



**Disability Rights UK**

**DPO Capacity  
Building  
Project**

# DPO Sector Analysis

Executive summary of reports  
**Part 1, Part 2** and **Part 3**



# About this report

To supplement a three-segment research report, the Executive Summary reviews Disability Rights UK's DPO Capacity Building project scoping research into the DPO sector.

For a description of the research method, data analysis and complete thematic analysis table, see:

- **Part 1. The DPO Sector Research Report,**  
For a discussion of the final sector assessment model, please review **Part 2. The DPO Sector Assessment,**
- For the recommendations, projections, and values of DR UK's DPO Capacity Building project, grounded in these research findings, please review **Part 3. The DPO Capacity Building Recommendations and Projections.**

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# Executive summary

This report summarises the research method, results and recommendations of a mixed-methods research study conducted by the DPO capacity-building project at Disability Rights UK.

## Part 1. Research Report

The first report outlines the importance of capacity-building for disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in the UK. It highlights the challenges faced by DPOs in the current socio-economic climate, including increased competition for funding, demands for rigorous evidence-based campaigns, external bias, and a decreasing workforce.

The report defines DPOs, discusses the historical development of disability rights in the UK, acknowledges the movement's complexity and outlines the DPO sector's value in enabling disabled individuals to have their voices heard.

This study aimed to gain insight into the context, capacity-building needs, and mandate of the DPOs sector and how it relates to Disability Rights UK. A total of n=61 participants from n=32 DPOs participated in focus groups and interviews. The financial reports of n=54 DPOs were also analysed as part of this study. An inductive thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the DPO sector.



## Part 2. Sector Assessment

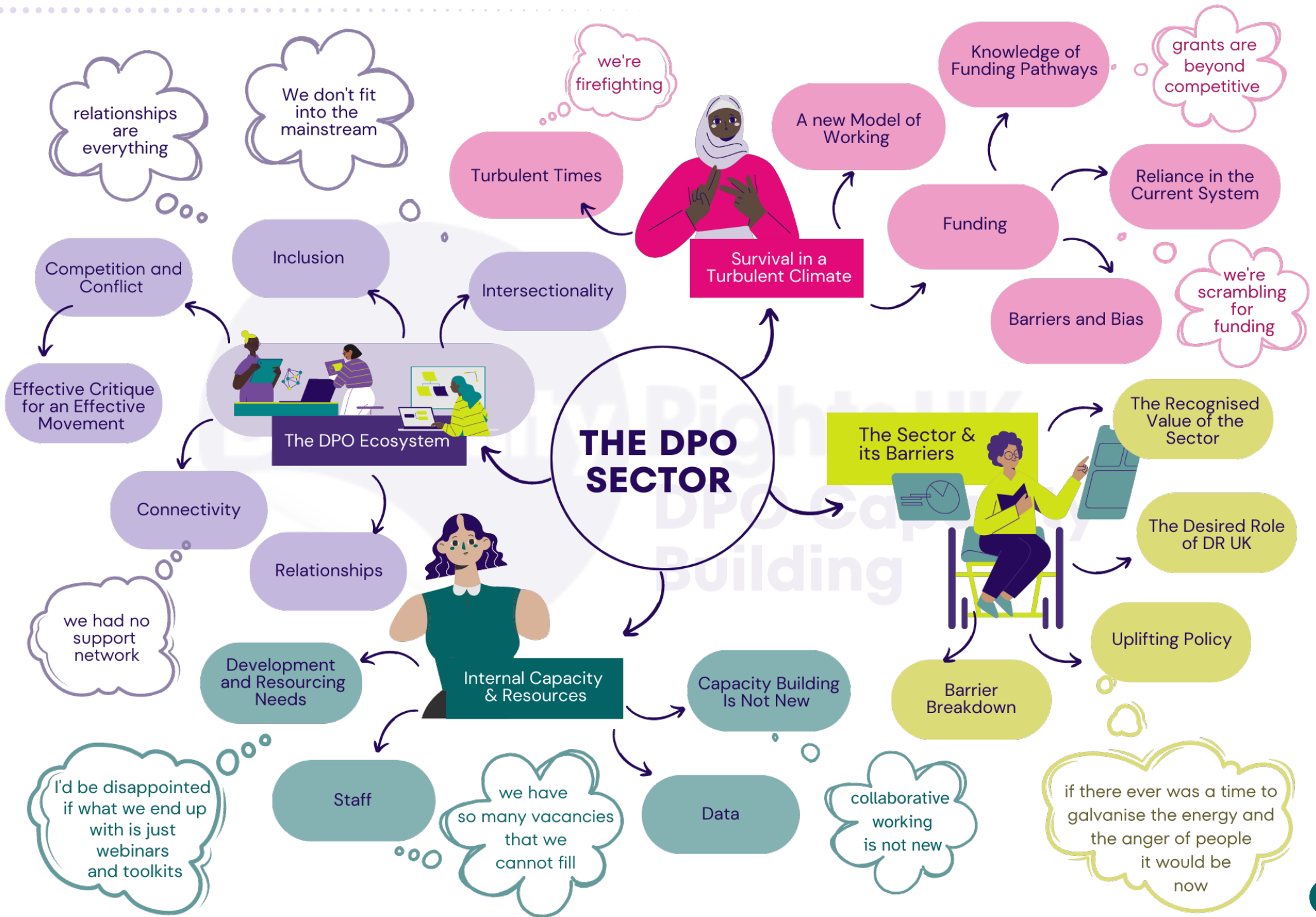
The second report outlines the results of the thematic analysis in the form of a sector assessment model. The model describes **n=4 overarching themes**, which outline the fundamental messages about the climate and values of the sector. Within the overarching themes are **n=17 themes** and **n=53 subordinate themes**.

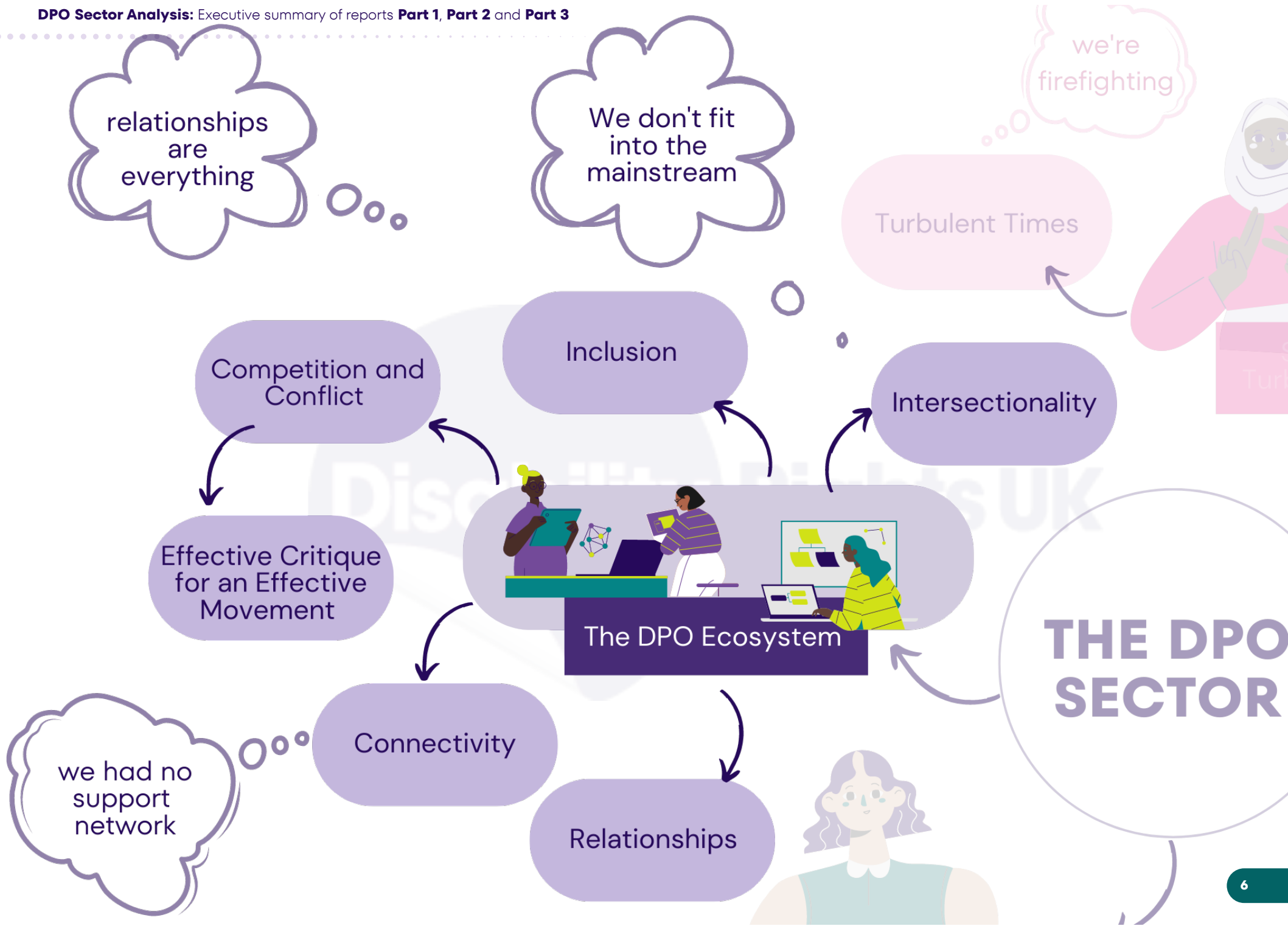
The overarching themes are summarised below:

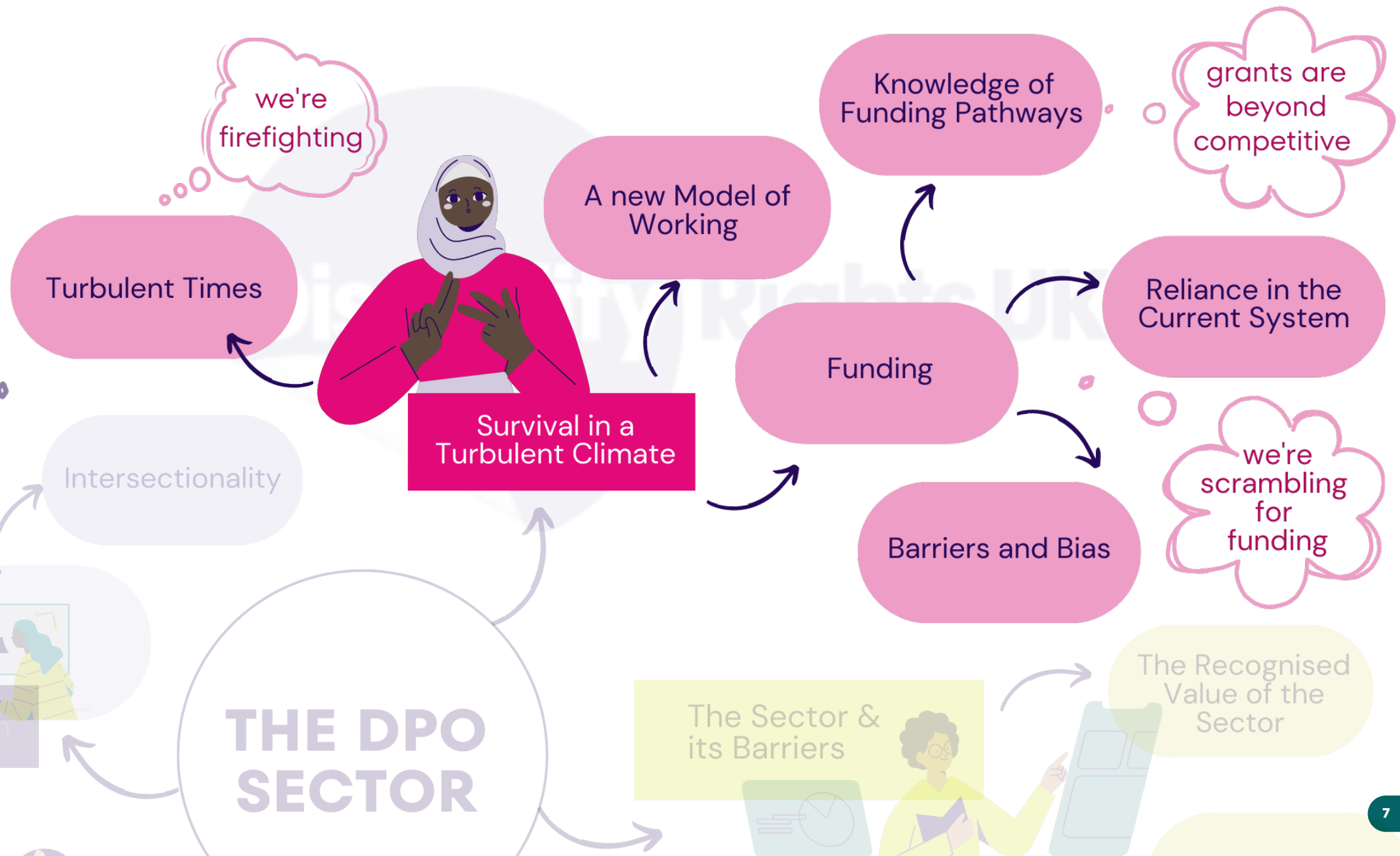
- 1. The DPO Ecosystem** explores the overall relational environment in which DPOs operate, including issues of inclusion, intersectionality, competition and conflict, the desire for effective critique for an effective movement, relationships, and connectivity. It provides insight into the dynamics and relationships within the DPO sector, and the challenges and opportunities organisations face in this field.
- 2. Survival in a Turbulent Climate** focuses on the challenges faced by DPOs in today's environment to maintain daily operations. It also describes the desire for a new model of DPO operations and funding issues: reliance on the current system, knowledge of funding pathways, barriers and bias. It sheds light on the difficulties DPOs face in securing resources and maintaining their capacity.
- 3. Internal Capacity and Resources** explores the staffing, data, development, and resourcing needs of DPOs. It highlights the importance of having adequate resources, including personnel and data, to support the work of DPOs and the ongoing need for capacity-building resources within the sector.
- 4. The Sector and its Barriers** focuses on the recognised value of the DPO sector, the desire for DR UK's role in barrier breakdown, uplifting policy, campaigning and the overall desired role of DR UK. It provides insight into the external barriers faced by DPOs and the role that organisations like DR UK can play in supporting the sector and breaking down these barriers.

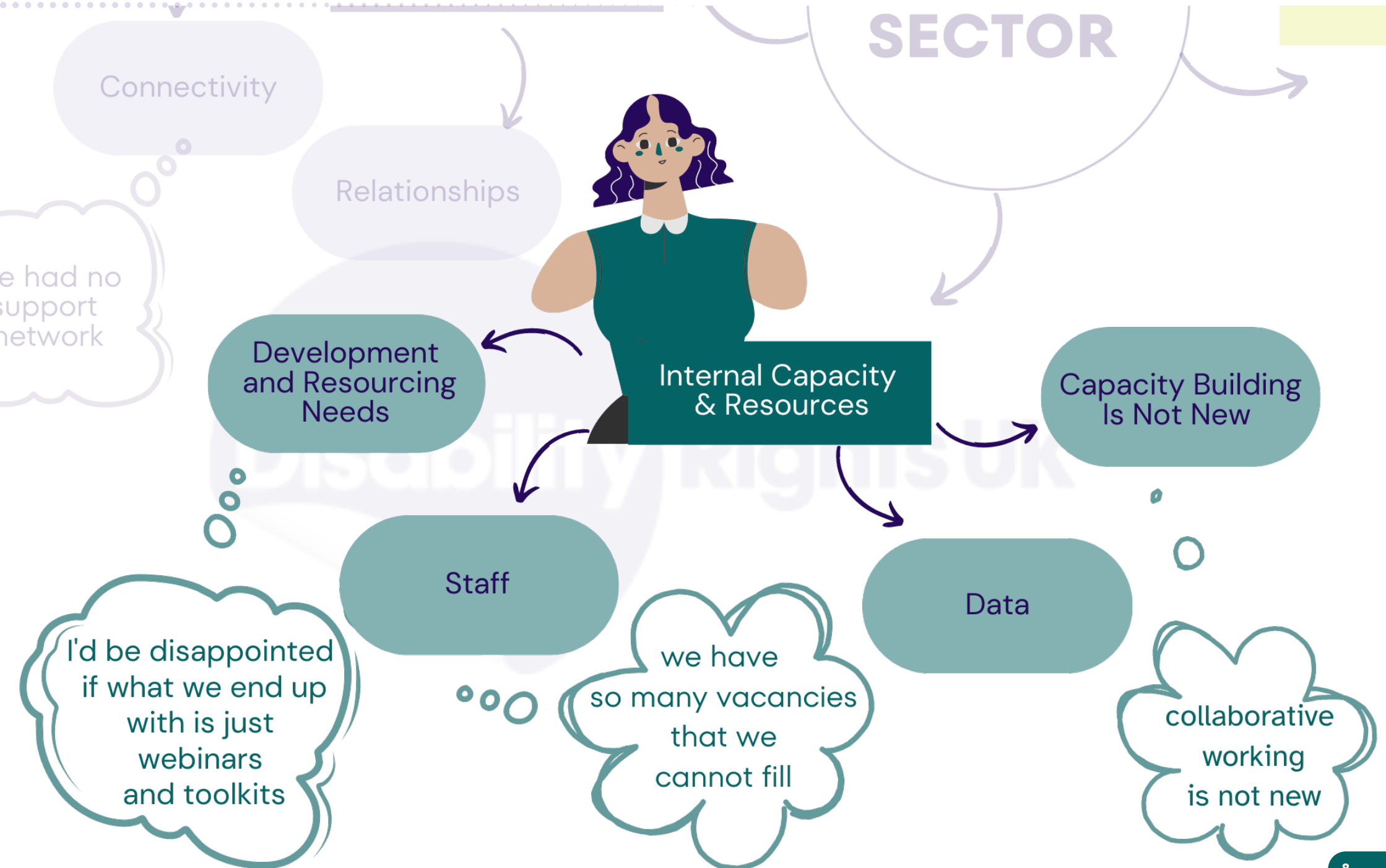
Participating DPOs expressed a desire for DR UK to provide comprehensive capacity building support that addresses their current and future needs.













THE DPO  
SECTOR

The Sector &  
its Barriers



The Recognised  
Value of the  
Sector

The Desired Role  
of DR UK

Uplifting Policy

Barrier  
Breakdown

Capacity Building  
Is Not New

Data

collaborative  
working  
is not new

if there ever was a time to  
galvanise the energy and  
the anger of people  
it would be  
now

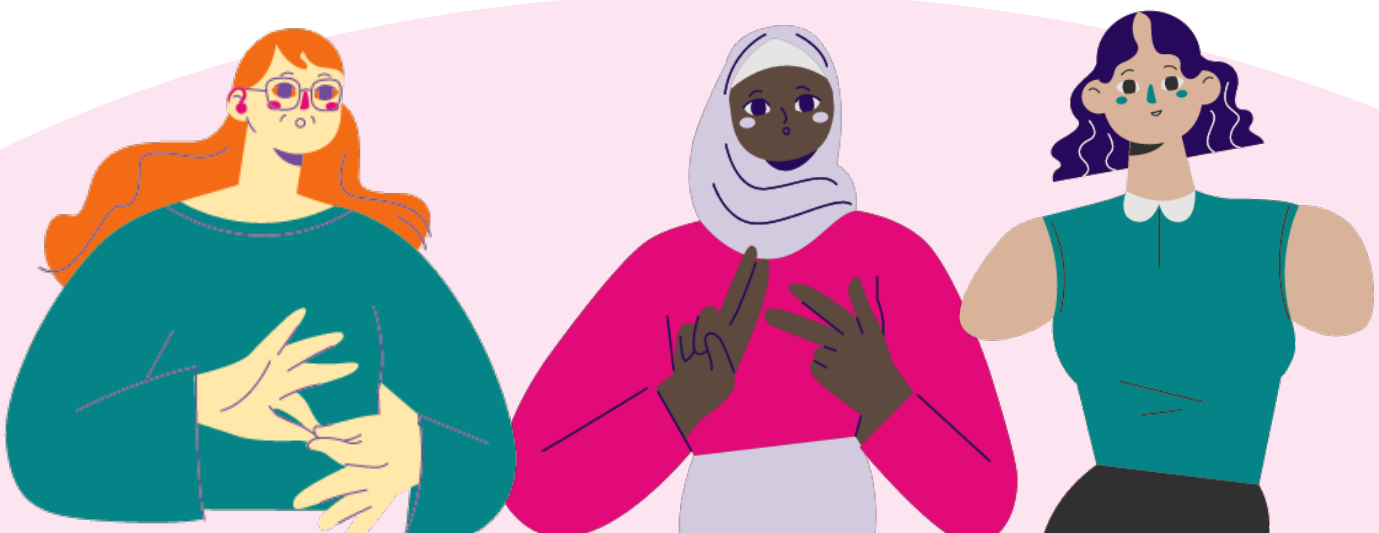
## Part 3. Recommendations and Projections

The third report breaks down the sector assessment model into sites for capacity-building and makes suggestions for future steps.

The following recommendations were made:

- 1. Strengthen the DPO Ecosystem:** Develop partnerships and networks between DPOs to improve collaboration and support for one another.
- 2. Ensure Survival in a Turbulent Climate:** Provide financial and operational resource support to enhance the sustainability and security of the sector's operations and adaptation to environmental changes.
- 3. Increase Internal Capacity and Operations Resources:** Develop and deliver training and development opportunities to enhance DPO staff and volunteers' skills, knowledge, and expertise.
- 4. Break Down Sector Barriers:** Work with DPOs to identify and tackle the sector's macro barriers, promoting targeted schemes that fit both in the remits of the DPO Capacity building project and DR UK's broader action.
- 5. Enhance Intersectionality and Inclusion:** Ensure that the project considers the multiple and intersecting identities and experiences of disabled people.
- 6. Avoid Duplication:** Ensure that the project does not duplicate existing work and that it builds on and adds value to existing initiatives.
- 7. Embrace Coproduction:** Make coproduction a core tenet of the project, working in collaboration with DPOs and disabled people at all stages to ensure that their voices, experiences, and perspectives are fully reflected in the project design, delivery, and outcomes.

Overall, the study provided valuable insights into the context and capacity-building needs of the DPO sector and their mandate for Disability Rights UK's action and relationship forming.





# Disability Rights UK

## DPO Capacity Building Project

**Disability Rights UK** is the UK's leading organisation led by, run by, and working for Disabled people.

We work with Disabled People's Organisations and Governments across the UK to influence regional and national change for better rights, benefits, quality of life and economic opportunities for Disabled people.



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