



**LAND SETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN KENYA: ACOMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR SUCCESS AT THE COAST AND RIFT VALLEY REGIONS.**

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#### ABSTRACT

*The Kenyan Land Settlement program focuses on the settlement of the landless poor and is funded by government budget allocations. The land settlement program was launched in 1961 and the department of settlement created in 1962 as a government department to administer the program technically on behalf of Settlement Fund Trustee (SFT), a body corporate that was established under the legal notice no. 352/63 of the Agriculture Act CAP 318 to help execute the program.*

*This study sought to establish how the government has put in various project management aspects to ensure the success these settlement projects. A comparative study of two projects (Lake Kenyatta and Suguta) in the Coast and Rift Valley regions respectively was undertaken. Their success was measured against management and administration of the programs as well as the achievement of some shared or similar initial stated objectives of the two programs namely: provision of political stability, provision of settlement land to the poor landless natives, amelioration of unemployment, agricultural development and improved welfare for the settled community.*

*The target population was project managers and the project beneficiaries in the projects. The target group was 83 respondents from the two sampled projects. Both primary data and secondary data were used to give both qualitative and quantitative information. Questionnaires were delivered to the respondents. Edited and coded data was descriptively analysed and presented using frequency tables, pie chart and bar graphs as was found appropriate. The study has shown that there is a positive relationship between how a project is planned, implemented, financed, monitored and evaluated and its success. The study also established that the sponsorship of these projects mattered in how the projects are managed thus contributing to their success or failure. Suggestions and recommendations of carrying out a successful settlement program are given at the end of the study.*

**Keywords:** Land settlement programs, project management, project management, project monitoring and evaluation, project financing.

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## INTRODUCTION

After attaining Independence from the Colonial Government, the Government of Kenya embarked on a land acquisition and redistribution program. This was aimed at seeking political, social and economic stability. To facilitate this, a Land Development Settlement Board (LDSB) was established in 1962 to administer settlement schemes for all races through the stabilization of the prices of European-owned farms and offering of credit to Africans who wished to purchase the European owned lands. The first form of African settlement in the White Highlands was the Million Acre Scheme which begun in 1963. A later fund SFT was mandated to purchase land from the settlers and sell it to resettled farmers through a land mortgage system. The farmers repaid this at very minimal interest. The trustees are government Ministers in-charge of Finance, Agriculture and Lands Ministries. The settlement program focuses on the settlement of the landless poor in projects funded by government budget allocations. This is with the aim of enhancing socio-economic development through provision of land, security of tenure, food security and creation of employment in order to alleviate poverty in the country. The program is mandated with the acquisition, planning, demarcation, survey and allocation of economically viable agricultural settlement land to landless, poor and unemployed Kenyans on loan basis (GOK 2003: 86). Land for settlement is acquired through setting apart of trust or government land or purchased from private owners. The size of the plot allocated to the settlers depends on the production of the land and is classified as high, medium and low density plots. The planned schemes are allocated through the District Settlement Plot Selection Committee (DSPSC).

Each Land settlement project is assigned to a Project Manager and a team which is supposed to ensure proper application of knowledge, skills and techniques to execute projects effectively and efficiently. The settlement process involves acquisition of land, planning and surveying of settlement land, allocation of land to deserving beneficiaries, ensuring documentation of settlers upon payment of

10% land deposit, ensuring the repayment of land and development loan, preparation of discharge of charge and transfer documents for registration of schemes to facilitate issuance of title deeds. Hence the Project Manager must simultaneously manage the four basic elements of a project: resources, time, cost, and scope effectively.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Kenya being an agro-economy, successive governments have strived to see to it that every Kenyan has equitable access to land for shelter and food production purposes through the settlement projects where the landless poor are identified, settlement schemes established and agricultural land issued to them. However, the problem of landlessness has persisted and today fifty years after independence the Government still undertakes a cyclical effort to settle and resettle the landless through the SFT Settlement program which focuses on the settlement of the landless poor in projects funded by government budget allocations. This is through purchase land from private holders, alienate suitable government land and set apart trust lands for settlement. This depicts failure of the settlement program.

The Kenyan policy-makers still view land purely as a factor of production and a sustainable development paradigm to land management has received little attention in previous land policy documents (GoK, 2009). Perceptions, politics, cultural norms, greed and poor project management are the reasons why the settlement projects fail PMI (2008). Hamid & Henry (2008) in their study said that no proper evaluation of Kenyan projects is carried out to establish their effectiveness and the viability of the government spending a lot of resource in their establishment. There are also no clear or comprehensive guidelines/frameworks to guide project managers in handling of settlement/resettlement projects successfully so as to ensure that communities and individuals would be no worse off after settlement.

This study therefore sought to establish the various project management aspects namely; project planning, implementation, financing, monitoring and evaluation applied in government projects. At the end is also gives clear guidelines to project managers and the government in order to ensure the success future land Settlement projects.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to highlight management factors that influence the success of Government initiated land settlement projects in Kenya and whether the settlement program is sustainable in the present day. Specifically the study sought to establish the following:

- i. To find out how project planning influences the success of Land Settlement projects.
- ii. To establish how project implementation influences the success of Land Settlement projects.
- iii. To investigate the impact of project financing on the success of Land Settlement projects.
- iv. To determine how project monitoring and evaluation influences the success of Land Settlement projects.

## Research Questions

- i. How does project planning influence the success of Land Settlement projects?
- ii. To what extent does project implementation influence the success of Land Settlement projects?
- iii. Does project financing influence the success of Land Settlement projects?
- iv. What is the impact of project monitoring and evaluation on the success of Land Settlement projects?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Critical Chain Project Management Theory by Goldratt*

Goldratt, (1997) in the Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM) theory based his ideas on methods and algorithms derived from the theory of constraints. In project management the critical chain is the sequence of both precedence and resource dependent terminal elements that prevent a project from being completed in a shorter time, given finite resources. If resources are always available in unlimited quantities, then a project's critical chain is identical to its critical path.

In a land settlement project, there is planning, surveying, identification of settlers, allocation, documentation, showing of plots, revenue collection and closure. These events require multiple activities. Time taken to do each can be measured in a variety of ways. In such a project, because of the length of the project, it could be measured in months to determine the critical path to determines the length of time it takes to complete the project. Government money held in these projects in terms of land charges and loans issued by the SFT earns interest payable to the government (liquidated damages). So the project should be well planned so as to be completed by a certain dates and settlers documented.

Land settlement programs all over the world have become a way of population distribution and a development strategy to improve the socio-economic status of the settled communities. They are created to alleviate landlessness and to address the problem of squatters too (Ogolla & Mugabe 2006).

Land settlement schemes are usually public programs where the government has a say in the policies and administration of the programs. The identification and planning of the settlement schemes are government actions. Depending on the degree of government

involvement, settlement of the landless may be spontaneous, government assisted, or government planned and supported. Government intervention in settlement programs can therefore be categorised into two types: either sponsored or assisted spontaneous settlement. Here the administering authority is involved in every aspect of settlement, from land acquisition to settler selection, infrastructure development, provision of living and production support in the transition period and extension to post production activities ADB (2010).

Assisted spontaneous settlement allows land to be invaded and then occupiers are regularized (Kinsey & Binswanger 2003). Spontaneous migrants play two important roles in settlement areas: first, they demonstrate to government-sponsored settlers what economic opportunities and potentials exist and how to take advantage of them; second, they help enlarge the size of population in settlement areas that in turn generate sufficient demand for locally produced goods and services (Shrestha & Conway, 2005). These projects are used by different organizations and countries to denote opening up of new areas and settlement of a group of people (Oberai, 2006). In the Philippines, they are called resettlement, land colonization, and sometimes new settlements, whilst in Malaysia, the process is popularly known as land development. In Indonesia, projects before the Second World War were known as land colonization, and later on as transmigration schemes. In Thailand, the projects are known as co-operative land settlements or self-help settlements. In Kenya it is called land settlement and in Tanzania it is known as villagization (ujamaa). All these refer to rural mobility which is the movement of people to areas of under-utilised agricultural potential. The term 'settlement' throughout this report was used.

The programs have common aims of raising the standards of people living in rural areas, but the approach and the aims of the programs differ from country to country. Oberai, (2006) states that the objectives of formulating and

implementing resettlement programs are both varied and complex. In Tanzania, the provision of services such as clean water, primary education, and health care, was the primary justification for the massive villagization program (Kinsey & Binswanger, 2003).

Rural land settlement programs are invariably expensive as analysed in a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2010). Whereas a few programs have been successful, the performance of many of the programs has not been very encouraging or they have generally failed. The high cost of government land settlement projects is a reason often presented against the continuation of such projects and for the need to find alternatives. Ironically, Bahrin (1988) mentions that many of the studies appear to show that the projects provided with the more elaborate social and physical infrastructures reflecting higher costs tend to be more successful. Notwithstanding their limited success, land settlement programs are popular in most developing countries, mainly because they are politically more desirable, more expedient and relatively easier to execute than other agrarian reform measures (Oberai, 2006). Land settlements are located in areas of varying physical conditions with people of diverse cultural, economic, social, religious as well as ethnic backgrounds under different types of land settlement planning, implementation and management systems which have made distinctive imprints on project performance (Thapa and Weber, 2007).

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who support land settlement programs lobby to achieve comprehensive and integral redistribution of productive resources in favor of the poor and the landless (Hamid & Henly, 2008). They find themselves between the rock of the demands of the landless and the increasingly impenetrable walls of government decision-makers. Civil societies also make their own demands felt collectively in the public sphere because they desire a society in which all people are assured of sustainable livelihoods

through secure and equitable access and utilization of land and natural resources.

Kenya Land Alliance (KLA) is an example of a civil society which asserts that sharp inequalities in the distribution of land are a major cause of poverty in Kenya (KLA & KHRC, 2011). Land settlement is meant for the people and should therefore, be tailored to meet the needs of the people especially the total needs of a settler family. According to Teo, (2009), the people factor is critical in land settlement programs. He argues that it is important that social development programs must be instituted from the beginning of the program to ensure harmony and peace at the scheme level. It is a continuous process of innovation and adjustment to meet the needs of the people. Even though its physical impact is only short term, its economic and social effects continue for generations. A wider social science perspective is essential if the development potential in land settlement is to be realized. This was stated by Scudder, (2001), in a study of the development potential of new land settlements in the tropics. He explained the social perspective in a four-phase conceptual framework which offered to classify the stages of development of new settlements. First is the planning of the initial infrastructural development and settler recruitment, second is the transition, third is the economic and social development and finally the handing over with incorporation and integration into the wider society.

ADB (2010) and Oberai (2006) gave indicators of effective settlement program as first the achievement of the outlined objectives of the settlement program, provision of regional development and clear improvement of the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of the settlers. Gaillard (2008) states ultimate factor that affect the success or failure of a settlement program is its capacity to satisfy the cultural needs and requirements of the people.

Oberai, (2006) listed the factors that affect the success or failure of land settlement programs as planning, site selection, size of plot, selection of settlers, land tenure and farming systems,

their management and administration and finally settler dependency.

### **Critique of Literature Review**

Globally, the land resource is also the ultimate source of wealth but unfortunately rural landscapes in developing countries are characterized by highly inequitable social structures. Land ownership is one determinant among other factors that contribute to this phenomenon (Rahman & Manprasert, 2006). Cernea (1999) in his Impoverishment, Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model suggests that overcoming the pattern of impoverishment requires targeted risk reversal or mitigation which can be accomplished through focused strategies, backed up by commensurate financing. He argued that in developing countries if the land issue is solved, it would indirectly solve major problems such as joblessness, homelessness, marginalization and food insecurity (Cernea 2000). However land is not the only factor of production in the economy and therefore should not be viewed as the ultimate solution to economic problems. Therefore the government should device and encourage the utilization of other non land dependent sources of livelihoods to reduce the overdependence of land as a factor of production. This way, the pressure on land leading to conflict and other economic problems will be reduced as the citizens will have other sources of livelihoods which are not dependent on land.

### **Research Gaps**

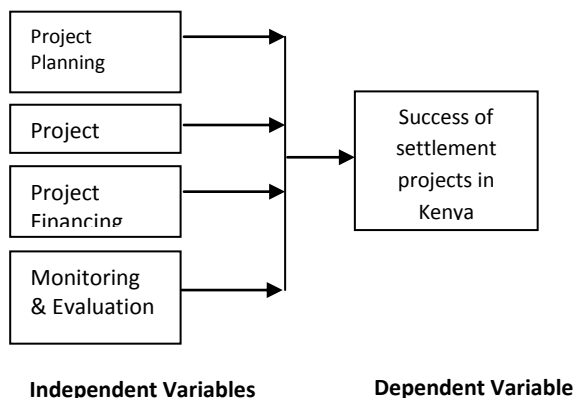
Project success is a multi-dimensional and means different things to different people. According to Max (2003) the measures of project success, in terms of both process and product, must be defined at the beginning of the project as a basis for project management decision-making and post-project evaluation. In the Kenyan land settlement projects, evaluation of a project success at the beginning of a project seem not to be currently a common practice. The land settlement projects often are not subjected to proper evaluations neither are there properly set parameters to measure their

success. A search in various libraries has not yielded results of documented studies on the percentage of success of these projects despite them being widely spread at the Rift Valley and Coast regions.

Hamid & Henly (2008) in their study said that the Kenyan land settlement schemes are characterized by low national priority, poor planning, subversion by ethnic and sectional interests, and an emphasis on resolving conflict by redistributing existing farmland rather than alleviating poverty by exploiting unused resources. This means that no proper evaluation of the management factors which cause this poor performance has been done.

Most studies which have been documented involve projects such as product development, construction, design, IT, or service but no study has been undertaken on the management aspect of Land settlement projects. This study applied the theories of project management in the running of these in order to fill this gap. By evaluating a sample of land settlement projects from the planning stage to the closure stage, this study offered an insight on the failed projects and look at how their management aspect can be remedied and also look at how future projects can be managed to timely closure. Secondly, the study has given suggestions on what can be incorporated in the running of these projects to ensure success.

### The Conceptual Framework



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a comparative case study research design by sampling two land settlement projects and studying how the various project management aspects of the projects have contributed to the success or failure of either of them and thus the land settlement program in Kenya as a whole. Considering the number of settlement projects in coast and rift valley regions it would not be feasible to conduct an overall study of the population and therefore the Lake Kenyatta and Suguta settlement projects in the Coast and the Rift Valley regions respectively were chosen for this research. The choice of the two projects was based on the Ministry of lands parameters of a successful Settlement project. These are; provision of infrastructure, provision of land to the poor landless, offering security of tenure, 100% plot occupancy, improved welfare status of beneficiaries, repayment of SFT loans, Agricultural development and provision of political stability. According to departmental report GOK(2010), Lake Kenyatta is rated among the most successful projects while the Suguta project does not seem to meet the project success benchmark. The target population of this study was 25 project managers and 800 project beneficiaries the Lake Kenyatta and Suguta settlement schemes making a total population of 825. Purposive sampling was adopted in this study. This is a technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study. This study targeted 83 respondents from the two sampled projects. These represented approximately 10% of the target population.

Qualitative data was consolidated, content analysed and narrative report used to depict respondents' views.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

An analysis of the respondents indicated that majority of the respondents in both projects were farmers. Those in Lake Kenyatta farmed

various types of crops while Suguta was purely livestock farming. Settlement projects are basically agriculturally based. The land in Suguta is semi arid and cannot sustain arable farming. This could be a big contributor towards the failure of the Suguta project as an economical live improvement project.

All project managers in Suguta interviewed indicated that they were still civil servants with only one in Lake Kenyatta indicating owning a private consultancy firm on project management and policy implementation. This shows that government employees manning the projects are not trained on project management line.

The respondents agree that they lived as squatters on private land before they were moved into the project zone. The overwhelming response which is consistent in both cases indicates that the government was very categorical when identifying the projects and the possible beneficiaries in the initial stages of the project. However, the timing of implementation of the Suguta project greatly interfered with the allocation project. It was during the campaign period and the implementing government was quick to issue the land to gain political mileage. The project manager present that time said a big number of beneficiaries' names were of political origin. This has resulted to their inability to access the area due to hostility of the host community and thus the sales quoted earlier. The study also established that all the beneficiaries in both projects had prior information regarding the project but in the Suguta project no updates were done until allocation was done and were no consultations with the stakeholders. Secondly, the project managers confirmed that there was no environmental impact assessment on the project. This is an indication of poor planning on the part of the government.

### **Project planning**

According to Kerzner, (2003) project planning is often used to organize different areas of a project, including project plans, workload and

the management of teams and individuals. The findings show all of the beneficiaries in Lake Kenyatta agreed having access to the basic amenities in the society as opposed to a fraction of the respondents in Suguta scheme who indicated they had access to schools and hospitals but had poor access to water and the roads were impassable. However these amenities in Suguta are outside the project area. It is worth noting that majority of the respondents who indicated they had access to hospital and schools had to walk for long distances before accessing the amenities since they were not available within the project. This shows that the project planners in Lake Kenyatta had considered beneficiary welfare when planning the projects but not so in Suguta. This fact can be attributed to outside funding of the project. The project was a GASP project hence good planning was done before implementation.

There was an indication that the list of beneficiaries from the Lake Kenyatta project was legitimate and intended landless people were settled whereas the list of beneficiaries in the Suguta project did not cater for intended group. This caused failure of the project due to inappropriate selection of beneficiaries. Outsiders could not get into the land due to insecurity from attacks from the locals. This was evidenced by the high rate of sales where those beneficiaries who were not in need of the land have sold off their land cheaply to some two ranchers.

### **Project implementation**

The findings show that majority of the beneficiaries of the Lake Kenyatta settlement scheme took occupancy of their allocated pieces of land in a period of between 5-10 years. Significantly, all the beneficiaries of the Suguta project have not yet occupied their pieces of land. This is because the demarcation boundaries even if put were not pointed out to the beneficiaries. The respondents got were just doing free range grazing with no particular plot occupation though holding old letters of allocation. All the beneficiaries in Lake Kenyatta

indicated that they acquired and occupied their current piece of land after being allocated by the government. Notably all beneficiaries in the Lake Kenyatta project had their land titles in possession and had paid their SFT loans. Secondly, no beneficiary had a piece of land elsewhere outside the project. This is an outright indicator that the Suguta project is a failed project since none of the target beneficiaries either occupies the land or holds a title deed for their land.

According to the project managers, the implementation of Suguta project was frustrated by bureaucracies within government and grand corruption in the implementation process where influential people within government would input names of fake beneficiaries in the initial list of beneficiaries which led to protests from the initial beneficiaries. The case is different in Lake Kenyatta where the process was consultative and involved all stakeholders on board. This made all stakeholders own up the process and hence less resistance. Perceptions, politics, cultural norms, greed and poor project management are the reasons why settlement projects fail (PMI2008).

### **Project Financing**

The study established that the lake Kenyatta project was funded by GASP. (German Assisted Settlement Projects) while the Suguta project was fully funded by the Government of Kenya. The project manager in Lake Kenyatta indicated that the various activities involved during the implementation process were well funded and on a timely basis where the funds disbursed were available for use in due course.

The Suguta project managers were not satisfied with the way the Government of Kenya funded the project. The disbursement of funds was inconsistent and sometimes not available when needed. This led to delay of key activities during the implementation process and withdrawal of experts and consultants involved in the implementation process. The managers also indicated that the major hindrance to their efforts was the availability of funds. Secondly,

they indicated to have never sighted a government auditor at the site of the project implementation. In the Lake Kenyatta case, auditors were very frequent since the project was funded using donor funds who needed periodic audit of the progress of the project.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The findings indicate that all of the respondents in the Suguta project and majority of respondents from Lake Kenyatta indicated that no monitoring and evaluation was done regarding the project. However, a fraction of the respondents in the Lake Kenyatta project indicated having seen the monitoring and evaluation team from the ministry of lands visiting the project randomly. This indicates that monitoring and evaluation in both projects was poor and hence the project managers had all the authority at their discretion. This explains why the projects took longer than expected.

## **CONCLUSION**

On Project Financing, the study found that, although the Kenyan land settlement program has made considerable achievements, there is a big difference in the success or effectiveness of programs which are donor supported and those which are government funded. Inadequacy of funds to finance settlement projects is listed in the ministerial report as among the most pressing challenges faced by the department.

The population of Kenya has increased rapidly and continues to rely largely on agricultural income. Government land has diminished and cannot match the growth. GOK (2013) also states that lack of repayment of loans issued to earlier settled people has made buying of new land difficult. The issue of insufficient funds has resulted to incomplete projects and also poor or lack of basic infrastructure in projects. This research found that the contrasts between the donor -funded projects like Lake Kenyatta and Kenyan government funded projects like Suguta are diagnostic of broader contrasts in policy

orientation and management structure of the sponsors.

Project Planning should involve serious, comprehensive, in-depth economic and social feasibility studies. To the government officials, the issuance of Letters of Offer to the settler seems to be the end in itself forgetting that the settlers must be provided with basic infrastructural facilities, and a noticeable improvement in income, if they are to remain within the scheme. The researcher concluded that the planning process in the government sponsored project is wanting such that some beneficiaries feel their needs are not taken into considerations. Political interference influences not only the allocation process but also the location of most government projects GOK (2013). From the same report, it is stated that incoming settlers from one part of the country also sometimes face hostility from the host community where new settlement schemes are established leading to further resettlement planning. This shows a weakness in government planning process.

Likewise during implementation, the government's efforts in the field of land settlement have sometimes been intermittent and weakly co-ordinated. There is also a lot of political interferences in land Settlement programs as testified by all project managers who reported that the area politicians insisted on muddling with the list of beneficiaries.

The study found out that the implementation process of government projects was slow due to lack of monitoring and evaluation procedure. According to GOK (2013), government efforts to settle the landless are undermined by incidences of what is termed as emergence of professional squatters. These are settlers who immediately sell off the land and move on to settle on another piece of government land anticipating to be settled again on it. The settlement department also depends on manual records and inefficient management systems. Most staff are not trained in modern technology so even keeping a tab on those previously settled is difficult. This also brings

out a problem on how repayment of settlement funds is monitored.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of the two settlement projects showed that settlement should not simply be a matter of logistics that is, moving people physically from one region to another but should embrace more concerted and imaginative planning in the areas of destination, emphasizing the human element.

This research hereby recommends that the Kenya settlement program be made into a Semi-Autonomous Government Agency (SAGA) just like the FELDA in Malaysia to take over from the government line department. It was not until FELDA changed its management and administration that it was able to achieve its objectives (Shimomoto 1980: 103). The basic concept lies in giving more autonomy in operations in exchange for strengthening accountability for results. It is assumed that granting more flexibility in management produces more efficient and effective outcomes. A strong SAGA will have the ability to gain government support in every stage of the settlement process, including land acquisition, settler recruitment, and financial support therefore improve operational efficiency in service delivery areas through greater managerial discretion. Ultimately, the agency would assist eradicate controversy, corruption and political interference which have plagued the Kenyan settlement program for many years.

The study also found out that the management process in government settlement projects is poor and is not consultative and hence the study recommends that whenever such projects emerge there should be sufficient awareness and consultations so as to ensure the actual beneficiaries are involved right from the project initiation process up to the closure of the project. This will make the settlers own the project and there is good will from the host community for better integration with the settlers and prevent cases of hostility. Secondly,

the study revealed a worrying trend regarding the monitoring and evaluation of settlement projects and hence the government should invest in the monitoring and evaluation staff to make sure that such big projects are well monitored and on a regular basis. A creation of an updated data base on those previously settled will minimize the issue of professional squatting which leads to the resettlement cycle hence the need for the department concerned to be highly automated.

#### **Areas for Further Research**

The study recommends a further research to establish the reasons as why the planning of

government projects does not involve the stakeholders. Secondly, the study recommends further research be conducted to establish how government projects can be computerized for more accountability and better monitoring. Settlement schemes have been established without due consideration of the carrying capacity or the population a given parcel of land can support. This has made worse by subdivisions in times of inheritance. A study can be done on how guidelines can be given to provide a restriction in land use in the settlement schemes.

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