict is a very fertile land, partly consisting of ricefield, agricultural land, and productive forest of teak and pine, and therefore, protected by forest rangers. Balupalang Subdistrict is part of the western and southern part of Tegal and is bordered by Brebes Regency, Central Java Province.

The research focuses on rural deliberations in the village

Participatory Development Planning at the village level as a stakeholder communication forum representing the community at the grassroots level to discuss and agree on the results of meetings at the neighborhood and hamlet levels.



**Figure 2.** Map of research location  
source: Statistics bureau (2023)

The stakeholders involved who attend the village Participatory Development Planning can be groups, organizations, and individuals interested in the decision-making and implementation process of development.

Stakeholders here are elements of village government staff, especially in governance and economic development, who sometimes serve as facilitators.

The stakeholders are community and religious leaders, and teachers, while stakeholders from representatives of community organizations are the head of the village, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), family welfare development, integrated health service, the chairperson and management of the youth organization, and the head of the neighborhood, and hamlet.

#### 3.1 Characteristics and aspirations of stakeholders in PDP

The number of respondents in this study was 40 stakeholders who participated in rural deliberations in the village Participatory Development Planning; their descriptions are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristics in the village participatory development planning

Indicator	Category	Number	%
Age	Young (25-45 years)	37	30.8
	Old (46-≥56 years)	83	69.2
Formal Education	Low (≤Elementary-High School)	103	85.8
	High (≥Diploma-Graduate)	17	14.2
Organization Experience	Inexperience (≤1-2 years)	41	34.2
	Experienced (3-≥4 years)	79	65.8
PDP Experience	Inexperience (≤1-2 years)	52	43.3
	Experienced (3-≥4 years)	68	56.7
Motive Attending Village PDP	Substitute	14	11.6
	Public Interest	65	54.2
	Organizational Interests	41	34.2

As participants of the village Participatory Development Planning (PDP), stakeholders consist of community leaders and organizational management, generally from the elder who has long been active in organizations in the community and actively participated in the PDP.

Stakeholders from senior circles in the community are community and institutional leaders who have long served as opinion leaders who are influential, respected, and can determine the pattern of life in the countryside [29-31].

The younger generation generally works outside the region and is only represented in the youth organization. Table 1 shows that the stakeholders are generally elderly, have low education levels, have organizational experience, have experience participating in the village PDP, and have motives to participate in the village Participatory Development Planning for the benefit of the community.

Stakeholders with the old category have advantages and have experience in the planning process of development programs in the PDP; they also already have experience in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development.

Senior stakeholders have weaknesses like dominating the process and implementation of the PDP program because they have experience and control of the forum. They have a conflict of interest between representing and aspirations of their groups or community institutions; on the other hand, they support the government's interests because they already have a special closeness with bureaucrats.

The stakeholder's role was crucial in development, especially involving the younger generation the next generation, which must be a severe concern for the sustainability of welfare and development progress. The younger generation should be the determinant, and the development actor is not a development problem, not only looking for work but having the ability and expertise in creating jobs towards economic independence [32-36].

Therefore, senior stakeholders are expected to become cadres of the younger generation as the successors of development in the village by involving them in formulating and implementing the PDP program by carrying out training on the mechanism of PDP implementation and the formulation of development programs.

Young stakeholders who have high education, skills, and digital technology capabilities can support the implementation of development programs, especially in packaging, brand design, standardization, and licensing processes for small business products, including digital promotion and marketing through social media.

Village and regional governments must also have the political will to regenerate development actors from the younger generation by providing training on the mechanism of PDP implementation procedures, communication and deliberation techniques, identification and analysis of needs, and potential-based development programs.

According to Table 2, the respondents' aspirations for the village Participatory Development Planning in the four research locations.

**Table 2.** Aspirations in rural deliberations

Aspirations Brought	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Based on development programs that have not been implementing	Unimportant	9	07.5
	Important	111	92.5
Based on the interests of the community	Unimportant	11	09.2
	Important	109	90.8
Based on organizational interests	Unimportant	57	47.5
	Important	63	52.5
Based on the results of the village PDP	Unimportant	6	05.0
	Important	114	95.0

Stakeholders bring their aspirations to rural deliberations in the village PDP to be proposed, discussed, compiled in an order of priority and agreed upon in deliberation groups for four development areas: government, socio-culture, economy, and infrastructure.

The aspirations brought are based on various interests, as in Table 2, that the essential aspirations brought by stakeholders in the village Participatory Development Planning are: (1) Aspirations based on the results of the village PDP. (2) Aspirations based on proposed development programs that have not been implementing. (3) Aspirations from society.

According to stakeholders, aspirations based on organizational interests are aspirations that are categorized as not important according to stakeholders, meaning that the interests of the village community are considered more critical and prioritized.

Stakeholders should aspire to interests based on the problems, potentials, and needs of the community. Because stakeholders are representatives of the community both institutionally and individually as community leaders [37-40].

Stakeholder aspirations in the PDP are expected to be participatory based on an analysis of real community needs, potential local resources, and community problems. So that aspirations start from deliberation activities at grassroots levels such as neighborhood associations and community units with assistance from facilitators from the government, community institutions, and academia.

Furthermore, the development program designed and proposed in the village PDP must also evaluate the previous year's development, and priority programs have been arranged in three development areas, namely socio-cultural, economic, government, and infrastructure development.

An effective development program stems from the participatory aspirations of all parties, including the young generation who are energetic and dynamic and have a vision for the future that can adapt to the advancements and challenges of the times [41-44].

The results of the PDP in the form of a development program should be disseminated to the public so that they know they are interested and involved in the implementation of development so that development becomes a shared property and responsibility.

The dissemination of development programs resulting from the PDP can be carried out by creating dialogue forums with the community and digital technology media such as social media, village, and regional government websites.

Socialization and development implementation program are characteristics of good governance with transparency and accountability through participatory dialogue forums and digital information media. So that development belongs to and is a shared responsibility between government, private and civil society stakeholders times [45-49].

### 3.2 Factors affecting stakeholders' communication in PDP

The results of the path coefficient are to determine the effect of indicators from characteristic variables and aspirations by stakeholders on the communication process in the village Participatory Development Planning (Table 3).

Referring to Table 3 the influence of stakeholder characteristics on the communication process that have real effects are (1) Stakeholders' motives to participate in the village Participatory Development Planning for the benefit of the community and the organization's interests.

**Table 3.** Path coefficients of the influence of characteristics and aspirations indicators on the communication process in the village PDP

Variable (X)	Indicators Influence (X) toward the Communication Process (Y <sub>1</sub> )	Path Coefficient
Stakeholder Characteristics	Age	-0.12
	Formal Educational Level	0.21*
	Organizational Experience	0.08
	PDP Experience	0.24*
	Motive attending village PDP	-0.15
	Substituting other	
	Public Interest	0.38*
Stakeholder Aspiration	Organization Interest	0.28*
	Development programs that have not been implementing	0.12
	Public interest	0.32*
	Organizational interests	0.26*
	Results of the village PDP	0.46*

Notes: \*\* significant effect at  $\alpha=0.05$ . \* significant effect at  $\alpha=0.10$ .

It means that the stronger the stakeholders' motives to participate in the village Participatory Development Planning for the benefit of the community and organization, the higher the intensity of communication in the village Participatory Development Planning.

The influence of this motive is because stakeholders as participants of the village Participatory Development Planning consist of elements from community leaders and representatives of community organizations.

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the motives for participating in the village Participatory Development Planning are generally for the benefit of the community and organization.

The strong motive of stakeholders is founded in the deliberation group in the infrastructure sector: longer deliberation time, more participants, more dynamism, and debate.

(2) Experience in participating in village Participatory Development Planning, meaning that the longer the experience of stakeholders in participating in village Participatory Development Planning, the higher the intensity of communication in village Participatory Development Planning compared to organizational experience.

Based on direct observation, stakeholders who have experience in village Participatory Development Planning are more courageous and skilled in communicating or expressing opinions.

The results of the descriptive analysis show that more stakeholders have experience in village Participatory Development Planning.

(3) The level of formal education, meaning that the higher the level of formal education of the stakeholders, the higher the intensity of communication in the village Participatory Development Planning.

Meanwhile, age, organizational experience, and motives for participating in the village Participatory Development Planning to substitute someone else do not influence the communication process in the village Participatory Development Planning.

Several studies have shown that stakeholder characteristics determine the decision-making process and development process. The community has much discussion but only involves citizens who are most motivated and voluntarily to participate, involving people who are better off in terms of

income, education, and status [50-56].

However, the zeal for deliberation has erased differences across class, occupation, gender, nationality, and culture. Social phenomena are influenced by decisions or actions, identifying individuals, groups, and organizations involved in the decision-making process. The quality of the proposal of PDP is bottom-up and influenced by the physical environment and the characteristics of the community in the region itself.

As decision-makers at the local level, stakeholders from various elements who live and work between rural and urban areas are very knowledgeable about their area. The essence of deliberation is to share knowledge and information openly; all opinions are considered equally important and consider all available information before producing collective conclusions [57-59].

Furthermore, the influence of stakeholder aspirations that significantly affect the communication process are (1) Important aspirations based on the results of the rural Participatory Development Planning. (2) Important aspirations based on community interests. (3) Important aspirations based on organizational interests.

It means that the essential aspirations fought for by stakeholders based on the results of the village, the interests of the community, and the organization will further increase the intensity of communication in rural Participatory Development Planning. Aspiration indicators based on development programs that have not been implemented have no significant effect on the communication process in the village PDP.

Aspirations based on the rural Participatory Development Planning results, programs that have not been implemented, and community aspirations are included in the critical category.

Stakeholders seek their interests of proposal results for the rural Participatory Development Planning by providing a score, compiling a period, and agreeing on a development program proposal in a deliberation group for the four development: the infrastructure sector rather than the government, economic, and socio-cultural sector groups.

Therefore stakeholders' aspirations in the rural Participatory Development Planning for the benefit of the community are more influential than those of the organization. PDP should produce a list of priority scale community needs, not just what the community wants according to available funds [60-65].

Community participation will improve the deliberative development planning process and form a cycle of aspirational regional development planning stages. Interesting information messages are messages related to society's needs and how to get those needs.

The deliberation involves four steps to creating a solid information base, identifying and prioritizing fundamental values, identifying various solutions, and weighing the pros and cons of decisions that result in sustainable development programs.

Dialogue forums can accommodate more community suggestions and identify factors that influence the use of information technology in the formulation and decision-making process development program. Deliberate could be creating effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency related to regulatory control and internet accessibility for transparency, accountability, and digital literacy [66-70].

Therefore, the aspirations that are fought for can be by identifying problems and analyzing the potential of the village community's human, natural and economic resources.

Government programs could improve to manage administration and public services, and the economic sector empowers and assists programs for small businesses, agriculture, and fisheries.

The sociocultural sector can improve public health services such as mother, child, family, and environment and support religious activities, development, and preservation of local culture. The empowerment activity through organizing socialization, training, and assistance for stakeholders in the village regarding planning, implementation, reporting, and evaluation of development by a regional development planning agency.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The most important stakeholder characteristics influencing the communication process in the PDP are the community and organizational interests with the village development program that needs to be maintained as social capital. Experience and education are also important to provide opportunities for the younger generation as successors to development.

The most influential aspects of stakeholder communication in aspiring community interests in the PDP are conformity with PDP results, and consistent community and organizational interests according to stakeholder characteristics. Aspirations in the PDP are the result of a study of the problems, needs, and potential of the community and organization.

Comparative research on PDP mostly analyzes the satisfaction of development programs, development budget analysis, and community welfare studies. Meanwhile, this research has produced novelty about the importance of stakeholder characteristics as development communicators at the local level and the aspirations conveyed as the interests of organizations and communities in PDP based on the problems, needs, and potential of the community itself.

The theoretical implication is that PDP is a practice and study of democratization at the local level that was studied using quantitative methods limited to influence tests. Therefore, the limitations of the research results can be further researched by creating models of participatory development communication, persuasive communication studies, lobbying and negotiation, communication management, and organizational communication. This includes using qualitative methods such as case studies and participatory methods with research locations in urban, coastal, and border areas.

The practical implication of the results of this study is that PDP is a democratic forum at the local level that is important for determining the direction of development programs that must be following the aspirations of the needs, real problems, and potential that exist in the village.

This research confirms that stakeholder communication from participatory community organizations at the village level is very important to balance or complement development programs that have been dominated by technocratic city or central government stakeholders. Because the rural area is a producer and supplier of basic needs from agriculture, plantations, fisheries, and marine products. Therefore, rural development is very strategic because it can be the foundation of regional and national development.

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