



LOCAL FOOD  
AND FARM CO-OPS

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# ANNUAL REPORT

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# 2021



# OUR PURPOSE

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## MISSION

Fostering vibrant, resilient, connected and sustainable food and farm co-operatives.

## VALUES

The Local Food and Farm Co-operative Network values Ontario food systems that are:

- > Accountable to local producers and consumers
- > Fair, just and democratic
- > Open and accessible
- > Ecologically sustainable
- > Compassionate and built on solidarity
- > Fostering good food knowledge



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# REPORT FROM OUR BOARD

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In reviewing the previous Chair, Emmett Ferguson's Board Report from last year, I was struck by this recurring theme of change and transition. Undoubtedly, much of this was brought on by the pandemic, which forced many of us to reimagine our personal and professional lives and the various communities and boundaries that exist within those spheres. LFFC is no exception. We've been on a bit of a soul-searching journey ourselves. One that represents a struggle with how the organization fits within the local food system and co-operative landscape. Much of our project work has been northern Ontario based simply because there are more funding and partnership opportunities available. The tension with being a grant-funded organization is that it broadens the scope of the work we do, which has been the elephant in the room for quite some time, though, the pandemic really brought that to light.

Looking back at board meeting minutes from the beginning of the 2021-2022 term, showed that both strategic planning and membership engagement were front of mind even then. In those early days we were revising budgets, discussing increasing sponsorship and contracts as well as membership dues and looking at ways that the organization could become more self-sufficient. It's a dance that I'm sure a lot of nonprofits do. And when you begin to evaluate those particular areas, it can't help but pan out and begin to examine the bigger picture. Which is, perhaps, an intimidating task regardless of whether you're a contractor or a volunteer board member. As a board, we have also struggled with board recruitment efforts over the past several years. We have had a small board at the helm of some big transitions and reckonings that have been happening within the organization.

There's a lot of things to hold space for and I want to recognize and thank my fellow board members and the LFFC contractor team for their continued efforts. Doing so under normal circumstances, let alone, two years into a pandemic, is no small feat. I think it's really important to also recognize the board's accomplishments over the past years.

The LFFC board worked collaboratively with the LFFC contractor team on a number of initiatives over the past year. Perhaps more actively than I recall in my tenure with the board. Here are some of the highlights:

- worked to establish less prohibitive processes for LFFC contractors, to provide them with more autonomy, agility, and support, and better allow them to more readily pursue partnership and grant opportunities.

- met with the LFFC team to participate in a joint strategic planning exercise led by Hannah Atkinson-Renglich.
- established a Strategic Development group to help support LFFC contractors in the realization of certain Strategic Development objectives, including:
  - integrating JEDI approach to SD process and having an inclusion and participatory process
  - adapt changes to their roles and responsibilities to align with SD
- struck a Member Engagement committee to explore strengthening member relations within the organization
  - that committee drafted a new multi-stakeholder member structure as a recommendation for adaptation by the LFFC membership
- begin work around exploring the adaptation of the 8th co-op principle of diversity, equity, and inclusion through the monthly practice of rotating, board-led J.E.D.I. (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) readings and discussions
- decided to shift organizational management, but reducing spending operational costs, PM, and communications with more focus on fundraising for the organization
- the intention of this shift is to increase organizational revenue and lead to a small bump to PM and communications activities in the 2nd quarter of 2022, while fundraising would still likely be the primary focus, depending on the outcome of some grant submissions currently under review

So there is a lot of activity that's been happening over the past year and a lot of opportunities for members to become more involved in shaping the LFFC for the future. We also have myself and Alexandra Szaflarska finishing up our board-terms this year. I'm uncertain of Alex's decision whether or not she'll be returning to the board, but I wanted to thank her for diving into the board work fearlessly and working hard and diligently as the Treasurer in the first year of her term and as the Secretary in her second year. This means our already small board of 6 people will shrink. We really need LFFC members to stand in and take ownership and leadership for this organization, especially as we move into the next new phase of its lifecycle. There is training and support available for those who might be new to serving in governance roles. I, myself, have reached my maximum terms of a board member, though, I'll be staying on some committees and willing to support new board members as they learn the ropes. I hope all of you will join me in giving a huge thank you to all of the current board of directors and team of contractors for their hard work and dedication through this year. Thank you.





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## REPORT FROM OUR TEAM

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The Co-op continued to experience and assess strategic changes and programming pivots this year, as we passed through year two of the global pandemic.

The team of coordinators solidified and new expertise and personalities have brought a fresh dynamic to the team and provoked a return to visioning the role of LFFC in food system change.


The coordinators reoriented programming to address member needs during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as evaluate and highlight the vulnerabilities in Northern food supply chains.

As 2021 began, uncertainty regarding project funding reduced the capacity and activity of the Northern team. After the very successful pivot to a virtual 2021 Assembly, the core team turned focus to Strategic Development and planning. We surveyed members and the sector, audited projects, programs, team skills, and our resource prospects to reorient and reimagine the best way to serve members and local food and farm ecosystems.

We applied for several grants throughout 2021. Successful funding projects include OMAFRA (CAP) for value chain coordination research. OMAFRA (RED) was awarded to incubate the Dryden Food Hub (working directly with new member 807 Cooperative), but we still await matching funds from FedNor to launch this project.

In late 2021 we applied to the Ontario Trillium Fund to foster resiliency, fuel our strategic direction and ramp up our member services development throughout 2022. Unfortunately OTF deemed LFFC ineligible for funding and we will have to contest this classification for future funding opportunities.

Early 2022 included restructuring of the Core and Northern roles to optimize and leverage skills internally as the Project Manager role transitions from Shylah Wolfe to Jen Esposito.





# YEAR IN REVIEW

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**33**

Events hosted, animated and supported by the LFFC

**+13**

NEW LFFC members!

**755**

Cooperators, foodies & farmers reached by LFFC

**40**

Co-ops and businesses assisted by LFFC team

Our last in person event in 2020 was the Assembly, but that did not stop us from hosting many virtual workshops and webinars and collaborating with members and food system actors from North to Southern Ontario!

# PROGRAMS — + PROJECTS

## Assembly 2021 Analytics Report



215

attendees

34

speakers

6

provinces,  
territories, states

- 80%+ attendees were from Ontario
- Other locations include: BC, Alberta, Yukon, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Mississippi, New York
- 83% women, 14% men, 1% non-binary attendees
- 2021's Presenting Sponsorship allowed for a total of 75 subsidized passes which went to: 65 Indigenous low-income women and 10 students / start-up co-ops

# FIELD SCHOOLS



NORTHERN FOOD DISTRIBUTION  
NETWORK PRESENTS

## Indigenous Leadership

in Food Distribution

Webinar

Thurs Jan 14, 2021

11am CT/12pm ET

## INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN DISTRIBUTION

Our NFDN and Indigenous Relations Coordinators led a discussion about how various Indigenous food initiatives can be successful when developed for the community and by the community in creating better food access and distribution. Speakers included the new Regional Distribution Centre in Sioux Lookout being developed, the Red Rock First Nation Maamawitaawing Community Moose Hanger in Red Rock Indian Band, L'Autochtone in Haileybury, and the Northern Ontario Indigenous Food Security Collaborative.

## NORTHERN VALUE CHAIN COORDINATION

A webinar series focused on:

- Building Back Better in Remote Communities
- Balancing Values & Sustainability in Northern Food Coordination
- Bridges & Barriers in Bringing Northern Food to Market,
- How Funders Support Northern Food Initiatives



## FORAGE & FARM

Partnered with one of our members to bring a workshop series focused on Northern foraging and farming skill-building (ie. Planting & Fermenting Garlic)

## REGIONAL TOURS

AgriTech North's brand new facility in Dryden

## PARTNER INTERVIEWS

8 Partner interviews were completed by our Membership Engagement committee to inform our new membership strategy



# TRADE ROUTES

In Spring 2021, NOHFC awarded this project matching funds to resume the Healthy Food Distribution North Project, which focuses on the partner and infrastructure development with partners across Northern Ontario to improve food access for all communities, including rural, remote, low income and marginalized groups. In 2021, with support from FedNor and NOHFC, the LFFC Northern team connected with, assisted and advised 40+ food initiatives across the Northeast and the Northwest. The activities supported through this project include the coordination of the Northern Food Distribution Network, annual forums, multiple mentorship and training events and support for community members, partners and team members to coordinate the purchasing, delivery and distribution, and marketing to engage partners' clients in the new program. Additional research led by Mike Degagne includes evaluations on needs-based platforms and special requirements in Northern communities, time-banking and alternative economy exchange platforms to provide members best practices and land access surveying of 10 food and land based organizations about how coops can optimize land access for individuals.

## NORTHERN FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETWORK



Kelleigh Wright and Jen Esposito led extensive research exploring the application of Food Value Chain Coordination to address barriers and create bridges between a diversity of food communities in northern Ontario, which culminated in the [Barriers & Bridges in Northern Ontario Report](#). In the fall of 2021, LFFC commissioned research and the ensuing report [NFDN: Evaluating Success, Planning the Future](#) was completed by Collective Harvest Consulting in early 2022. The report charts an action plan for the Network to engage effectively and leverage partnerships, skills and capacity for optimal impact. In January 2022, Jen Esposito took over NFDN Coordination from Kelleigh Wright (Boreal Food Systems Advisory). Pilot Projects have been officially accepted for development support from the Network. The Northwest pilot (Dryden Food Hub) is comprised of one of LFFC's newest members, 807 Co-op. In the near term, the Project committees will engage by connecting project partners with multiple sector leaders, resources and training, identify strengths and weaknesses in collaborations across northern Ontario, provide research and strategy recommendations and offer letters of support for funding applications to enhance project development. In the long term, the NFDN and Project committees will provide support to developing project proposals (including cross-disciplinary project review of project needs assessment and recommendations), advising policymakers and funders on network learning (gaps, food project challenges, success factors). Anticipated impacts from this work include Network participants having a greater understanding of the northern Ontario food system and Northern food consumers benefitting from new enterprises or initiatives that prioritize access to local food. LFFC is acting in a voluntary capacity toward the goals of the NFDN and as such, will make decisions that will conform with funding obligations.



# MEMBERSHIP & SERVICES

We revamped and streamlined the member intake process to ensure onboarding includes a warm welcome session and a tour of all the resources that LFFC has to offer.

We added 26 new resources to the online toolbox in 2021. Shylah Wolfe and Susanna Redekop completed a thorough audit of the 150+ toolbox resources to identify gaps, broken links and update information. Susanna Redekop led community platform comparative analysis to optimize peer to peer communications as well as resource management and bring the most value for our vast reaching network of members and partners. This laid the groundwork to launch the Pollinators of Food Change Network for the 2022 Assembly and our overhauled member service offerings, peer to peer forums at your fingertips and the (soon to come) revamped Coops on Your Desktop and other seasonal curriculum streams.

We also began a partnership with OCA to facilitate delivery of CoHealth (formerly CoPharm) to LFFC members. We helped NFU-O be the first to launch the program to their members and will continue approaching more LFFC members as the program rolls out across the province.

The Member Engagement Committee undertook a theory of change exercise and several interviews with sector stakeholders and other members to determine revised membership classes that better represent LFFC values.

## LFFC Membership Classes

### Food|Farm Co-ops + Social Enterprises

**Definition: Start-up and Established Incorporated food and farm co-ops and social enterprises**

#### Additional Benefits + Responsibilities

1. As outlined in the Bylaws, and based on member subscription tier chosen
2. Steer priorities for member content development & educational events
3. Complete LFFC member surveys

Participate in mentorship / knowledge transfer opportunities with other members

### Community Stakeholders

**Definition: Individuals or unincorporated enterprises who are involved in or interested in co-operation as a tool for improving local food systems**

#### Additional Benefits + Responsibilities

1. As outlined in the Bylaws, and based on member subscription tier chosen
2. Steer priorities for content development & educational events
3. Complete LFFC member surveys
4. Opportunities for mentorship / knowledge transfer from other members

### Sector Stakeholders

**Definition: Institutions & Corporations who are investing time, expertise and capital resources into cooperation as a tool for improving local food systems**

#### Additional Benefits + Responsibilities

1. As outlined in the Bylaws, and based on member subscription tier chosen
2. Collaborative education, networking events and direct marketing opportunities with LFFC network, members and clients
3. Representation as a Supporting Member in Annual Assembly and on LFFC website
4. Sector passes to our Annual Assembly (dependent upon pledge level)
5. Provide sector insight and expertise toward committees, content development, and knowledge transfer / mentorship to fellow members
6. Contribute an annual pledge (minimum \$500 in cash and kind), beyond regular membership fees and contributions, which may include:
  - a. Sponsoring programming (annual conferences, seasonal workshops & webinars)
  - b. Sponsoring LFFC memberships, event passes and services for startups
  - c. Reciprocal membership & preferred rates
  - d. Reciprocal program offerings & discounts
  - e. Content development support or animate training(s) to the LFFC network
  - f. Sector insight, expertise and knowledge transfer / mentorship to fellow members
  - g. Sector insight and expertise toward LFFC Board & committees development



## SERVICES

From financial analysis, bookkeeping, mentorship, business planning, visioning, communications, value chain coordination, policy and bylaw development, virtual AGM support and more... LFFC has provided expert fee-based services to 13 members and free services to over 20 burgeoning coops as well as partners. These services are at a flat discounted rate of \$50 / hour to LFFC members and are also open to non-members. Get in touch for details today!

# CO-OPS + MEMBERS

## 2021 NEW MEMBERS



**UNDERHILL CO-OPERATIVE  
RYERSON MUTUAL MARKET  
THOMAS KAETHLER**



## 2022 NEW MEMBERS



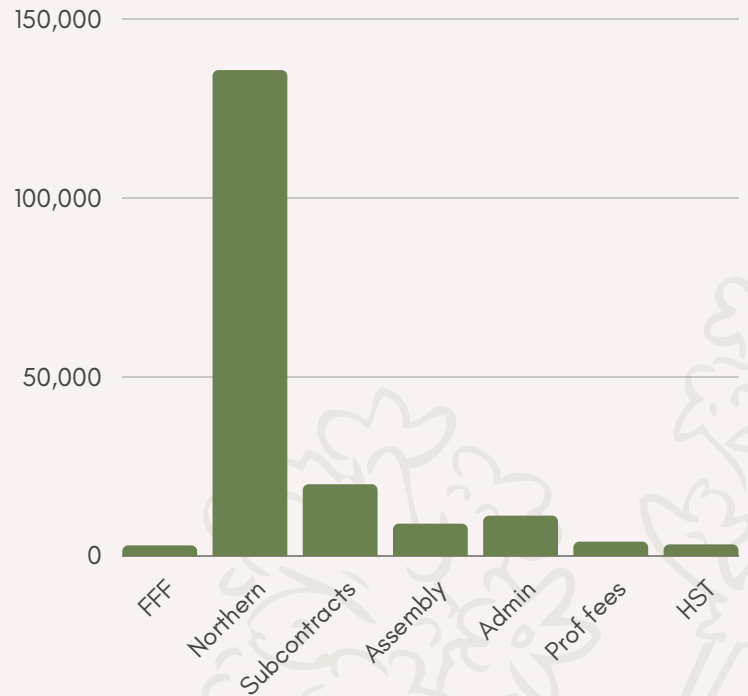
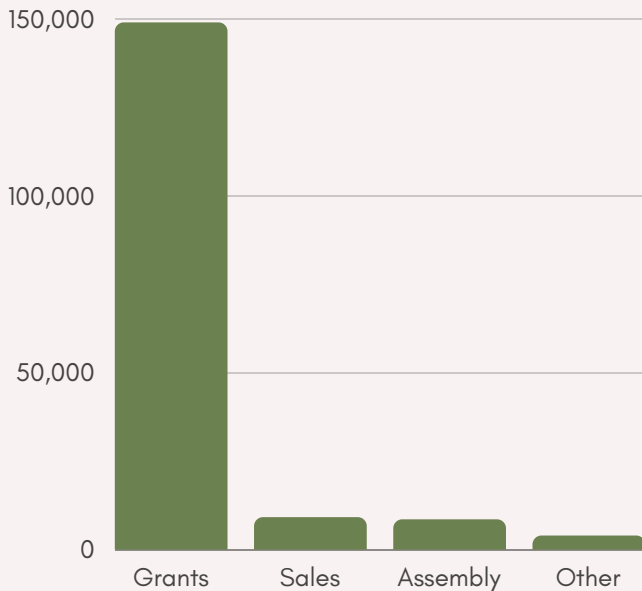
**CONSEIL DE LA  
COOPÉRATION  
DE L'ONTARIO**



**COOPERATION  
COUNCIL OF  
ONTARIO**



# FINANCIALS



## 2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

LFFC net assets as of December 31, 2020 as reported in the 2020 Review engagement are \$24 572 however were adjusted to \$73 504 in the 2021 assessment due to outstanding grants receivable at 2020 year end, that were not realized until 2021.

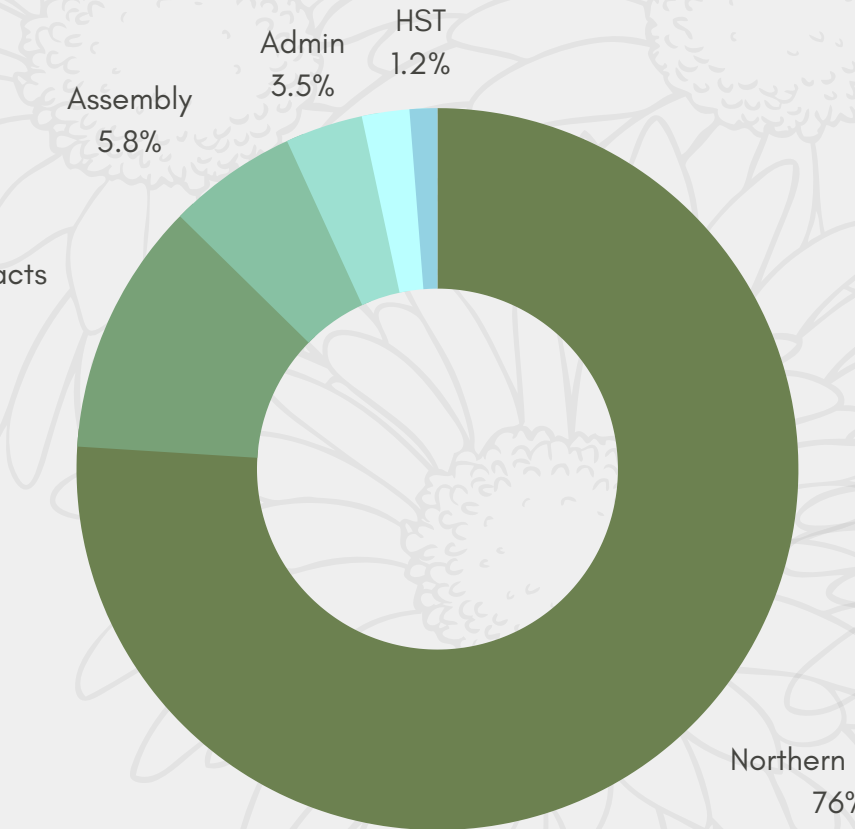
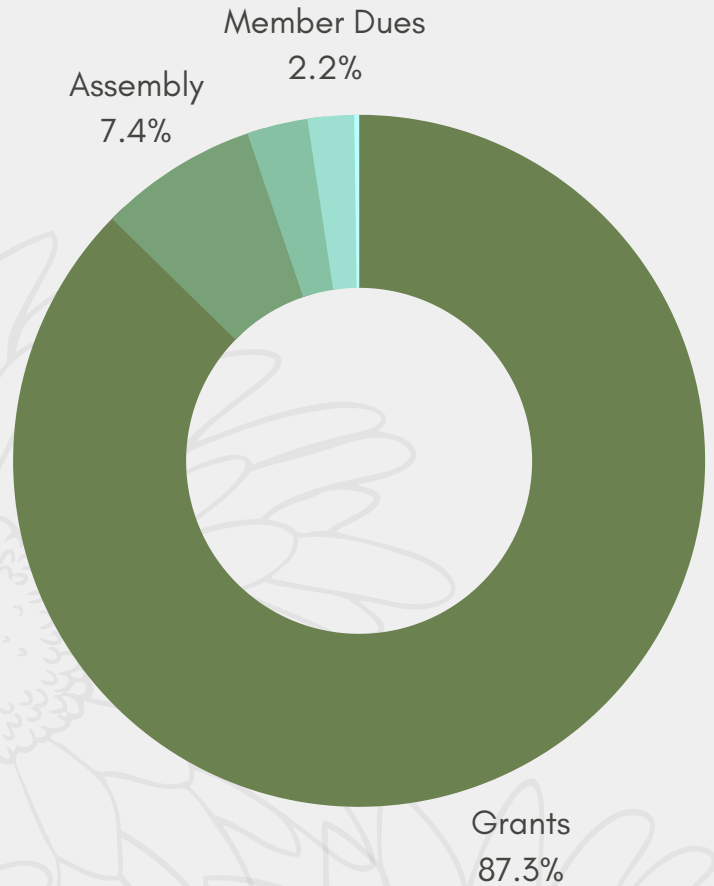
LFFC ended 2020 with \$169 799 in revenues and \$185 040 in expenditures, including a small amount of Fair Finance Fund expenditures. Resulting in a deficiency of revenues over expenditures of \$15 241.

[click here to see the 2020 Financial Statements](#)

# 2021 FINANCES

## 2021 REVENUES

Income in 2020 was considerably lower than previous years due to the emancipation of FFF. Highest revenues came predominantly from government funders, for Northern projects. Total revenues from funders was \$165 896, followed by Assembly income (including sponsorships) at \$16 466. Membership dues totalled \$4800 and other sales and contracts totalled \$6300.



## 2021 EXPENSES

Expenses were also comparatively lower than previous years, due to departure of FFF and lowered capacity while awaiting NOHFC funding. Total costs incurred in 2021 were \$245 837, including \$185 863 for the Northern Projects, \$27 785 for subcontracts, \$14 188 for the Assembly and \$8507 for administrative costs, \$5200 for professional fees, \$3032 in HST and \$1262 for travel.

[click here to see the 2021 Audited Statements](#)

# THANK YOU

## — LFFC TEAM



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alli Floroff, Alex Szaflarska, Aimee Blyth, Christine Clarke, Debbe Crandall and Josephine Grey provided vital consistency and support throughout a year full of changes.

A special thank you to Alli Floroff for countless hours serving three consecutive terms on the Board and for serving as chair and facilitator this year. Your dedication will be greatly missed!

### TEAM



SHYLAH WOLFE  
PROJECT MANAGER



SUSANNA REDEKOP  
COMMUNICATIONS



ARLENE MEEKIS-JUNG  
INDIGENOUS RELATIONS



MIKE DEGAGNE  
NORTHEAST COORDINATOR



JEN SPRINGETT  
NORTHWEST COORDINATOR



KELLEIGH WRIGHT  
NFDN COORDINATOR

### FUNDERS

Notable funding for LFFC projects and (in some part) the Assembly comes from FedNor, NOHFC and OMAFRA.



An Agency of  
the Government  
of Ontario



# JOIN THE ACTION

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## BOARD & COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT

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Special thanks goes out to Emmett Duncan Ferguson for serving as a member at large on the Member Engagement Committee this past year.

**Want to join the Board of Directors, the Member Engagement or Governance Committee?**

Your participation is absolutely vital to a thriving and supportive co-operative network!

We invite all members to contact [Board@localfoodandfarm.coop](mailto:Board@localfoodandfarm.coop) to discuss how you can get involved.



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# THANK YOU

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FOR A GREAT 2021