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## **NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROMOTION OF AGRIBUSINESS AMONG THE YOUTH GROUPS IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA.**

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**Abstract:** *The national government has invested in supporting the youths doing agribusiness through infrastructure. This study focused on how the national government is attracting the youth in Kericho County to embrace agribusiness through provision of storage facilities, accessibility of roads, availability of supplies and security of the area. The study used a descriptive research design and the target population was 23 youth groups engaging in agricultural activities in Kericho County. The sample size for was determined using Yamane Formula. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample size from each of the 23 youth groups. The study also used purposive sampling method to select agricultural officers under the national government to Kericho County. The research used both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments, which included questionnaire and interview guide. The data collected was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data was coded and entered into computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data was analyzed and presented in frequencies, bar charts and pie charts for easy understanding. Qualitative data was analyzed by transcribing the interviews, reading through the responses, organizing them into specific themes and reported in narrative form describing each theme. The study found that Kericho County provided inadequate storage facilities for perishable farm produce, but most of the roads were accessible during rainy and dry periods and there was appropriate access to agricultural supplies and inputs in time.*

**Key Terms:** *Youth group, Agribusiness, Infrastructure*

## 1.1 Background of the study

Palwinder & Jasmindeep (2014) on their journal on The Role of Infrastructure in the Growth of Agriculture in Punjab informs that the development of agriculture is dependent on advancement of agricultural infrastructure. Adequacy in infrastructural facilities help in increasing production and lowering production cost of activities. Infrastructure plays a vital role in determining the agriculture output. Ojha (1985) in his study on storage of agricultural durables and semi perishables reports that India holds the second largest agricultural land in the world, and 70 percent of the population are engaged in activities related to agriculture. Due their large production they cannot store their product at home stores, the government, private entrepreneurs, and cooperative societies have construct Agri warehousing that help farmers to store their produce and avoid losses. The Pennsylvania department of agriculture wrote a document on Agricultural Security Area (ASA) intended to promote more permanent and viable farming operations by strengthening the farming community sense security. It benefits the farmers as it provide protection as well as creating an agricultural security area is a collaborative effort between the local government and Farmers.

FAO (2010) research revealed that African agriculture was changing and entry of large numbers of young people into to the sector accelerated due to improved technologies, management practices and long term investments in research and infrastructure. Calestous (2011) states that ‘Urgent investment in rural infrastructure is needed so as to address poor infrastructure in transportation and storage which hampers the ability for Africa to sustain economic growth and meet sustainable development objectives’. Poor infrastructure in Africa has been identified as the major challenge to agricultural growth and development. According to Olumeko (1999), Nigeria is losing huge tones of crop yield due to poor harvest and unavailability of storage facilities. Thus, leading to losses associated with these crops limiting the potential income of the farmers and threaten food security of the society and worsen the condition of hunger poverty among the rural households, who depend solely on the income of storing farm produce for the later date.

The Government of Kenya report of 2007 reported that the expect growth due to their investment on infrastructure. Infrastructure development is the main component of Kenya’s goal of becoming the middle income economy by 2030. The government of Kenya secured funding from World Bank and the Development Bank to finance various infrastructure project in the country.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

This study focused on how the national government is attracting the youth in Kericho County to embrace agribusiness where employment can be realized by investing in the agribusiness infrastructure.

The national government is mandated to insure the infrastructure of all the counties that benefits all the sectors including agriculture. This study is set to determine if the youth doing agribusiness get the infrastructural support that would benefit them in carrying out their agricultural venture.

## 1.3 Objective of the Study

The research was carried out to Investigating how national government is using agribusiness infrastructure to promote agribusiness and how it benefits the youth groups.

## 1.4 Review of Empirical Studies

### **Use of agricultural infrastructure in promoting agribusiness.**

Infrastructure plays a vital role in determining the output of agriculture, its development is dependent on advancement of agricultural infrastructure. Adequacy in infrastructural facilities help in increasing production and lowering production cost of activities. This informs the state to concentrate on infrastructural development as it affects the agricultural output from farmers. It also shows the need why the government should provide support to farmers hence enhancing agricultural growth. Palwinder & Jasmindeep (2014). The study revealed that road disbursement has a significant positive direct effect on a state's agricultural output. Study done by Tory (2004) indicated that investment in road infrastructure is not only imperative to the agricultural development within a state but also beneficial to the agricultural development in other states. As a result more resources should be allocated to the construction and maintenance of road infrastructure to enhance the growth in agricultural economy.

Poor infrastructure in Africa has been identified as the major challenge to agricultural growth and development to the continent. Poor roads and lack of storage facilities leads to post harvest losses which leads to not meeting the demands of the consumers hence leading to poverty and hunger (Calestous, 2011). The government of Kenya secured funding from World Bank and the Development Bank to finance various infrastructure project in the country. Agriculture has been identified as an important area to propel the economic foundation into realizing GDP growth rate hence the need to improve the road infrastructure. Infrastructure development is the main component of Kenya's goal of becoming the middle income economy by 2030 (GoK Report, 2007).

## 1.5 Research Design

The study used descriptive research design since it is the most suitable for describing particular characteristics and behavioral trends of an individual or group. The study focused on specific predictions of youth groups in Kericho County, narration of facts and characteristics concerning the Group members.

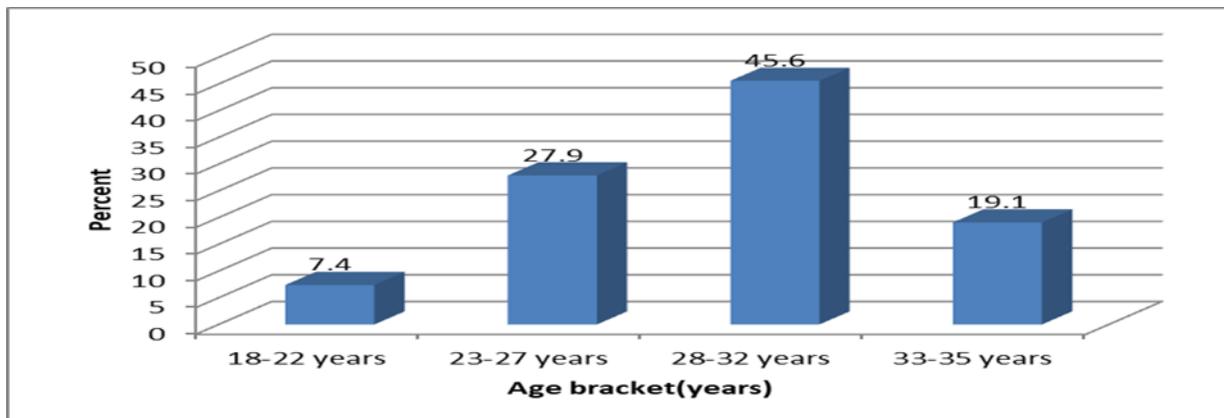
### **Methods of data collection**

The research used both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The study used questionnaire and interview guide. These instruments captured the information required for the study. The items in questionnaire were of two types namely; structured and unstructured (open ended) questions. The structured questions enabled obtaining of specific responses and clarifications from the participants whereas the open-ended questions enriched the structured questions by allowing the participants to express their views and any other information they wished to share.

## 1.6 Results and discussion

### Demographics

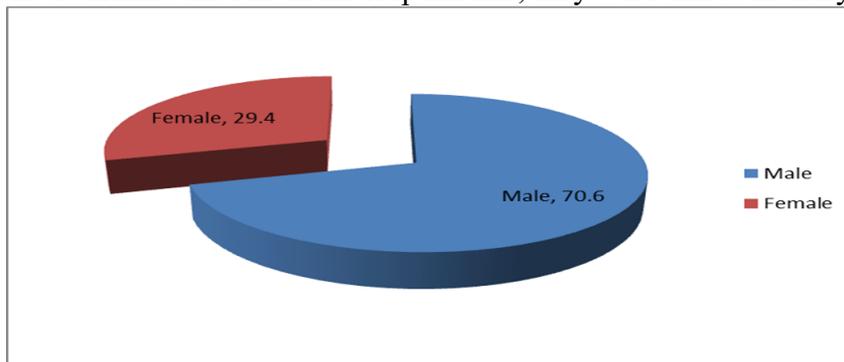
**Figure 1; Age of Bracket of the Participants**



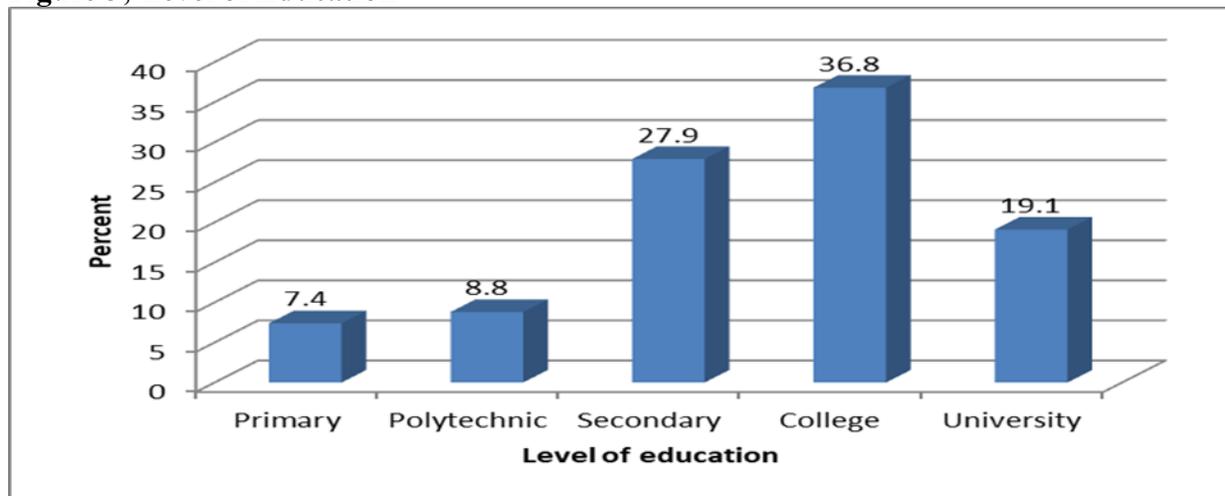
This implied that most of the youth groups who participated in the study were aged between 28 and 32 years as they constituted the bulk of the sample.

**Figure 2; Sex of the Respondents**

To determine the sex of the respondents, they were ask to identify themselves as male or female.



According to the results, 70.6 percent of the participants indicated that they are male and 29.4 percent specified that they are female. This implied that most of youth groups were male. The reason why many male are interested in agriculture might be because they are breadwinners, they tend to look for alternative to provide basic needs for their families to survive unlike women who due to unemployment become housewives and concentrate on bringing up their children.

**Figure 3; Level of Education**

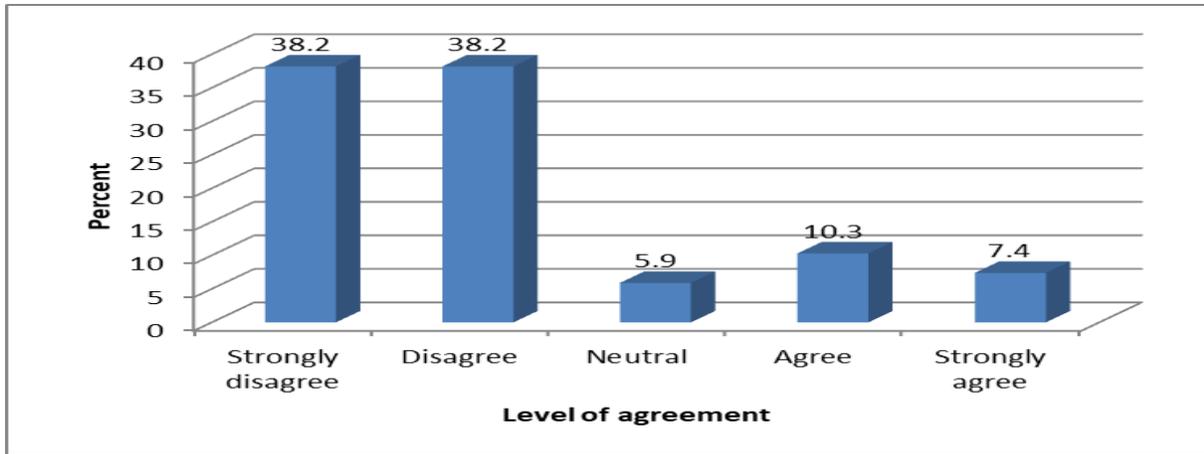
With regard to the respondents' education level, 36.8 percent of the participants specified that they had college education, 27.9 percent pointed out that they had secondary education, 19.1 percent specified that they had undergraduate education, 8.8 percent specified that they had polytechnic education and 7.4 percent indicated that they had primary education. This implied that most of the agricultural officers, youths and extension officers had diploma certificates. And this explains unemployment crisis in the country, with a diploma an individual is able to secure a good job but due to lack of jobs they sought agricultural sector regardless of what they studied for. The verbatim quote below supports the above mentioned position.

### **Agribusiness infrastructure and youth groups**

On investigating how national government is using agribusiness infrastructure to promote agribusiness among youth groups in Kericho County, the study asked detailed questions on various infrastructural development in the county these are, storage facilities, condition of roads, farm inputs and supplies and security of the area.

#### **I. Provision of Storage facilities for perishable goods**

Storage of agricultural products helps in preventing post-harvest losses, it's a challenge for small scale farmers as they can't construct such stores for their goods. These products needs proper storage at the farmer looks for market. The participants were asked to indicate the extent in which Kericho County provided storage facilities for perishable goods. As this is the major factor that affects production of goods as they await pick up. The results were as presented in figure 4 below;

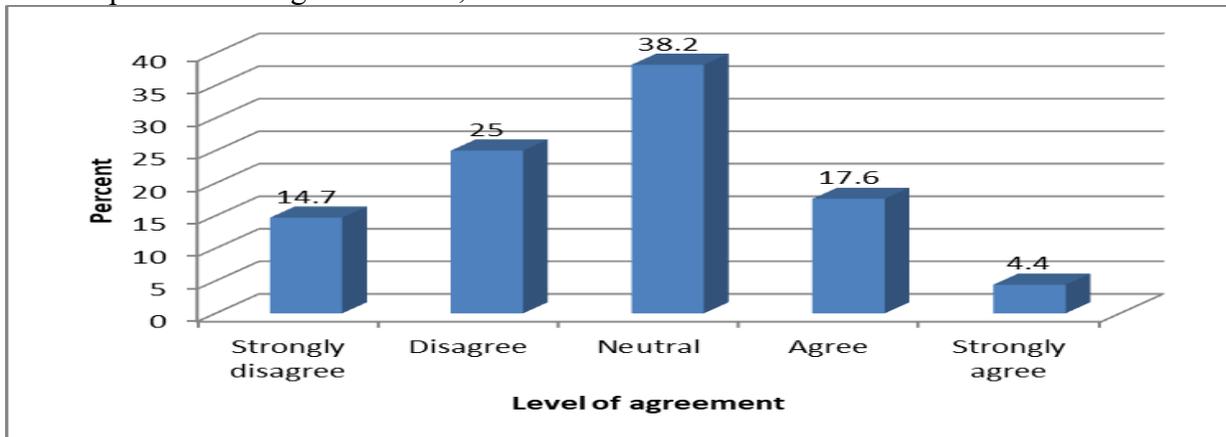


According to the results, 38.2 percent of the participants strongly disagreed that Kericho County provided storage facilities for perishable goods, the same percentage disagreed with the statement, 10.3 percent agreed and 7.4 percent strongly agreed. This implied that Kericho County provided inadequate storage facilities for perishable and this inconvenience the farmers when looking for markets for their produce as they lack where to store their products leading to losses.

The maximum storage duration of agricultural products varies and can only be few days for some fruits and vegetables like kales, cabbages and tomatoes, for bulbs like onions they can be stored for over four months when dried properly. Kericho county needs to be equipped with storage facilities and warehouses to enable farmers carry on their agricultural practices without encountering losses. On the tomato issue the below verbatim quote support the outcome.

## II. Accessibility of Roads during rainy and dry period

Road infrastructure plays a very significant role in accelerating agricultural production. A good road network reduce transport cost and accelerates efficient delivery of farm inputs and product distribution. The participants were also requested to point out their level of agreement on accessibility of road networks during dry rainy and dry period in Kericho County. This was to determine how good the roads were to enable transportation of their inputs and goods. The results were as presented in figure 5 below;



According to the results, 38.2 percent moderately agreed that the roads in Kericho County

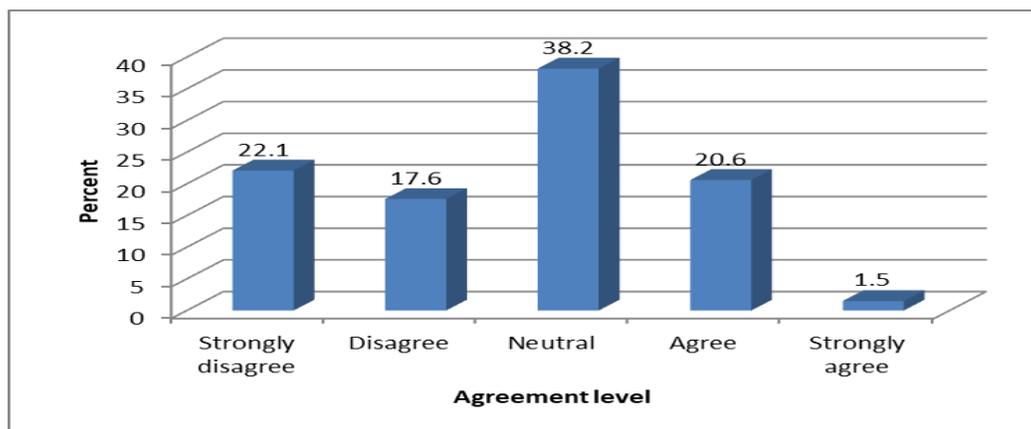
were accessible during rainy and dry periods, 25 percent disagreed with the statement, 17.6 percent agreed, 14.7 percent strongly agreed with the statement while 4.4 percent agreed. This implied that most of the roads in Kericho County were accessible during rainy and dry periods. This enables farmers in various areas to transport their produce to market places as well as other urban areas.

The findings agrees with Social Systems Theory which theorizes groups as being open systems affected by spontaneous internal action and other forms associated with living behavior. The actions of national government in promoting agribusiness through providing good passable roads during both rainy and dry periods is the part of the change that influenced youth groups into venturing into agriculture.

This study agrees with the study of Tong (2012) which was conducted to evaluate the impact of public infrastructure on the output of food manufacturing industries. The study revealed that road disbursement has a significant positive direct effect on a state's agricultural output. The findings in the study indicated that investment in road infrastructure is not only imperative to the agricultural development within a state but also beneficial to the agricultural development in other states. As a result more resources should be allocated to the construction and maintenance of road infrastructure to enhance the growth in agricultural economy.

### III. Accessibility of Agricultural Supplies and Inputs in Time

Inputs are either seeds, fertilizers, farm tools or machinery. Access to inputs is crucial to the development of agriculture sector as it enhances efficiency of running farm activities. The respondents were also asked to indicate their agreement level on the statement that youth were able to access agricultural supplies and in input in time. The results were as presented in figure 6 below;



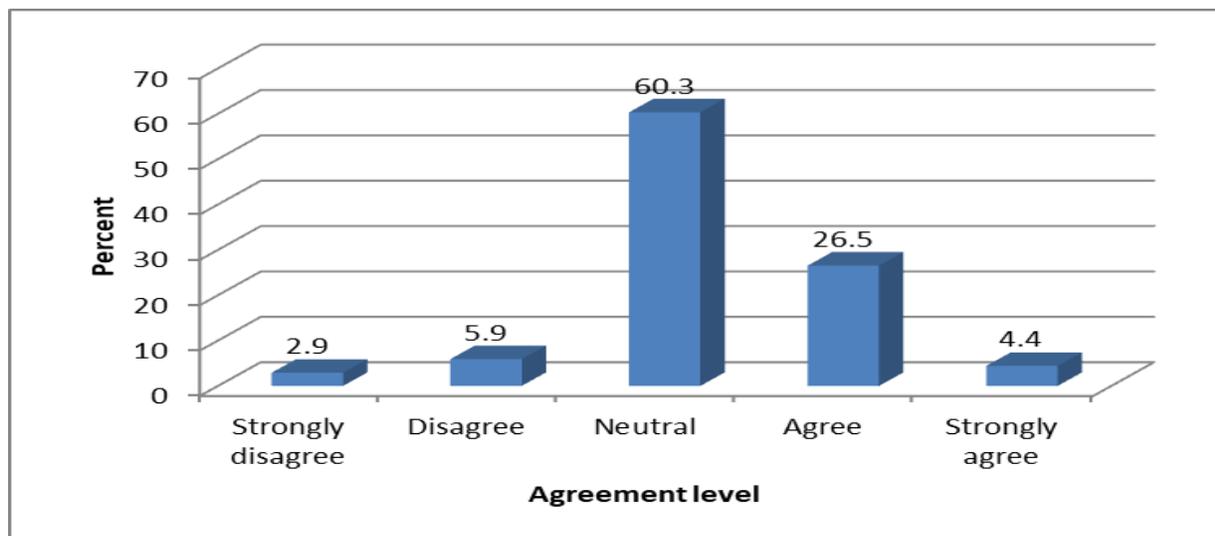
According to the results, 38.2 percent of the agricultural officers, extension officers and youth groups moderately agreed that the youths were able to access agricultural supplies and in inputs in time, 22.1 percent strongly disagreed, 20.6 percent agreed, 17.6 percent disagreed while 1.5 percent strongly agreed. This implied that youths in Kericho County were able to access agricultural supplies and inputs in good time hence running their activities smoothly.

Agricultural inputs are great determinants of yields in any type of agricultural production.

Agriculture has become dynamic hence making the kinds of input that are being used in the agricultural sector upgraded. Hybrid seeds remain the best seeds for planting as they are being bred to resist drawbacks from elements like, drought, parasites and weeds. This has made it easier for farmers to embrace agriculture due to availability of input and supply.

#### IV. Security of Agribusiness Areas

Security is equally important for farms and other agricultural environments, it enables smooth operation in farms and protection of the farmers. The participants were asked to indicate their agreement level on security of the area they undertook their agribusiness. The results were as shown in figure 7 below;



According to the results, 60.3 percent moderately agreed that the area they were undertaking agribusiness was secure, 26.5 percent agreed, 5.9 percent disagreed with the statement, 4.4 percent strong agreed while 2.9 percent strongly disagreed. This implied that agribusiness areas in Kericho County were moderately secure and farmers could carry on their activities smoothly.

The agricultural sector is the main contributor of the Kenya's economy. The sector directly contributes 24 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It also contributes over 75 percent of industrial raw material hence it is the largest employer in the economy. In order to give it high priority the national government should provide security for farmers to protect them from thieves and any other harm.

#### 1.7 Conclusion of the study

The study found that Kericho County provided inadequate storage facilities for perishable farm produce (38.2%). The study also established that most of the roads in Kericho County were accessible during rainy and dry periods (38.2%). In addition, the results revealed that the youths in Kericho County were able to access agricultural supplies and inputs in time (38.2%). Further the study found out that agribusiness areas in Kericho County were moderately secure (60.3%)

## 1.8 Recommendations of the study

The study found that Kericho County provided inadequate storage facilities for perishable farm produce and agribusiness areas in the County were moderately secure. Therefore, the study recommends that more funds should be allocated by the national government for more development towards storages facilities which will help farmers of Kericho County to be able to prevent losses of farm produce.

The study also recommends that the national government should liaise with the county government to develop new policies which ensure increase in the number security officers in the county's peri urban areas because the farmers complained of thieves taking advantage of good roads and motorcycles to stealing their produce from the farms. This leads to losses hence the outcry for increase in security.

The study focused on youth who are in groups. More studies should explore on the general population who seek funds to engage in agricultural activities as well. As it will inform on the importance of the available funds on agricultural sector, and if these funds are being put into use. Women get affected by unemployment as well as they take time to bringing up children and being housewives, the study commends that the government should come up with programs that interest the women into taking funds and venturing into the agricultural sector as it is the country's major source of income hence the main employer.

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