



Annual Report

**CNVOS**

2021



**c n v o s**



# #WECARE

How many times has it happened that all three pastel-coloured bikes of CNVOS met in front of our offices? You guessed it, once! In 2021, we worked mainly in the online environment. **But no less enthusiastically in helping NGOs.** Those who care for people in need. Those who fight for a healthy and clean environment. And those who care that people living in remote villages are not forgotten by the world... **Among our members are 1473 national networks and individual societies, associations and foundations.** We were happy to help non-members as well. **To build a better tomorrow together!**





# **WE DEFENDED**

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**THE RIGHTS OF THE NGOS.  
AND RIGHTS OF THOSE THAT NEED THEIR HELP.**

We had two main goals.

1. Provide effective support to NGOs, affected by the pandemic.
2. Prevent negative interference in the existing support and enabling environment for the operation of NGOs.



# WE WERE NOT BORED.

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**We managed to raise the salaries of social welfare service providers.** We have been striving for this since 2013! In 2012, the salaries of social welfare service providers were comparable to the salaries of public employees in similar jobs. With the onset of the financial crisis, wages in both the public and non-governmental sectors declined. However, wages in the public sector have risen three times since the end of the financial crisis, but funding for social security providers has fallen sharply. **Together with the service providers, we persistently warned the ministry that social welfare programs cannot remain this way.** No one wants to stick with an underpaid job! Last year, the ministry finally listened. They also accepted our suggestions that the material costs should be paid in a flat-rate.

# HOW NICE IT IS TO RECEIVE THANK YOU NOTES FOR YOUR WORK! ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE AS HEARTWARMING AS THE ONES THAT OUR HEAD OF ADVOCACY, TINA DIVJAK, RECEIVED...

*Dear Tina!*

*What else should we write as an expression of great gratitude for all the efforts you are making for the common good and, above all, for our efforts for equal opportunities for all people.*

*We will, of course, keep trying, because this is our mission. But I believe it would be much slower and much harder without your efforts.*

*Therefore, once again a sincere and heartfelt thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do for greater fairness of funding for the NGO sector.*

*Greetings and best regards,  
Anita Ogulin  
President of ZPM Ljubljana Moste-Polje*

*Oh, wow!*

*What a success !!! Bravo Tina and your team - hats off !!!  
Thank you, thank you and thank you again! Thank you for fighting, for not giving up, and for caring.*

*You really are the best!*

*My respect.  
Špela Gorjan  
CPM*



We have achieved that the mandatory Covid-19 testing for unvaccinated workers in social welfare programs was **free of charge - at all times.** The costs of testing thus did not burden the budgets of NGOs.



We demanded that the government includes persons in need of emergency assistance from social welfare organizations and personal assistance as exceptions to the **RVT rule** (recovered, vaccinated, tested). **We stood up for those who receive their food and basic necessities in humanitarian warehouses and distribution centers. We succeeded.**

In cooperation with humanitarian, disability and sports organizations, we have **temporarily suspended the adoption of an amendment to the Gaming Act**, which would reduce the revenues of the Foundation for the Financing of Organisations of the Disabled and Humanitarian Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia and Sports Foundation by several million euros. The process will continue in 2022. **We will not give up.**

We have achieved the **elimination of discriminatory conditions for non-governmental organizations** in two calls of the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy for the distribution of EEA funds and the Norwegian Fund. The Office violated the treaty with donor countries and set additional conditions for NGOs that virtually no NGO could fulfill.

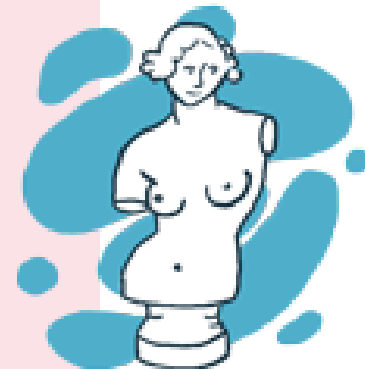




*»If the introduction of discriminatory criteria was about quality, the conditions would be such to ensure that only the best undertakings and NGOs were able to apply. But they are not. The conditions are such to enable every undertaking and virtually no nongovernmental organisation to participate. The bar has been set so high that nobody can reach it.*

*It is very telling that they were keeping the criteria secret from the donor countries, inserting them in the call without the donors' knowledge – after a coordination and confirmation procedure with them. If the criteria were really to ensure quality and growing assets, they would surely want to boast about them to the donors.«*

- From our press release, June 30, 2021







# WE TALKED ABOUT CIVIC SPACE IN SLOVENIA.

We intensively cooperated with the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** and the pan-European network of non-governmental organizations **European Civic Forum (ECF)**, informing them about the state of the civic space in Slovenia. The FRA published its research results in September in a report entitled "**Protecting Civic Space in the EU**" and the ECF in its annual report "**Civic Space Watch**".

The European Commission consulted with us in **co-creating a report on the rule of law in Slovenia**.

At the invitation of the European Parliament's Special Group on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights, we took part in a **discussion on media freedom in Slovenia**.

As part of the Fundamental Rights Forum, which took place in October, we prepared a discussion on the civic space with partners from Hungary, Romania and Poland. In December, together with the ECF, we held a debate in the European Parliament on the rule of law.

# WE KEPT A CLOSE EYE ON THE GOVERNMENT.

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## AS WE DO SINCE 2009.

At CNVOS, we are advocats of the position that is prevalent everywhere in a mature democratic society: **politics is the management of public affairs.** The more the management of politics is in the hands of the public, the better. The more hidden behind closed doors, the worse it is.



# MONITORING OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEADLINES

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...is a tool we have developed so that we can monitor how governments adhere to the National Assembly Resolution on normative activity. This requires them to have **at least a 30-day public debate** for each new regulation.



We found that the government of Janez Janša violated the provisions of the resolution in **69% of cases** from 14 March 2020 to the end of 2021. This is almost 10% more than the government of Marjan Šarec in his term.



# WE MADE SURE THAT THE NGOS WERE WELL INFORMED.

Approximately 300,000 visits to the website [www.cnvos.si](http://www.cnvos.si) were recorded in 2021.

## **Most people found us while searching for content in browsers.**

This does not surprise us: our law experts have promptly interpreted all government decrees related to the coronavirus epidemic, and the communicator has translated them into a language that is incomprehensible only to those with two doctorates in law. We focused, of course, on intervention measures that affect the operation of non-governmental organizations. **We published 71 articles** on our special website **NGO in times of the coronavirus**, which we updated regularly.

**The second most important source of traffic was our e-newsletter.** We sent 50 of them in 2021, informing non-governmental organizations about legal initiatives and changes, trainings, events and **868 national and international calls for non-governmental organizations.**

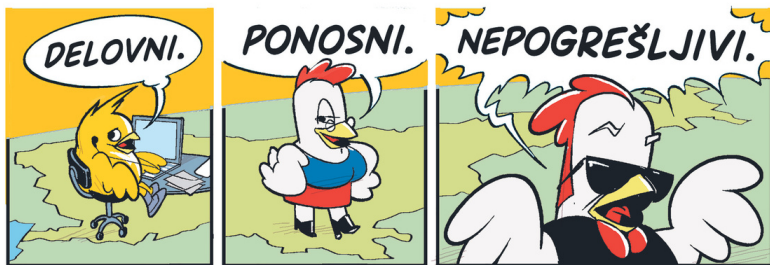
## **The third place goes to Facebook.**

We are using it for informing the NGOs about all important changes that affect their performance in shortest possible time. **Sometimes we use Facebook as a recommendation tool.** For example, to check if Slovenian Business Register - Ajpes has included you in the updated register of NGOs in the public interest (if you have the status, of course; if you do not have it, you can jump to our site and see how to get it). Or, where to take a guy on a date who doesn't know what NGOs are all about (give him a chance!). **Speaking of which...**

# WE HELPED THE COMIC ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO SPREAD ITS WINGS.



## KAJ SO NEVLADNE ORGANIZACIJE?



In the autumn of 2020, we helped the Peace Institute to create an educational and entertaining comic **“What are NGOs?”**, drawn by academic painter, illustrator, cartoonist and comic artist **Ciril Horjak**. The comic explains in a fun way why NGOs are important so that everyone can understand it, from a fifth-grader to a member of the National Assembly. In December 2020, at the invitation of the City of Ljubljana and the Kresija Gallery, the comic was exhibited in the Historical Atrium of the City Hall. It stayed there until February 8.

**And then something wonderful happened.**

**In 2021, comic hens flew all over Slovenia!** They were assisted by regional associations of non-governmental organizations: PIP Institute, LRF for Pomurje, Borea, Grozd, Consulta.si, Dobra družba Institute and the Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo mesto

**The times were not right for mass gallery visits. A little culture in the fresh air, however, didn't hurt anyone.**

The chickens were waving at us from the shop windows in the center of Maribor, from the fence on the Square under the castle in Škofja Loka, in the city centres of Murska Sobota, Lendava, Gornja Radgona, Novo mesto, Brežice, Sevnica, Krško, Litija... **The mayors also came to greet them.**

*"The priceless role of non-governmental organizations was especially evident during the epidemic of the coronavirus, which severely affected our personal and public lives. Without hesitation, volunteers in humanitarian organizations, as well as firefighters and members of the Civil Protection were available to citizens. I am particularly pleased that a large number of young people, students and pupils have joined as volunteers, proving that they care about our society. The work of non-governmental organizations always fills me with optimism that no one is left behind in difficult moments and that we respect values such as solidarity and caring for others."*

– Mayor of Murska Sobota Aleksander Jevšek  
at the official opening of the exhibition in the  
adventure park Expanso, May 14, 2021





# WE OFFERED COUNSELING.

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We shared **300 free legal tips** by phone and email with CNVOS members (when we say free, we mean it - you don't have to pay a cent to join CNVOS).

We spent **500 hours** on more complex, in-depth legal advice.

We have also published **a new online guide on the legal framework for NGO funding**. You can find it among the guides on NGO establishment and management, taxes and accounting, NGO work and special statuses for NGOs.

*"Thank you so much for having all the information so beautifully arranged. It helped me a lot while I was establishing an NGO. "*

– satisfied user of our online guides on the establishment and management of NGOs



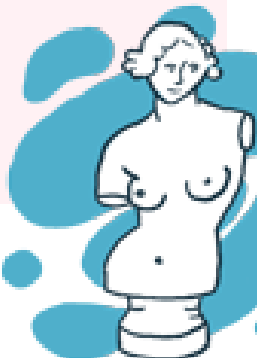
# WE SHARED KNOWLEDGE.

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We said that in 2021 we will conduct 13 workshops. But sometimes things just don't go according to plan. **We conducted 25 of them.** We repeated our "classic" workshops - on how to monitor and evaluate projects, how to manage risks, what you need to know about working with volunteers... **We also adapted to the current situation.** Among other things, we offered non-governmental organizations a workshop on motivating employees remotely and on how to establish a healthy working environment during the fight against the epidemic.

**With the support of the Ministry of Public Administration from the NGO Fund, all workshops were free.**

700 participants gained new knowledge.



**We have received wonderful compliments in our inboxes...**



**... And even better follow-ups:**

*Dear Veronika,*

*thank you so much for the wonderful workshop.*

*In the course of 4 meetings, a new view of the mechanism for applying to calls opened up to me. The knowledge we have received is very valuable. The systematics of the process will be of great help to us in the institution, as well as instructions on how to consider which call is right for us, so that we can make a change and a step forward with it.*

*This is where our work will begin, as it is necessary to have the story at least roughly prepared in advance.*

*Thanks again and have a nice day.*

*Bojana Čibej*

*After your education, we applied for two calls. We succeeded at the first one, and we are still waiting for the results for the second one.*

*(Bojana Čibej participated in Veronika's workshop "How to win calls with a good application")*

**Way to go, Veronika!**

# WE SHARED OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE ACROSS THE BORDERS.

- Director of CNVOS participated in the **OECD Periodic Review of Public Administration Development in Albania and Kosovo**. The final reports are published [here](#).
- As the **leading expert**, our director also **directed and coordinated the development of the new Montenegrin Government Strategy for Cooperation between State Bodies and Non-Governmental Organizations 2022–2026**. The strategy is expected to be adopted in the second quarter of 2022.
- On behalf of the OECD, **we participated in the drafting of a new Ukrainian law on public consultations**. We analyzed the government's draft law and made recommendations for improvements, and reviewed about 200 amendments tabled by MPs. We participated in the parliamentary working group in the preparation of the amended bill for plenary discussion in the Verkhovna Rada.
- We participated in the **Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)**: led the Steering Committee, completed a regional survey on the needs of NGOs in the Western Balkans, and reviewed national reports under the Monitoring Matrix of Enabling Environment for CSOs.

# WE WERE THE FUND OPERATOR OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN SLOVENIA.

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Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein want to strengthen the role of NGOs in **promoting democratic governance, involving the public in decision-making at national and local level, and strengthening human rights in thirteen European countries - also in Slovenia.**

The management of the Active Citizens Fund was entrusted to us for the second time in 2018.

We also assisted the managers of the **Active Citizens Fund in Croatia** in preparing calls and monitoring projects.



- In January, we published a **public call for institutional support** (yes, the one we designed ourselves, and the donor countries enthusiastically transferred it to other countries!), and in May, we published the results of the call.
- In May, we also published a **public call for small projects**. Those that impressed us the most were announced in December.
- For non-governmental organizations interested in our calls, we conducted online workshops, which we also published on our YouTube channel. We also offered consultations 1 on 1. We conducted 38 individual consultations.
- We helped non-governmental organizations prepare convincing descriptions of selected projects and their stories, which we published on the Active Citizens Fund - Slovenia Facebook page.





# WE CREATED THE DEMOCRACY DEFENSE FUND.

In July, we published a **call for financial support for actions to defend democracy**, through which we distributed 100,000 euros to non-governmental organizations.

We supported the **urgent advocacy, legal and communication actions of non-governmental organizations that opposed the abuse of power, hate speech and harmful laws**. Organizations could receive a maximum of 10,000 euros for individual campaigns.

We closed the call in mid-December as we distributed all available funds. We supported 13 NGOs.

**Financial support for actions to defend democracy was provided by the Open Society Initiative for Europe in the framework of the Open Society Foundations.**

**USTAVIMO  
RAZKROJ  
DEMOKRACIJE**



100.000 evrov  
za nujne akcije  
civilne družbe

# WE HACKED FOR A MORE ACTIVE AND QUALITY AUTUMN OF LIFE.

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In October, we organized a two-day virtual hackathon, in which we looked for creative solutions in an often neglected area: **how to enable older people to have a more active, more fulfilling and generally better quality autumn of life.**

We invited non-governmental organizations, representatives of centers for social work and homes for the elderly, and of course the elderly. **If we work for the elderly we should do so in collaboration with them!**

We promised to help them develop the ideas they formed on the hackaton. **We look forward to the results!**

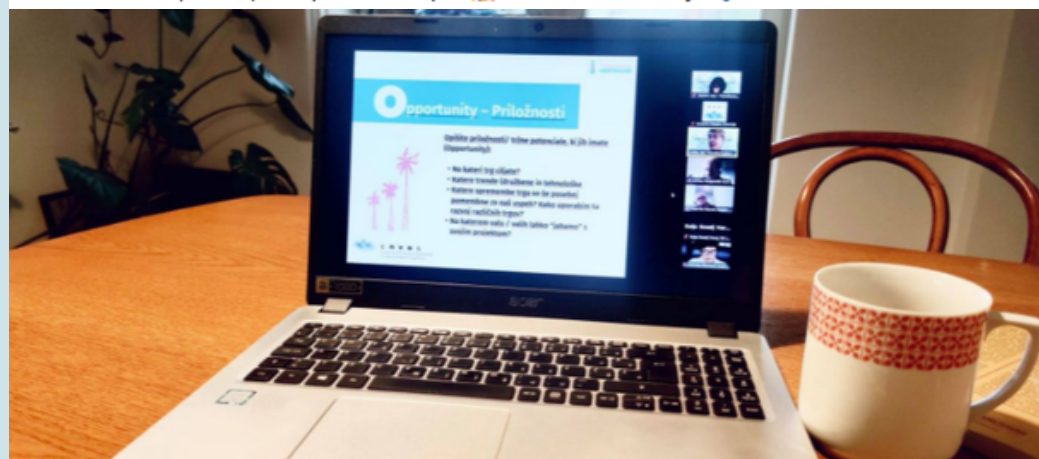
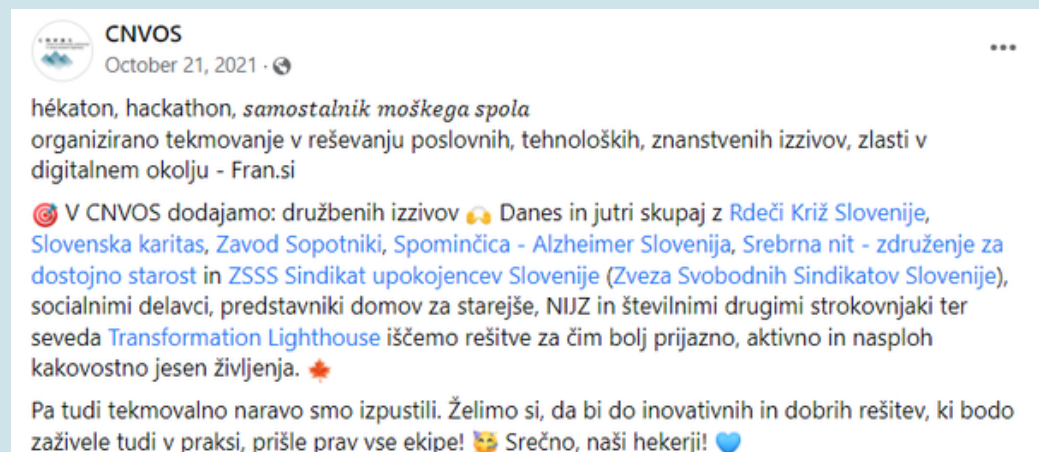


"I like that we, NGOs working in the field of social affairs, can be involved and have the opportunity in modern ways of developing ideas or innovations. Our organisation undoubtedly wants to remain innovative, but we are facing many challenges, sometimes problems. Networking is extremely important to me, so I think it is very good that you have connected us directly with NGOs like us. "

"For us, the virtual hackathon was also a platform through which we could involve professionals and seniors, as everyone was interested. When we finished the talks, they were extremely happy to see each other, chat, and above all they were happy that they participated in the preparation of a new project. In these times when loneliness knocks on many doors, I think this is extremely important. "

"It was also great that we really laughed from the bottom of our hearts. I have to say that I relaxed a bit, because in everyday life a person sometimes carries the burden of hardships that he witnesses, but they are not aware of it. So I'm very grateful that we laughed together, despite the seriousness of the issue, which we all tried to solve in our own way.

- Hekaton participant Anu Kahuna,  
program manager at the Zavod Sopotniki



# WE HAVE CONNECTED NGOS AND RESTAURANTS.

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In May, the moment we all eagerly awaited, came. After a long time we were able to put down the cookers and indulge in culinary pampering in restaurants throughout Slovenia. And secondly: we were once again able to organize the charity campaign The Good Dinner, in which restaurants and NGOs join forces for a good cause!



**In a week, we raised 8,145 euros with the help of generous social networks users.**

# WE CALLED JOURNALISTS. AND THEY CALLED US.

We collect all important media articles in the media center on our website.

**We commented on the harmful amendments to the laws.**

"In January, Minister Andrej Vizjak presented a proposal for a new law on environmental protection. Silently and without pomp, he proposed ideas that no serious businessman, let alone the Minister of the Environment, would have dared to suggest a year ago, as they would be considered completely crazy on the spot. However, Vizjak's proposal for the time being - apart from a few isolated responses from non-governmental organizations - has not received any particular outrage or public interest.

If we had a solid system so far, in which our famous bear from Kočevje was reasonably protected from harmful interference, we will now have Vizjak's system, in which harmful interference is protected as instead"

- Goran Forbici, director of CNVOS,  
for the newspaper Večer, February 20, 2021



**We wondered about the validity of some government measures against the spread of coronavirus.**

"What has allowing constructions without a final permit, arranging conditions for obtaining accreditations from higher education institutions, pleasing the universities close to the ruling party, tightening conditions for nature conservation NGOs to participate in administrative environmental procedures, to do with the epidemics?" Nothing at all. However, these measures were adopted - or envisaged - in the intervention anti-corona laws. "

- Goran Forbici, director of CNVOS,  
for the newspaper Svet24, March 14, 2021



**We raised awareness about the NGO sector.**

"We often hear that NGOs do nothing and sit on state money. When we specifically ask them - can you name five NGOs? - they don't know them. Until we help them. And they say, 'oh, really, they too? Slovenian Caritas as well? ' Yes, also Slovenian Caritas. With the rise of populism and social media, it has become easy to spread false claims: non-governmental organizations are leeches, non-governmental organizations are against Sloveneness... Some people take this as a sacred truth. "

- Tina Divjak, Head of Advocacy and Deputy Director of CNVOS,  
on Radio Slovenia, in the show Nočni obisk, 14 June 2021

# WE TOLD THE STORIES OF NGO ACTIVISTS



In 2021, we continued to present people behind non-governmental organizations on news site Dnevnik.si every Monday. Each of them strive to make our society more beautiful and friendlier in their own way.

We met...

... **Ivica Žnidaršič**, long-time president of the **Association of Slovenian Exiles 1941–1945**, who strives to preserve the historical memory of the genocidal policy towards Slovenes during the Second World War and the expulsion of Slovenes as the most cruel form of this policy.

... **Miroslav Žaberl**, President of the **Fishing Association of Slovenia**, which protects nature and strives to leave our descendants rich and healthy waters.

... **Maja Prinčič**, coordinator of learning assistance in the **St. Vincent Assosiation**, which offers free learning assistance to primary and secondary school students.

... **Urška Pregelj**, expert manager of the **Rhythmic Gymnastics Club Špica**, which has been operating for twenty years and connects more than 750 rhythmic gymnasts in more than 60 exercise groups across Slovenia.

... **Metka Demšar Goljevšček**, head of programs at the **Back to the Horse Institute**, the first Slovenian non-governmental organization to develop comprehensive treatment of people with special needs and therapy with the help of horses.

... **Dejvid Horvat**, president of **PGD Pušča**, the only Roma volunteer fire brigade in our country. And in the world.

... **Andreja Cilenšek**, head of the Volunteering program at the **Slovenian Hospice Association**, which has been offering compassionate and professional support to the dying, their relatives and all those who face mourning and death for twenty-five years.

... And 42 other environmentalists, culturalists, animal rights activists, human rights activists and other NGO actors who help the state and its people when we need it.

# MOVING FORWARD!

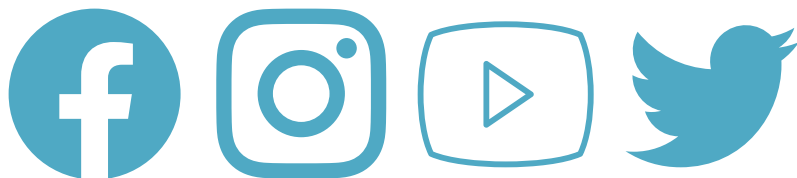


*"I am happy to be able to dedicate this December to more progressive activities, not just firefighting," our director wrote in his December diary for newspaper Večer.*

*"We are pleased to be able to devote a good part of 2022 to more progressive activities, not just firefighting."*

*- we, in the CNVOS Annual Report for 2022.*

*Fingers crossed!*





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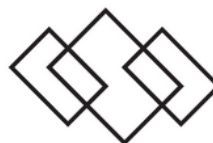
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