

## An overview of the Far Western Region of Nepal

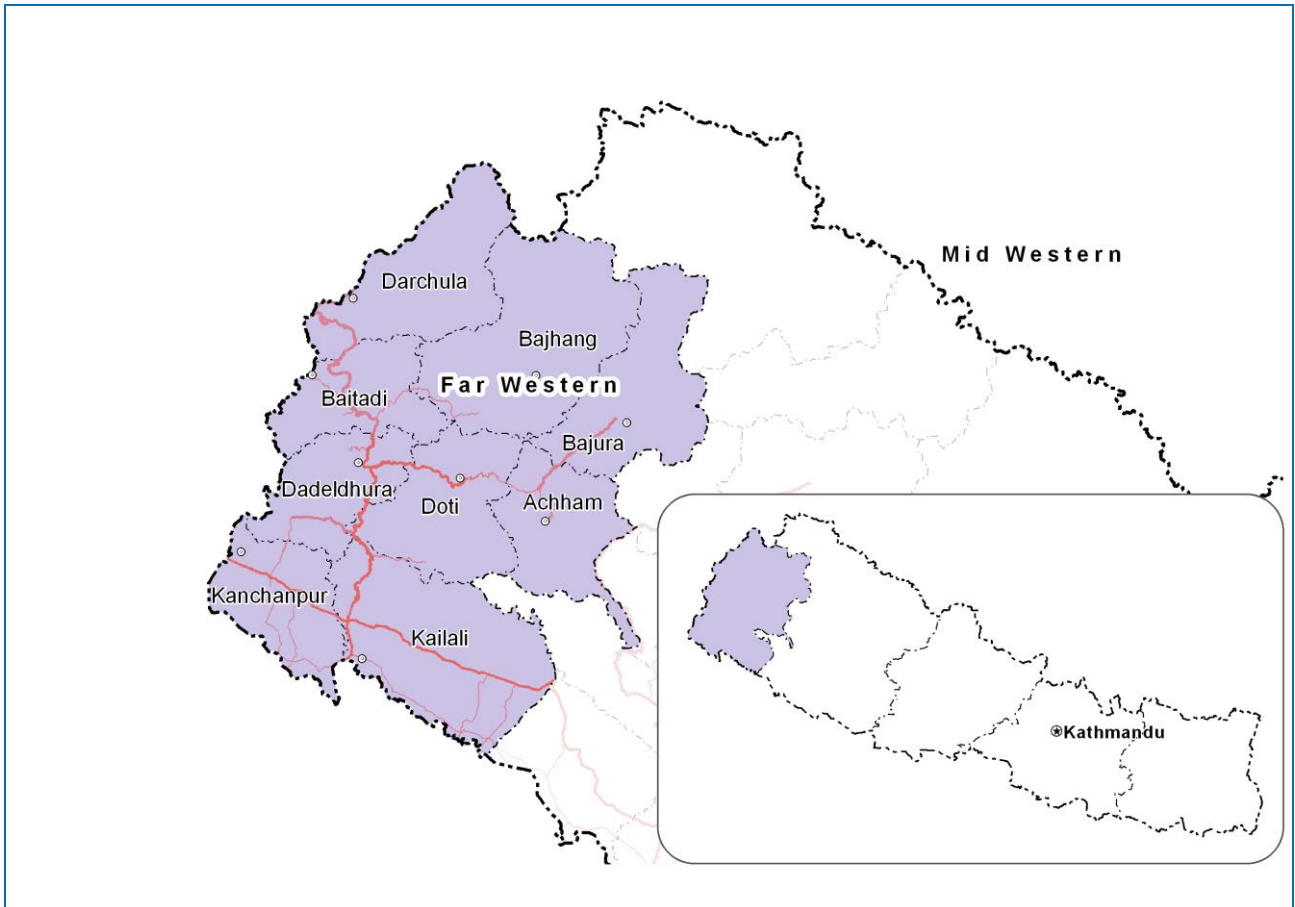
The Far Western Region covers 19,539 km<sup>2</sup> and comprises two zones, the Seti and Mahakali. It has nine districts with the regional headquarters at Dipayal, Doti district. The Far Western Region is remote and developmentally challenged. Some 44 % of people in the Far West Hills and 49% in the Himalayan districts live beneath the poverty line. The region has limited access to basic services and increasing services is challenging due to the difficult topography.

The region has complex socio-economic structures and there is both widespread gender and caste based discrimination. Traditional systems associated with religion, culture and customs also have a great impact on overall development.

### Far West Nepal

<b>Total area:</b> 19,539 sq Km	<b>Zone:</b> 2 (Mahakali & Seti)
<b>Total districts:</b> 9	<b>Total VDCs:</b> 383
<b>No. of Municipalities:</b> 6	<b>Total HHs:</b> 479,817
<b>Total Population:</b> 2,750,716	<b>Male:</b> 1,374,344
	<b>Female:</b> 1,376,372

*Sources: District Resource Map and Poverty Mapping (2001);  
 NepalInfo Database (2009)*



## Major Challenges

- Prevalence of gender and caste based discrimination;
- Lack of employment and high seasonal migration to India; High prevalence of HIV/AIDs among migrants;
- A legacy of socio-economic exploitation, such as bonded labour and the Kamaiya/Haliya systems;
- Continued caste discrimination;
- Widespread child labour;
- High infant and maternal mortality rates due to a lack of basic health services and high malnutrition;
- Low literacy rate, insufficient school facilities and limited access to quality education;
- Low agricultural productivity and poor rural infrastructure (e.g. roads, irrigation) that limits production and markets;
- Extreme / diverse climatic conditions;
- Difficult topography prone to natural disasters such as floods, landslides and forest fires;
- Lack of transport facilities and road networks across the districts, with heavy reliance on mules and porters.

## Human Development

The Human development Index (HDI) varies by development region, rural-urban area and ecological belt. The Far West Region ranked fourth out of five regions in Nepal in the Human Development Index (HDI), with a rating of 0.461 (UNDP HDI 2006). Furthermore, the HDI of the Far Western Mountains and Hills is quite alarming at 0.435 and 0.443 respectively. The HDI of the Far Western Tarai is slightly better at 0.503. The Gender Development Index of the Far Western Region is 0.447 and the Gender Empowerment Measure is 0.456 - again ranked fourth out of five regions.

**FWR: Human Development Index (HDI)-2006**

Development Index	Nepal	FWR	Mountain	Hill	Tarai
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.509	0.461	0.435	0.443	0.503
Gender Development Index (GDI)	0.499	0.447	0.414	0.421	0.492
Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)	0.496	0.456	0.413	0.396	0.469
Human Poverty Index (HPI)	35.40	39	48.1	44.9	35.3
Poverty incidence (poverty head count rate (%)-2003/04	30.80	41			

Source: UNDP, Nepal Human Development Report, 2009

## Geographical Challenges and Natural Disasters

The topography of the Far Western Region includes *Tarai* (plains), Hills, Middle Mountains and High Mountains, with the highest altitude at 7,132 meters. Most villages are very remote and inaccessible. However, all district headquarters are linked to the national road network, five through paved roads and four through earthen roads.

The region is prone to natural disasters such as floods, landslides and forest fires. Every year during the monsoon season, floods affect thousands of people in the Tarai, while landslides triggered by rains cause serious damage in the Hill and Mountain areas. In 2008, floods badly affected Kailali and Kanchanpur districts, claiming many lives, damaging houses and agricultural fields. Similarly, landslides triggered by heavy rains damaged houses, land and community infrastructure such as rural roads, irrigation canals and trails in hilly districts, particularly in Darchula and Bajura, in 2009.

#### Human deaths and other losses due to disaster in FWR (1971-2009)

- 4,277 deaths; 922 missing; 10,426 injuries; 473,192 affected
- 21,123 houses destroyed; 16,343 houses damaged
- 3,196 evacuated
- Loss of NRs. 1,042,432,714

Source: Nepal Disaster Database (2011), Nepal Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET)

## Conflict Dynamics

The decade long armed conflict severely affected the Far West. A total of 1,558 people were killed in the Far West from 1996 to 2006, second only to the number of casualties in the Mid West Region (NHDR 2009). Similarly, 6,758 people were displaced, 60 disappeared and 65 were left disabled due to the conflict. The conflict damaged physical infrastructure, community level service centres and most VDC and line agency service centre offices, resulting in line agency service centres shifting to district headquarters. Access to services and overall development were thus further undermined.

#### Conflict Related Statistics

- 1,558 deaths
- 65 disabled due to conflict
- 60 missing persons due to conflict
- 6,758 people displaced between 1996 – 2004\*

Source: Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) - [www.inseconline.org](http://www.inseconline.org)  
\* UNDP, Nepal Human Development Report, 2009

The instability also reduced employment opportunities and led to increased seasonal migration towards India. The overall security situation has been calm since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006.

## Health and Sanitation

Challenges in the health sector include an inadequate number of medical facilities per capita (see chart), as well as gaps in health personnel, medicines and equipment. Health institutions are supported by a number of UN, multilateral and bilateral agencies through their programmes.

#### Health and Sanitation Statistics in FWR

- People living with HIV/AIDs: 4,057
- Contraceptive prevalence rate: 35%
- Proportion of delivery conducted by SBA among expected pregnancy: 24%
- Under 5 mortality rate: 100/10,000
- Open defecation – 71.9% (Bajhang- 89.4% and Kailali 60.9%)
- Managed Water Supply Ratio: Percentage of households served with managed water source- 80.4

Sources: Regional Health Directorate, Annual Report 2009/2010; Central Bureau of Statistics, NepalInfo Database; GoN, Nepal Demography and Health Survey (2006)

### Health Institutions in FWR

District	Zonal Hospital	District Hospital	Private Hospital	PHCs	HPs	SHPs	PHC-ORCs	EPI Clinics	Ayur. Centres
Kailali	1	0	5	5	7	30	208	265	1
kanchanpur	1	0	1	3	8	9	97	125	1
Achham	0	1	1	2	12	60	227	225	1
Baitadi	0	1	0	2	10	55	204	218	1
Bajhang	0	1	0	2	10	35	105	134	1
Bajura	0	1	0	1	11	15	97	119	1
Dadeldhura	0	1	1	1	9	15	97	125	1
Darchula	0	1	0	1	11	29	150	146	1
Doti	0	1	1	2	10	39	221	236	1
<b>FWR</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>1,406</b>	<b>1,593</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Far Western Regional Directorate, Annual Report 2009/10

Acute respiratory tract infection, headache, gastritis (APD), pyrexia, diarrhoea, intestinal worms and amoebic dysentery are among the most common diseases. The Far West also has high maternal and child mortality rates and a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Hygiene and sanitation in the region are poor – more than 70% of people living in the region do not have access to toilets but use ‘open defecation areas’. The number is as high as 89% in Bajhang, a mostly rural, mountainous district. There is also a strong preference, particularly among those living in rural areas, to visit religious healers (*Dhami, Jhakri*) when they are sick, rather than visit formal health institutions.

### Education

The Far Western Region has a very low literacy rate. The region again ranked fourth among the five regions in literacy. The literacy rate for those over 15 years is in fact lower than those over six, revealing that the literacy gap increases as many do not complete their educations. This divide becomes more marked when comparing literacy among males and females.

The number of Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) and primary schools are increasing; however there are insufficient

#### Education Statistics of FWR

Literacy rate over 6 years: 63.4% (Male: 77.4% and Female: 52.2%)

Literacy rate over 15 years: 54.1% (Male: 72.5% and Female 40.4%)

Total schools:

Government schools: 3,547, ECDs: 3,474,

Community schools: 3,222, ECDs: 3,156

Institutional schools: 325, ECDs: 318

Enrolment in 2010 in government schools: 783,032 (Girls: 383,278)

Enrolment ratio: Girls- 48%, Boys- 52%

Percentage *Dalit* enrolment at primary level: 24.5% (Boys 24.2% and Girls 24.8%)

Percentage *Janjati* enrolment at primary level: 18%

Total teachers: 23,722 (23.2% females)

Teaching licenses distributed: 33,741

Female teacher by level: Primary 29.7%, Lower Secondary 10.6%; Secondary 6.9%; Higher Secondary 2.3%

*Dalit* teachers: 2.7%

Student to teacher ratio: Primary-31.7; Lower Secondary-44.2; Secondary-35.0; Higher Secondary 17.5

Source: www.moe.gov.np (June 2010)

higher secondary schools and campuses. Girls' enrolment is gradually increasing although there remains a gap between girls' enrolment at basic and their enrolment at secondary level. Similarly, the *dalit* and *Janjati* enrolment rates are still very low (see chart).

23.2% of teachers are female; however half of them are working at primary and lower secondary level. The participation of female teachers at secondary and higher secondary levels is very low. Similarly, there are only very few *dalit* teachers in the region.

Programme and projects like Food for Education (FFE), Girls Incentive Programme (GIP), One Laptop per Child (OLPC), Decentralized Action for Children and Women (DACAW) and targeted scholarship programmes are implemented by the Government with the support of various agencies in areas with especially low enrolment and attendance rates.

The poor physical condition of schools, inadequately trained teachers and insufficient educational materials are the major challenges. It has also been reported that, in some remote areas in the Far West, teachers recruited by the School Management Committees (SMCs) do not actually teach in the schools but sub-contract others to undertake the duties at a lower wage.

## Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in the Far West. However, the percentage of agricultural households with land and the average size of agricultural land holdings are decreasing. The average land holding per household was 0.8 hectare in 2001 compared to 0.5 hectare in 2004<sup>1</sup>. Major crops are paddy, wheat, maize, winter potato, garlic, mustard, winter and summer vegetables.

There are only few agricultural households using improved seed and chemical fertilizer. Most farmers still use locally made equipment.

Mechanization of agriculture is at a very early stage.

The proportion of irrigated land increased sharply between 1996 and 2004. However, around one third of agricultural land is still not

### FWR: Agriculture Statistics

- Agricultural HHs: 94.7%
- Agricultural HHs with land: 93.7%
- Agriculture owned land: 82.1%
- Agricultural rented-in land: 17.9%
- Area of agricultural land: 8.8%
- Average land holding per household- <0.5 hectare
- Irrigated Agricultural land: 69.3%
- Agriculture Households having cattle: 82.7%
- Households using improved seed: Paddy 2.8%, Wheat 3.7%, Maize 1.8%
- Households using chemical fertilizer: Paddy 38%, Wheat 43%, Summer Maize 7.2% Millet 0.0%
- Agriculture equipment ownership: 76.4% have plough, 1.3% have tractor, 1.3% have thresher and 6.3% have water pump

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal Living Standard Survey (2004)

### FWR: Nutritional Status of Children under 5 years

- Stunting- 52.5% (Nepal 49%)
- Wasting- 16.7% (Nepal 13%)
- Underweight- 43.7% (Nepal 39%)

Source: GoN, USAID and New Era, Nepal Demography and Health Survey (2006)

<sup>1</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal Living Standards Survey, 2004

irrigated.

Livestock constitutes an integral part of the agriculture system and the majority of agricultural households have cattle, with 3.6 per household being the average. In high mountain areas, farmers keep cattle and sheep, whereas buffalos are more common in hilly areas.

The hilly and all mountains districts, particularly Bajura, Bajhang, Darchula, Baitadi and Achham, are high food deficit districts. Seasonal migration towards India in search of labor opportunities is a common coping mechanism among food insecure people.

**FWR: Food Security Situation 2009/2010**

District	Food Production (MT)	Food Requirements (MT)	Food Surplus/deficit (MT)
Dadeldhura	19,859	23,358	-5,464
Bajura	19,973	23,362	-3,390
Doti	40,407	42,746	-2,339
Bajhang	30,840	37,622	-6,782
Darchula	17,950	27,078	-9,128
kailali	212,148	124,627	+87,521
Kanchanpur	134,420	120,066	+14,353
Baitadi	39,685	47,118	-7,433
Achham	31,521	51,660	-20,139

Source: Regional Agriculture Directorate, Dipayel

Key challenges in the agriculture sector are:

- Traditional agricultural practices, land fragmentation and limited land holdings;
- Adverse geographical climate for production;
- Inadequate technical support to farmers, including lack of subsidized seeds and fertilizer;
- Lack of wider marketing and inaccessibility to markets.

## Employment and Migration

There are limited employment opportunities in the Far West. Agriculture is the biggest contributor to household income. The main employment sources are wage labour, agricultural labour and self-employment (self-agriculture).

14.4% of wage earners are involved in agriculture whereas the remainder (85.6%) work in other sectors such as construction, manufacturing, trade and transport. Most wage earners outside the agriculture sector are paid on a daily basis. Lack of work in the mountains and hills or in agriculture during the winter, the lack of income outside the agriculture sector and lack of basic services induce a large number of Nepalese workers to move to the Terai and India annually in search of work. The number of migrant workers is especially high in the Far Western Region. The largest number of migrants to India comes from landless groups, the highly indebted, dalit and socially excluded groups.

### Employment and migration in FWR

- Household income: 48,785 (medium) and 66,294 (mean)
- Per capita income: 8761 (medium) and 11,504 (mean)
- Employment sources: Wage-18%; Self employed-56%; Other-26%.
- Unemployment Rate: 1.7

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal Living Standard Survey (2004)

## Forest and NTFP

More than half the area of the Far West is covered by forest. At least 30% of Bajhang and 75% of Dadeldhura are covered by forest. In Nepal, the concept of community forestry emerged in the mid-1970s as an innovative and future-focused approach towards participatory forest management by local people.

In the Far West, the Forest Offices are gradually handing over forested areas to the communities. Most households are involved in Forest User Groups and also in participatory forest management.

The Far West is rich in biodiversity with 71 species of non-timber forest products (NTFP) and hundreds of species of medicinal herbs (*jadibuti*), with more than 1.6 million kg annual production. The *Yarshagumba* of Darchula district is considered among the best in quality.

### Forest and NTFP statistics

- Area covered by forest: 48.7%
- Forest handed over to Forest User Groups: 10.5%
- Household involved in Forest User Groups: 74%
- Species of NTFP recorded: 71
- Annual production of jadibutis: 1,696,461 kg.

Source: Regional Network of DDCs, Regional Profile of Far West (2003)

The national park and conservation areas are:

- **Khaptad National Park:** The national park rises to above 3,000 meters and covers a total of 225 sq. km within Bajhang, Bajura, Doti and Achham districts. 224 types of aromatic and medicinal plants, 270 types of birds and 175 types of wild animals are found in the park. Tribeni River, Shiv temple, and Khaptad Lake are among the main attractions of the park.
- **Suklafata Wildlife Reserve:** The reserve lies in Kanchanpur district and covers 305 sq. km. There are two main lakes in the conservation area - Rani Lake and Sadgaudi Lake. There are many types of wild animals and 268 types of birds. Big herds of swamp deer are a main attraction of the reserve<sup>2</sup>.
- **Api Nampa Conservation Area:** The conservation area lies in Darchula and covers a total of 1,903 sq. km. Wildlife like the snow leopard, clouded leopard, musk deer and Himalayan black bear are found there, along with birds like the crimson pheasant, blood pheasant, red billed chough and yellow billed chough. Many endangered plants are also present.

## Gender Discrimination and Social Inclusion

The Far West is a male dominated society. Women suffer from both gender-based violence and domestic violence, while there is discrimination between boys and girls in education, household chores and nutrition, as well as social and cultural boundaries. *Chaupadi* is one prevalent form of violence against women. Women are considered untouchable during the first five days of their menstrual cycle and must remain separate from others in many aspects of daily life, often staying in dedicated sheds during their cycle. Similarly, domestic violence is widespread and there are many incidents of domestic abuse linked with alcohol consumption. Heavy physical labour by women, early marriage and uterus prolapse are key concerns among women.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Profile of Far West 2003

Female property ownership is very low at 11.62%. Similarly, women are less involved in economic activities and mostly confined to domestic work (farming). The participation of women in civil services and in politics is also very low. Similarly, there is very low literacy among women (40.4%), in particular *Dalit/Janjati* women who are doubly challenged in this regard with caste based discrimination being widely practiced in the Far West. There is also widespread poverty, as well as high maternal and child mortality rate among *dalit* communities. The *Haliya* system of agricultural bonded labour has been outlawed but there are more than 20,000 freed *haliyas* in the region, most of whom are *dalit*.

Gender and caste based discrimination remain serious obstacles to ensuring that achievements toward the Millennium Development Goals are shared equally among all groups in the Far West.

## Endangered Ethnic Groups

### Raute:

Rautes are the only the nomadic ethnic group officially recognized by the Government of Nepal. Their estimated population is about 650 persons living in temporary and small settlements. There are two settlements of Rautes in Jogbuda and Sirsha VDCs of Dadeldhura. The estimated population in Dadeldhura is around 250.

### Badi:

Traditional entertainers often associated with the sex industry. They live mainly in Kailali district

### Raji:

Raji are one of the endangered indigenous nationalities of Nepal, and are gradually decreasing in number. Currently there are only 2,339 in Nepal settled in Surkhet and Achham districts in the hills, and Dang, Bardiya and Kailali districts in the lowland Terai region. Some 90 percent of Rajis have been displaced from their ancestral lands and live in extreme poverty, while approximately 82 % are illiterate<sup>3</sup>.

## UN Programmes in the Far West

Agency	Name of Project	Districts Covered
UNDP	Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP)	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Darchula
	Micro Enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP)	Darchula, Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Kailali
	HIV/AIDs	Darchula, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Achham, Doti, Kailali and Kanchanpur
	Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (WTLCP)	Kailali, Kanchanpur
	Access to Justice (A2J)	Kailali, Doti
	Enhancing Access to Financial services (EAFS)	Kailali, Dadeldhura
	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetland in Nepal (CSUWN), called Wetland project	Kailali
	Public Private Partnership for Urban Environment (PPPUE)	Dhangadi-Kailali
	Electoral Support Project (ESP)	Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Darchula
	UNIRP	
UNICEF	Decentralized Action for Children and Women (DACAW)	Dadeldhura, Achham, Bajhang, Bajura

<sup>3</sup> <http://nefin.org.np/indigenous-nationalities/inner-terai-in/60.html>



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Agency	Name of Project	Districts Covered
	Paralegal Programme	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Darchula, Kailali, Kanchanpur
	Maternal and Neonatal Health Programme	Darchula
	Community Managed Malnutrition Programme	Kanchanpur
<b>WFP</b>	Food for Education (FFE)	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Darchula
	Mother and Child Health Care Programme (MCHC)	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Darchula
	Food OR Cash OR Food and Cash for Work Programme (PRRO)	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Darchula, Achham
	One Lap top per Child Programme (OLPC)	Dadeldhura
<b>UNFPA</b>	UNFPA supported programme	Dadeldhura, Bajhang, Baitadi, Bajura, Achham, Darchula, Kanchanpur
<b>FAO</b>	Food Security Programme	Baitadi, Bajhang, Doti, Darchula, kailali
	Leasehold Forestry Programme	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Doti, Achham
	Integrated Pest Management Programme	Dadeldhura, Kailali
<b>ILO</b>		Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Bajura, Bajhang
<b>WHO</b>	Immunization Preventive Disease Programme	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Darchula, Kailali, Kanchanpur
<b>OHCHR</b>	1612 Action Plan Monitoring Team	Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Darchula, Kailali, Kanchanpur

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