

2022/23

IMPACT REPORT



WELCOME

Women's Inclusive Team is a medium-sized grass-roots charity founded by Somali women that has been supporting Black and ethnic minority women and their families in Tower Hamlets since 2004.



Foreword

- Independent board director Tower Hamlets Homes
- Race commissioner Tower Hamlets Council
- Poplar Harca Service Committee Member



Safia Jama MBE
WIT CEO & Founder

- Independent police advisor
- Trustee Volunteers Centre
- CTAG Scotland Yard
- Mental health trainer

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Women's Inclusive Team. For two decades, our dedication to the Tower Hamlets community and our resilience in the face of challenges has never wavered. And now, as we deal with the fallout from the pandemic, we continue to deliver exceptional services and programmes to the residents of Tower Hamlets. We understand the challenges posed by the cost-of-living crisis as demand for our services grows. Our focus remains on being adaptable, strengthening relationships with stakeholders, forging new partnerships, and maintaining the passion that drives our work.

Our success this year is attributable to our passionate staff, volunteers, supporters, trustees, stakeholders, and friends. Together, we've represented the voices at the heart of our mission: youth, women, and the vulnerable. Our team comprises professionals dedicated to meaningful impact. I express deep gratitude to our Chair and Board of Trustees. Their support and talent enables us to pursue our mission with professionalism. Their commitment is pivotal in driving excellence in all we do and without which we could not carry out life-changing work.

Highlights this year:

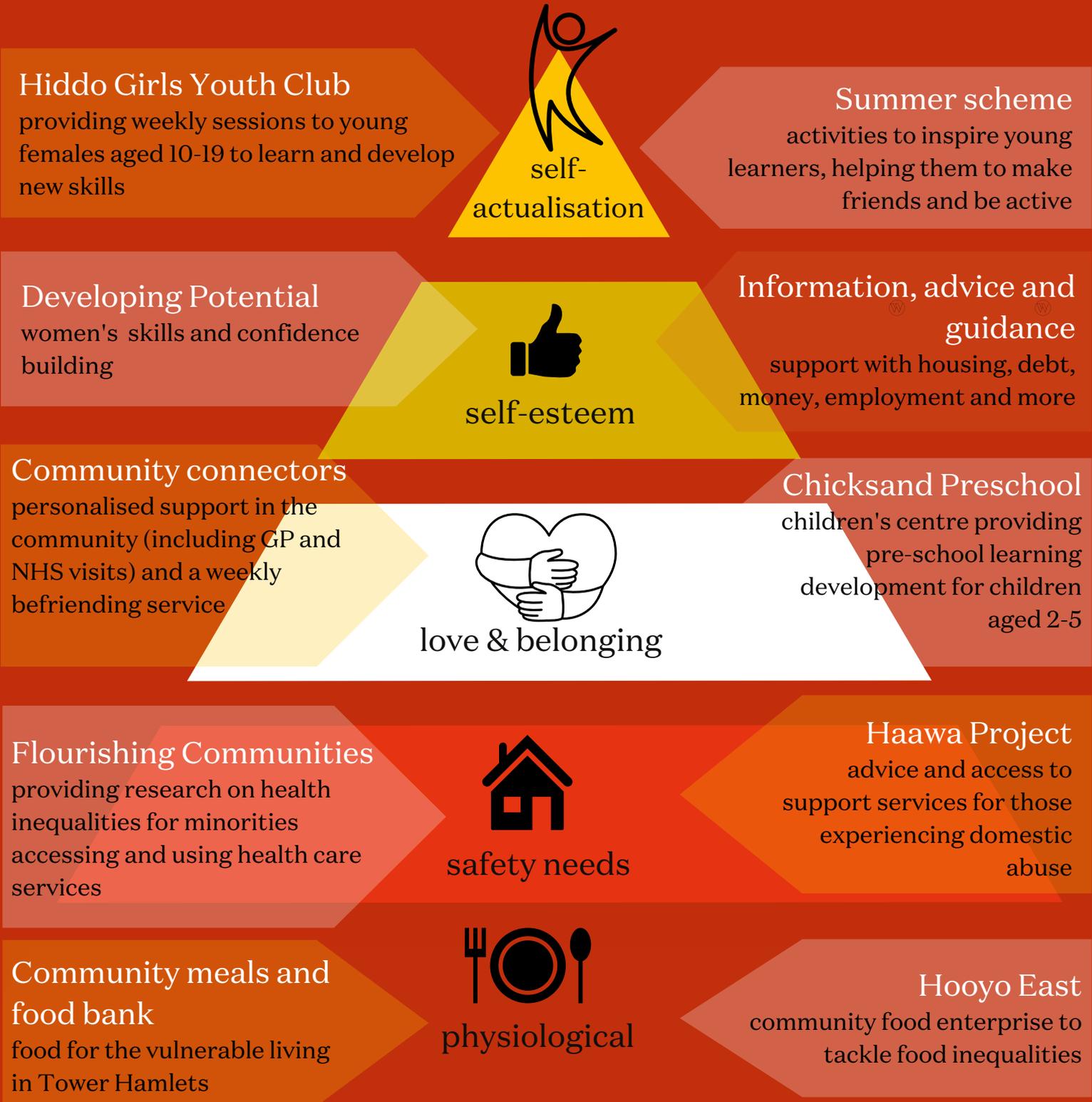
- Through our partnership with British Land, our Developing Potentials project empowers women, offering personal and professional development, education, training, and work experience.
- Our Hawaa project, funded by LBTH council, addresses the lack of culturally specific support for Somali women, making significant inroads despite challenges.
- Inequality steering committees and boards allows me to advocate for equality in schools. We prioritise the needs of the community to create a fairer education system.
- New virtual initiatives for our members and the wider community developed, responding to a significant number of calls from vulnerable community members.
- Across our digital space, we saw a 25% increase in followers, with our feeds gaining traction in areas such as Health, domestic abuse, Mental Health.

Looking forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to empower women, their families, and the most vulnerable in society. We persist in working toward a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Safia Jama, MBE WIT CEO & founder

Mayfield Well-being + Chicksand Preschool Hub

Our delivery model is seen as a holistic hug of wrap-around support as it addresses the community needs by connecting activities and services, operating from two centres.



Highlights

- **156** days of childcare provided to underprivileged families through Chicksand preschool nursery
- **38** free stay and play sessions
- **100+** young people and children accessed one or more of the following:
 - educational, well-being and summer programme activities
 - behavioural support, communication and translation within schools



- **2900+** families accessed our advice and guidance, emergency food and well-being services.

- **350+** hot meals & **850** food bank parcels delivered to vulnerable and isolated local residents.

- **136** women offered 1-2-1 confidence building support along with digital and employment skills workshops.

- **62** women received domestic abuse support.



- **1000** people were connected to our mental health and awareness services.



Young learners education and well-being



CHICKSAND FRIENDLY CLUB

Chicksand Preschool Hub

We provide a warm and nurturing setting for preschoolers aged 2 to 5 years in our Ofsted registered nursery. Our outdoor area allows children to discover the natural world, and stay and play sessions foster connections between children and their parents. Our activities are thoughtfully crafted to encourage children's growth and development, with an emphasis on various skills, including:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy and numeracy
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Morpeth school

We assisted 50 students by bridging the gap between their schools and families, addressing various educational issues. Our support included providing:

- Early resolution of potential conflicts.
- Facilitating communication between pupils, families, and the school, including translation when necessary.
- Offering emotional support, along with valuable advice and guidance to families.

Summer scheme

We welcomed 42 young people in 6 weeks aged 7-16, to our HAF summer programme. They enjoyed diverse activities, including physical fun, creative projects, and day trips. Our primary goal was to offer a safe space for engaging activities, fostering social skills, and promoting physical activity



Parents emphasise the positive improvements that they see in their children's communication and language skills whilst at Chicksand.
-OFSTED

Hiddo girls youth club

Hiddo ("traditional" in Somali) girls' youth club caters to its 52 members with a range of after school activities and workshops, including:

1. Cooking
2. Arts and crafts
3. Traditional dancing
4. Kayaking
5. Accredited leadership courses and outdoor activities
6. Six weeks of GCSE booster tuition lessons for Year 11 students

Our goal is to create an inclusive and secure environment where these young individuals can nurture their talents, acquire new skills, and foster lasting friendships.



The girls secured 3rd place in the LBTH Youth Achievement Awards group category for their outstanding photography project in the field of art.



Somali Excellence Award Event had over 80 young people present and 15 received awards ranging from Best Leader to Best Volunteer.

Mayfield Well-being Hub

The hub has become a haven for vulnerable families, offering them access to essential resources such as food, health guidance, educational information, and overall support for those facing challenges.

Food bank and community kitchen

The food bank has supported 850 people in Tower Hamlets by providing 850 food parcels and 380+ hot meals to those residents.

Gacmo is
dhaafaa gacalo
ka timaaddaa
Love emerges
when hands
give something
to each other

Community Connectors + Advice and Guidance

Our team of professionals supported 3900+ people through Tower Hamlets Homes, Winter Pressure, advice and guidance, Community Connectors and the Mental Health Awareness Campaign. Providing support relating to welfare, mental health and well-being, finance support, housing, pensions, sick pay and debt.

Our support plan is based on the individuals' priorities, interests, values and motivations and provides access to local resources and services.

Main objectives:

- Challenge stigma attached to mental health and raise awareness around mental health well-being
- Holistic approach to impact on health areas that affect health such as debt, poor housing, being unemployed, loneliness and caring responsibilities
- Provide non-judgmental support, respecting diversity and lifestyle choices
- Develop trusting relationships, bridging the gap between mental health and the community

Workshops + Events

Community Safety Event: Joined by The MET Police, Citizens Advice Bureau and East London NHS Foundation's Mental Health Team. A Somali advisor spoke about the cost of living crisis and gave money saving tips.

Several Community Navigator workshops were held and joined by 50+ members of the community. This provided employability training as well as advice and guidance.

Sir Mark Caulfield, vice-principal for health and a professor of clinical pharmacology at Queen Mary University of London, spoke to 45 of our women about development and research projects in Whitechapel. The aim was to ensure the upcoming £66 million development projects reflected our women's needs.

WIT does an excellent job of connecting with the community and understanding their needs. They are always willing to listen to the community's concerns and work to find solutions that meet their needs. – Ayan Hussein, Mind in TH, Newham, Redbridge

Hooyo East

Hooyo (mother) East, was established by Women's Inclusive Team in June 2021 to address food inequalities. Our enterprise specialises in crafting traditional Somali cuisine for events, offering both food delivery and in-house catering services. This venture plays a vital role in ensuring the financial sustainability of our community kitchen meals, weekly food bank, free school meals, and other essential services. For inquiries, please contact us at Hooyoeast@wit.org.uk.

Takeaway that gives back

- 1450+ free school meals locally.

The organisations we've catered for include:

- ELFT- East London Foundation Trust
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets- Corporate Research
- St Margaret's House
- City, University of London Research Centre
- Tower Hamlets THCVS
- Met Police Tower Hamlets
- GP Care Group
- Leaders in Community
- Poplar Union
- Well One
- Poplar Harca
- Kayd - Somali week
- Aberfeldy Community Centre
- Accenture Strategy Centre
- Malaria Consortium
- NHS North East London
- Dahabshil
- Positive East
- Bow Health Network
- Crisp Street Market
- Numbi Arts
- Somaliland UK Mission
- Eid in the Square (Heart Productions)
- Sight loss
- Film Skool

Personal stories

“I felt trapped, isolated, lonely and feared for my life.”

My husband brought me to the country. I didn't have family or friends here and didn't speak English. Shortly after I arrived, he started being abusive towards me. He called me names, criticised everything I did, hit me and controlled everything I did. When I would complain or threaten to leave, he told me my kids would be taken away from me, that this is what they did in this country, and that this would mean I was a bad mum.

I felt trapped, isolated, lonely and feared for my life. I became very down and lost all hope. I didn't know my rights and the support that was available to me to be free from abuse.

I told someone I knew about my situation and they informing me that Women's Inclusive Team was doing a project called Haawa and it was designed to help women like me.

I approached their CEO who I already knew a little bit and she referred me to the DA case worker for Haawa. The case worker contacted me and started supporting me, informing that I could get help, that there was hope and this was wrong. Haawa project referred me for legal support and I successfully obtained an injunction that protected me from further abuse.

It's been just over 6 months and I have claimed benefits in my own right and work part-time. Haawa Project gave me my life back. I feel safe, hopeful, and able to parent my children well for the first time in a very long time. **Domestic Abuse Survivor, Haawa Project**

“

After being part of WIT, I have expanded my communication skills and grown in confidence.

– Amal, 19, Volunteer

I wanted to gain experience working in an organisation that highlights the real life problems minority women face everyday. Improving my communication skills was also a goal. I was supported by the WIT team, in everything from interview prep, top tips and networking opportunities. This experience allowed me to get a job as a healthcare assistant, which was a dream of mine. I was also able to attend job fairs hosted by WIT and network with fellow Somali women, who work in the medical field, which cemented my initial interest.

I had an interest in learning how to cook, so helping the Hooyo East team gave me the confidence and the courage to cook on my own. Speaking to a range of different people improved my social skills immensely.

After finishing school, I was unable to carry out full conversations with people I didn't know too well, but after being part of WIT, I have expanded my communication skills and grown in confidence. **–Amal, 19, Volunteer,**

Developing Potential + Quality Improvement

Across the two projects, **135+** women were supported to improve employment, training and health opportunities for Black and ethnic minorities as well as reduce the digital divide concerning the most excluded groups in Tower Hamlets.

22 workshops and **140+** sessions included:

- Introduction to IT skills
- Employment writing skills, such as CV building, cover letters, work applications
- How to write business emails: style, structure, and generic business words which improved their writing skills
- How to access and use online services, banking, paying bills, viewing payslips, etc.
- ESOL
- Career Readiness
- Cycling session attended by 23 Somali women
- Job Fair - in collaboration with Barts Health, NHS organised to share volunteering and work opportunities.

These weaved the members' needs for employment support, personal/professional development, as well as health related activities, which created a vibrant engaging environment for members of the community to socialise, make friends and build their confidence.

Lafo geri ayagaa laysku jebiyaa.

A difficult problem can only be solved with an adequate solution.

Flourishing Communities

Flourishing Communities is a project aimed at tackling health inequalities specifically with women's sexual and reproductive health in Tower Hamlets. A partnership project between Women's Inclusive Team, GP Care Group, Limehouse Project and Tower Hamlets CVS. The project is funded by National Lottery Community and has secured 3-year funding following a very successful pilot, now in year 1.

Key successes:

- Limehouse Project joined as 2nd key partner
- Consultation with Bangladeshi women - over 20 women involved in 2 sessions to gather their experiences.
- Report on the women's experiences promoted through Tower Hamlets Together
- Trained 6 Cervical Screening paid champions to deliver workshops
- Created and delivered community cafes to educate community on cervical screening in trusted environments
- Contributed to the discussions on restructuring the Primary Care Unit (PCN)/locality health and well-being committees.
- At least 7 Somali speaking staff members recruited across PCN 1 and 7 with 2 of these being at network coordinator level and some as frontline staff
- Hosted the first wider Patient Participation Group event for Primary Care Network 1
- Facilitated a number of educational workshops on cervical, breast, and womb cancer
- Delivered project updates at the national level several times for best practice as requested by the funder.



I am so grateful for this project. I have prayed for the opportunity to better myself but I lacked confidence. I have been a homemaker all my adult life but I came to the cervical screening workshop by Limehouse Project and Women's Inclusive Team earlier in the year and I loved the topic. I feel very emotional achieving this and so excited to do more. Thanks to Flourishing Communities for giving me this chance and for saving lives.

- Cervical Screening Champion

Volunteers

Throughout the year, our committed volunteer team has contributed to more than 230 shifts to support vulnerable residents. Their efforts encompass a wide range of activities, such as meal preparation and delivery, clothing distribution, and offering valuable support to members of the community. In addition to our core volunteers, we also offer volunteering opportunities to help individuals in the community acquire new skills. Moreover, we collaborate with organisations to expand our team and organise meaningful events.

Male Service User - Aged 19

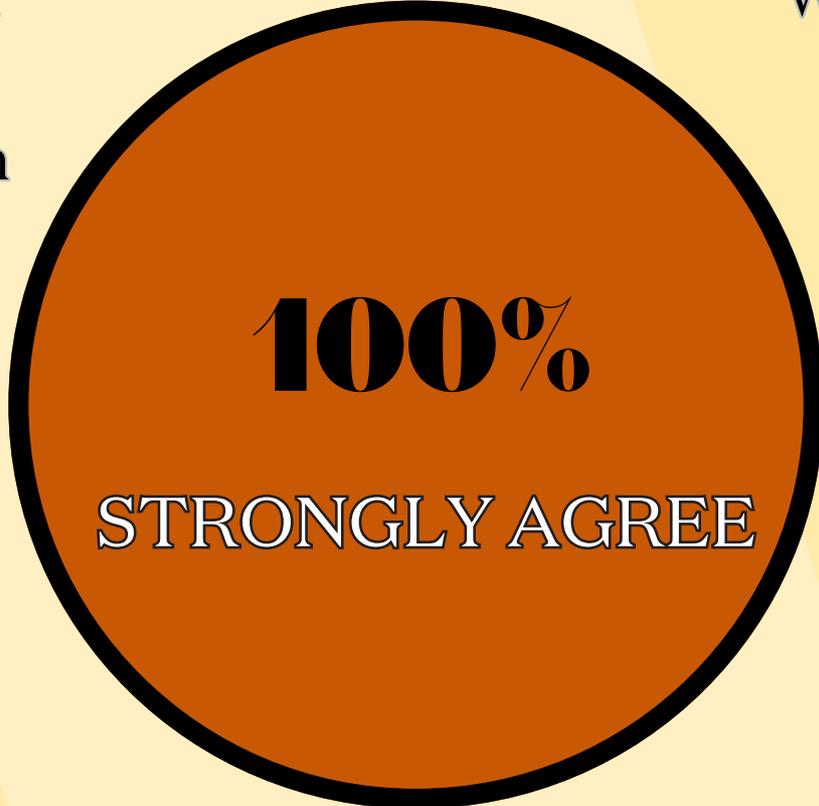
In November 22, a young member sought help for complex depression after moving to the UK. Language barriers and asylum seeker status limited access to services. In February 2023, a community connector provided support, including a food bank, freedom pass, Vodafone sim, and a voluntary position. Despite college commitments, he managed to do volunteering for 3.5 months which improved his English, developed his skills, and expanded his support network. Regular reviews addressed challenges, leading to enrolment in English Functional Skills for a 2-3 year plan towards higher education. He went on to complete a food and hygiene course further enhancing his skills. Volunteering empowered the young person to set realistic goals and build confidence for a positive change.

Partnerships

Our aim is to cultivate enduring partnerships with our supporters who contribute to our mission, enabling us to make a significant and lasting social impact.

WIT has a
positive
reputation

WIT provides
inclusion
services



WIT
changes
lives

WIT is a
trusted
partner

WIT delivers what they say they
will deliver

WIT staff have been a joy to work with, their passion and intelligent enthusiasm for their work results in a partnership that is very easy to develop and maintain.

– Edmund Glynn, East London NHS Foundation Trust

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Trustees

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated team of trustees whose expertise and guidance help us achieve our goals year after year.



Zaynab Ali



Stephanie Colquhoun



Emily Xiao-Fang Teh



Amina Abdi



Marjolaine Druart



Natasha Hanckel-Spice



Sara Custer



Susannah Nelson



Hannah Lind



Richa Ellis



Sabaad Hassan



Sado Omer

Funders and partners

Our sincere thanks to all our funders and partners.

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Canary Wharf Group
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Clarion Housing/Futures
Community Safety
Compass Wellbeing
DWP - Kickstart
East London Business Alliance
East End Community
Foundation (EECF)

East London NHS Foundation
Trust
Ethnicity Minority Network
GP Care Group
Good Things Foundation
Groundworks
HAF fund (LBTH)
Hamlets Early Years
Haymarket Media Group
Insurance Industry Charitable
Foundation
Limehouse Project
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Hamlets
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Play Association
Poplar Harca
Public Health
Solace
Somali Senior Citizens
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Tower Hamlets Homes
Tower Hill Trust- Bio
Diversity
Tower Hamlets Early
Years
UBELE
Vitol Group



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