



# Sligo Family Resource Centre

## Annual Report 2015

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[www.sligofamilyresourcecentre.org](http://www.sligofamilyresourcecentre.org)



## Introduction

Sligo Family Resource Centre (FRC) has been in operation since 1995. Based at 49 The Mall, Sligo this FRC is one of 106 FRCs under the FSA Programme based throughout the country.

Mission of Sligo FRC is to:

*support individuals, families and communities without discrimination and in a warm, caring and open environment by identifying changing needs and responding to those needs positively.*

The FRC is currently on the second year of its three year strategic plan 2015-2017 which is designed to achieve the following objectives all of which are linked to the Túsla Child and Family Agency National Programme Outcomes: that parents and children:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.
3. Are safe and protected from harm.
4. Have economic security and opportunity.
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

The Sligo FRC outcomes are as follows:

- That individuals, families and groups have access to a range of supports and services that enable and promote participation in society
- That people actively avail of a variety of community-based learning and development opportunities
- That children's holistic development is nourished in a safe, comfortable and fun environment.
- That individuals and families are supported in times of need
- That minority individuals and groups are empowered to participate in their wider community

This was an exciting year for Sligo FRC as we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Centre in May. With two staff still remaining in the FRC since that time, we celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> May which also coincided with the International Day of the Family. The guests on the day included the Mayor, Counsellor Tom McSharry, John Perry TD, Senator Susan O Keefe, previous chairpersons and board of management members including a former now retired FAS link worker who travelled from Cork for the occasion, families who have used the Centre over the years and colleagues from other services that we work with. We provided entertainment in the form of the Mad Hatters Tea Party, singer Peter Mooney, musicians Áine and Brendan Martin and Cos Cos Sean Nós dancers from Rathcormac.



Other distinguished visitors to the FRC in 2015 included the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs James Reilly who visited in April meeting staff and board of management members. He was particularly interested in the work we are doing with Danú birth mothers.

In August Gordon Jeyes, CEO of Túsla Child and Family Agency visited the FRC to hear directly from staff an account of the work they do in the Family Support Service every day with families.

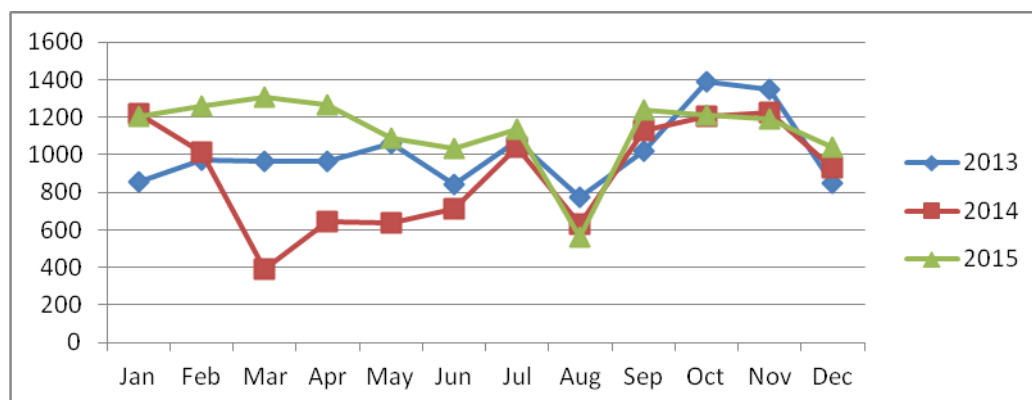
The building got a facelift with the local Tidy Towns committee kindly agreeing to paint the front of the building in time for the Sligo Fleadh and the capital grant from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs which enabled us to create a new entrance, reception area and access to the ground floor of both buildings, a bigger disabled toilet and a revamped play area for children.

A statistical analysis of every aspect of Sligo FRC's work is made annually through the FRC's SPEAK (Strategic Planning Education and Knowledge) recording system. This annual report is intended to give you a flavour of the various events and activities engaged by the FRC in 2014.



## Information and Services

Sligo FRC welcomes any member of the community to avail of its programmes and services and/or to find out more about other services or opportunities in Sligo. Below is an indication of the footfall in the FRC over the past three years. It peaked in 2015 with 13,519 people up from 10,773 in 2014.



These figures only include the people who come into the FRC, however, and do not include the outreach work carried out by the FRC staff in the family support service and support to adults with learning disabilities service.

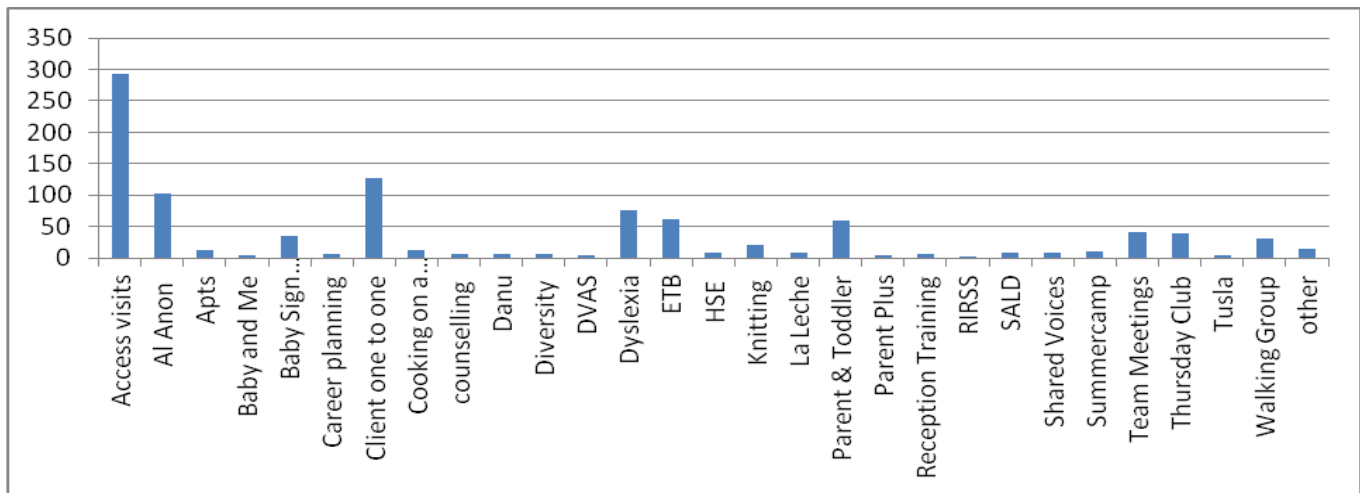
**Information** is provided through a selection of leaflets, fliers, posters and websites at the front office. Staff can respond to a range of queries through the bank of knowledge built up in reception. **Administrative support** such as design work, photocopying and printing is also available at the Centre.



The **Front Sitting Room** provides respite for busy parents and carers who can drop in to comfortable facilities for a bit of time out and a cup of tea. Children can play or read and adults can meet to chat or feed a baby. The **Outdoor Garden/Play area** offers excellent play opportunities and a good meeting point for parents, particularly those who have attended groups or **Footprints Crèche**. Rooms for **Access**

visits are also available and these families can avail of all the facilities outlined as part of these visits.

**Meeting rooms** at the Centre are available for hire at subsidised rates to facilitate community groups and organisations to meet. In 2015, 1,026 sessions took place in various rooms at the Centre for meeting or training purposes by the following organisations – up from 489 the previous year. The variety of groups, individuals, services who use the rooms are outlined below:



Other includes: Adoptive Parents (1) Family Welfare conference (1), Feilechan (1), MABS (1) RIRSS (3), SEED (1), SIF (1) and the Slign Group (4)

## Community based education, training and social integration opportunities

Sligo FRC works with May Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board to provide a variety of training opportunities in the community. During the year, 155 parents/carers/grandparents and 184 toddlers attended the **Parent and Toddler Drama** with Deirdre Gaule in the FRC on Tuesday and Friday mornings, which consists of a programme of music and drama to develop toddlers' language and movement.



Associated with the drama group is the annual Christmas party with Santa and his helpers in December.

The **Monday Walking Group** which was led all year by Alex Street, continued on a regular basis during 2015. 30 adults availed of the support and companionship of other walkers throughout the year.

During the year 20 women attended the **Sewing classes** and 13 attended the **Cooking on a Budget with Household Management**. These classes are about developing skills among women of diverse backgrounds, from Globe House and Sligo's settled community. Both of these were funded by MSL ETB.

Sligo FRC ran two **Summer Camps** during July for 24 children aged 4-6 years. The children had a great week of trips to Calry Pet Farm, the Garda station, Fire Station, Doorly Park and Centre based activities including arts and crafts, messy play, face-painting and music and dance.



## Parent Support Initiatives

The **Adoptive Parents Group** met twice during 2015 one to meet with prospective adoptive parents and discuss issues relating to adoption and the second to organise their annual Christmas Party. It was held this year in Merville and was attended by 8 families. Sligo FRC worked with the local Túsla Adoption Services to organise a seminar for adoptive parents and their children in Sligo and Donegal – it was hosted by Ruth Kelly and Mary D Healey in Donegal town FRC. Sligo FRC manager and an adoptive parent also attended a meeting in Athlone entitled Adoption in Ireland: a Meeting of Adoption Support Groups organised by Western Inter-country Adoption Organisation (WIAO) in June 2015.

The **Danú Birth Parent Support Group** has been in operation for the past 10 years as a result of collaborative work between Sligo FRC and St Attracta's Adoption Agency. This year Danú were awarded €3,000 in funding from the local Child and Family Agency and from Adoption Services national body. This funding was used to facilitate specific workshops with new members. While a new group was not formed some new women joined the existing group during the year. The group continues to be facilitated by Sligo FRC manager who was joined this year by co-facilitator Carmel McNamee. Work was commenced on a leaflet for publication which will be launched in 2016.

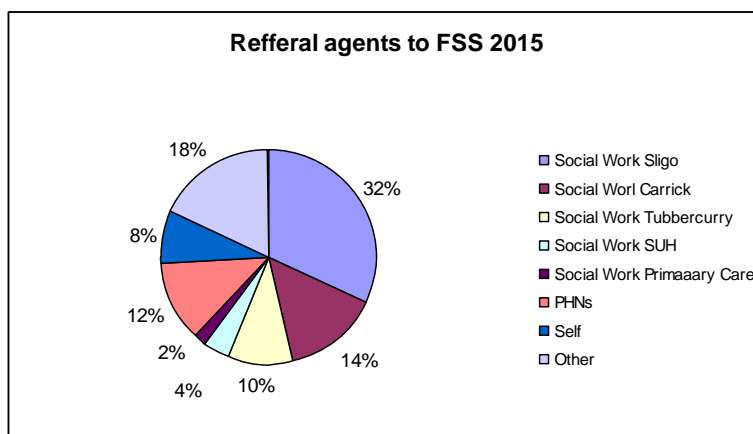
In 2015, Sligo FRC provided support to **parents of children with dyslexia** and their children. After-school classes were made available on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 5-6pm for children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. They were facilitated by qualified teachers from Mercy Primary. Parents met twice during the year to share concerns, information and to plan other initiatives that could enable their children to learn. Twelve children in total availed of the classes. They were partly funded by Sligo Leader Partnership.

## Family Support Service Including Footprints Drop-in Crèche

The **Family Support Service** is provided in the homes of families in all of counties Sligo and Leitrim. The length or extent of support depends on the needs of families, it can be a short time, e.g. helping a mother after the birth of a baby, or long term, e.g. supporting a family who are not coping due to bereavement, addiction or learning difficulties. Support is frequently provided in the form of practical household management, parenting skills, budgeting, nutrition, childcare and homework support.

In 2015, with an increase in funding from CFA, we increased the number of Family Support Workers from 3 part-time to 5 part-time and an additional part-time co-ordinator. Together with the four CE staff funded by the DSP, they supported 51 families. The Family Support Workers support families at all levels of the Hardiker scale (Level 1-4) while the CE participants support those at levels 1 and 2.

Referral agents to this service are outlined below. Others include Meithal, counsellor for special needs, Mercy Primary, Lifestart, Psychology, Service Allocation Meetings, CFSN and Home Youth Liaison Service



The Family Support Service, including Footprints crèche (below) is funded by the Túsla Child and Family Agency, Pobal and Dept of Social Protection.

**Footprints Crèche** is a service open to all families in Sligo and the surrounding area. It provides sessional care for up to 10 children up to 6 years of age on a once off or continuous agreed basis to facilitate parents to attend appointments, training, counselling etc.

Last year 123 children from 102 families used the crèche. Of the families attending 15.4% were from ethnic/cultural minority backgrounds, 18% lone parents, 71% were in receipt of a social welfare payment. Footprints has a high staff: child ratio and is affordable with 2 bands of payment based on ability to pay. Staff have built strong links over the years with key referral agencies to ensure families with particular needs can access the crèche service.

### Services to Adult with a Learning Disability

Sligo FRC now has six part-time support workers on varying hours and one part-time co-ordinator employed in this Service. The **one-to-one support** to four adults with learning disabilities living in the community is in the form of addressing issues such as healthy eating and lifestyles, managing a household, managing a budget, personal hygiene and self care while the drop-in Thursday lunchtime club gives adults with a learning disability somewhere warm and friendly to go.

This year we negotiated a service with **Cregg House** to provide community integration with residents involving bringing them into town to shop, attend hairdresser, have coffee etc. While the Service started in August 2015, there was a staff reshuffle and some other complications which held up its continuation and the new start date was deferred until 2016.

The **Coffee Dock Café** based at Markievicz House, provided training opportunities in a social enterprise for up to 20 adults with a learning disability in 2015. The number of hours of the Café supervisors was increased from 35 to 50 per week. The cafe was moved to a different area in the ground floor and the choice of food being served was broadened and the seating area was extended. The trainees receive experience in all aspects of catering and the two supervisor undertook FETAC Level 6 HISSOP training in 2015. This year we also took on an additional CE participant under the management of North Connaught Youth and Community Services to assist in the work at the Coffee Dock.

### Access Support Worker

In August 2015, we received funding from Túsla CFA to recruit a support worker to work directly with families during access visits. The worker was recruited internally and is based in the social work team in Markievicz House. She works with up to 6 families each week at Hardiker Level 4.

### Working with Cultural Minorities



Sligo FRC continues to be actively involved in working with minorities. This includes:

**Diversity Sligo** we have been involved with Diversity Sligo since 2003. This is a group made up of volunteers and professionals to support asylum seekers living in Globe House. This year we received funding for a polytunnel, bicycles, sewing machines and classes for adults and children. The students on placement from the IT and Ballinode College in Sligo FRC took on the role of managing the children's library in Globe House this year.

**Racist Indecent Reporting and Support Service:** This service was established in 2013 and is overseen by the Interagency Group made up of representation from the Gardaí, ETB, Sligo Borough Council, Sligo IT, Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Sligo Rape Crisis Centre, Lifestart Sligo. The Group met 4 times in 2015. However there were no incidents of racism reported in this year. In March, we recruited a volunteer to do some of the work in relation to ethnic minorities and in December, we received funding from the Social Inclusion office of the HSE to part fund a worker.

In 2015, the focus of the work was to continue with the support of the **Sligo Intercultural Forum**. Sligo FRC and SIF organised a cultural event one in the Avalon Centre on St Patrick's Day which was attended by up to 150 people. In September we received funding from Sligo County Council towards and cultural event which was held before the AGM. Up to 50 people attended. A new board of management was formed and the Sligo FRC volunteer attended the meetings and supported the new board with training and ongoing encouragement.

Sligo FRC and SIF linked with Jim Hogan, **Sligo Europe Direct Information Centre** the centre which serves as a contact point for all queries on the EU for counties Sligo, Leitrim and Mayo. The centre aims to promote informed debate and active European citizenship by providing EU information tailored to meet the needs of the local community.

**The Mentoring Project** continued into 2015 with a very successful African cooking morning held in the FRC – 2 Board members attended as well as 5 women.

### **Representation and Inter-Agency Initiatives**

Sligo FRC is represented on a range of committees and boards in Sligo in order to represent the needs of the families and individuals and to bring about policy and practice changes which it is hoped will improve their lives. Some of this work involves presenting views and developing policies, at other times it involves creating new joint projects and initiatives. During 2015, Sligo FRC was involved in the following policy actions:

- Age Action Ireland meeting
- childcare managers network
- CYPSC parenting sub group
- Developing a Prototype of Good Practice paper given at ERECD conference Sligo IT
- Disability Network
- Education sub group
- FRC National Forum Conference in relation to Syrian Refugees
- Gordon Jeyes CEO of CFA visits Sligo FRC
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Local Economic and Community Plan Health and Wellbeing
- Local Economic and Community Plan social inclusion, equality and poverty workshop
- Managing Early Years Services as a professional Business
- Meeting with Micháel Martin Fianna Fáil TD
- Meeting with the local public representatives –the 4 FRCs, Senators Mark McSharry, Imelda Henry and Susan O Keefe and Michael Colreavy TD.
- Mind Your Mental Health Conference
- Minister James Reilly visits
- North West Regional Support Group
- Public Partnership Network Secretariat
- Present and Participating in my community conference

- Service Allocation Meetings
- Sligo 2020: Local Economic and Community Plan
- Sligo community childcare committee membership
- Sligo County childcare committee member
- Sligo FRC 20th Anniversary
- Social Inclusion meeting – part of the PPN
- The Wheel local Managers Network meeting
- UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre 7th Biennial International Conference paper given

## Voluntary Board of Directors and Staff Team 2015

Sligo FRC is managed by a voluntary board of directors who oversee the work of the Centre and strategically guide the services. Twenty full and part-time staff are employed to manage and implement the work and ensure services are provided to the highest standard. Fifteen staff are employed through a CE training scheme.

**Chairperson:** Don Watts  
**Vice Chairperson:** Sonya Coffey  
**Treasurer:** Deirdre Gul  
**Secretary:** Pauric Cuffee

**Directors:** Mary Kelly, Nike Ogun, Margaret O'Connor, Trish McLoughlin, Nessa Cosgrove, Sarah Wetheral

The voluntary board of management comprised 10 volunteers in 2015. The executive sub-group meets for employment/staff matters or specific issues. Sub-groups of 2-3 board members are established for specific, short term pieces of work in order to share the load and they've proved to be effective.

### Staff Team

Elizabeth King	Manager (job sharing)
Catherine McGlinchey	Manager (job sharing) replaced by Therese Ruane in August and Caroline Bradshaw in October
Cathy McGowan	Administrator
Fiona Brennan	Coordinator of Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities
Charlotte Bussmann	Family Support Childcare Co-coordinator
Cathy Kilcoyne	Family Support Service Coordinator
Grainne Brennan	Access Support Worker
Rose McCrann	Footprints Crèche Supervisor
Sue Coleman	Family Support Worker on Sick Leave and replaced by Ann Rooney
Colette Sheerin	Family Support Worker replaced in August by Nicola McCormac
Karen Casey	Family Support Worker and Coffee Dock supervisor
Charlotte Fahy	Family Support Worker
Ann Boyd	Support worker and Social Club Leader
Maureen Scanlon	Support worker
Amy Gerrity	Support Worker and Family Support Worker
Ann McPadden	Support Worker
Esther Mooney	Support Worker and Social Club Leader replaced in September by Christopher Flanagan
Patricia Coleman	Support Worker
Marion Roycroft	Coffee Dock supervisor
Anne Marie Cawley	Support Worker



### Students in 2015:

Tara Gavin, Sligo IT Social Studies  
Abigail Paquet, Sligo IT Early Education Care and Education.  
Ann Stokes, Mercy College Sligo  
Lauren Devins, Ballinode College  
Sarah McMorrow, Ursuline College

### FÁS Community Employment Scheme Participants (2014/2015), 19.5hrs/week

#### Administration and

#### Reception

#### Childcare and Home

#### Support Workers

#### Childcare Workers

#### Disability Worker

#### Caretaker/Cleaner

Alex Streete, Rita Finan, Cecile Lamy, Jonathon Farrell

Michelle Cohn, Natasha Mulligan, Geraldine

Ryan, Kate McCarthy,

Sarah Ward, Martina Foley, Emma Wyber, Jackie

Dolphin

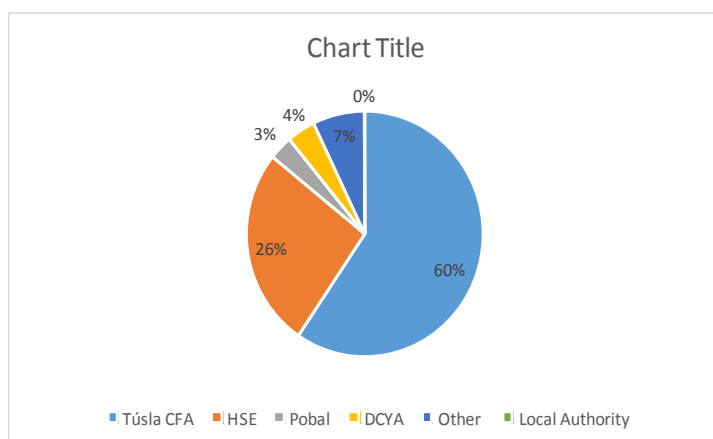
Caroline Cunningham

John McLoughlin, Richard Deignan



### Funding

Here is a breakdown of the funding received in 2015. The funding from Túsla CFA is made up of €107,368 from national office through the FRC national programme and €194,550 from the CFA local office. The DCYA funding was for the renovations on the ground floor and the resurfacing area in the back garden. Funding from “Other” includes: income from parents for the crèche, income from room rental, and small grants received.



## Sourcing Funding

As can be seen by the number of application for funding submitted - not including reports for FSA (SPEAK and Progress Report) and Service Level Agreement meetings with the HSE an enormous amount of time is dedicated to sourcing funding each year - not all of it successful.

Community Foundation of Ireland (€5,000) **unsuccessful**

ECB hours 20 home management 20 community development 20 creative studies - **successful**

Grow it Yourself: for the FRC garden **unsuccessful**

Grow it Yourself: for Diversity Sligo **unsuccessful**

Sligo County Childcare Committee – for parent and toddler group in Caltragh – **successful**

Health Promotion Unit and Túsla for the Danú group – €3,000 **successful**

ESB – Danú support group **unsuccessful**

ETB – creative studies, cooking and facilitation for Danú group **successful**

ESB grant for disability Access - €19,640 **unsuccessful**

Loretta Foundation fund: To support people in making the transition from Globe House €6,000

**unsuccessful**

Sligo County Council – team building event €1,424 **received €250**  
and SIF €1850 **received €500**

The Ireland Fund – SIF €9,000 **unsuccessful**

DCYA Capital Grant for Play ground and Disability access - €21,000 **successful**

National Lottery – SIF €4309 (**successful**) and young mothers  
€1953 **successful**

Community Foundation of Ireland – mentoring with African and  
Irish mothers - €20,000 **unsuccessful**



ETB – applied for hours for next year 2016

## Training undertaken by staff and others within the FRC

Below is a flavour of the work undertaken in the FRC in relation to training and education. This is taken from the 2015 SPEAK submitted to Túsla in February 2016.

My Baby and Me

After-school support to children with dyslexia

Afterschool support to children with dyslexia who will sit their junior certificate in 2015 and 2016

Career Planning

Charities Regulation Authority training

Child development course

Child Health and Well Being

Child Safety course

Children First Child Protection

Code of Practice for Suicide Prevention

Communications

Community addiction studies

Designated Liaison Person Training

Early Care and Education Practice

Equality and Diversity Education

Family Support Skills



Fire Training  
First Aid  
Food Hygiene  
Getting Ready for School  
Health and Safety  
Healthy eating and household management  
Healthy Ireland Smart Start  
Induction to family support and Footprints  
Knitting class  
LAMH  
Manual Handling  
Marketing Assistant Diploma  
Numeracy and literacy skills  
Occupational First Aid  
Payroll Computerised and Manual  
Paediatric First Aid  
Personal Development  
Planning session for parents of children with dyslexia  
Reception and Frontline Office Skills  
Refresher first Aid  
Resilience training  
School age childcare  
Shared Voices  
Social Media for Business  
Summer camp training  
TEAM Building  
Team Leadership  
Understanding Self Harm  
Work Experience  
Workplace Safety

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