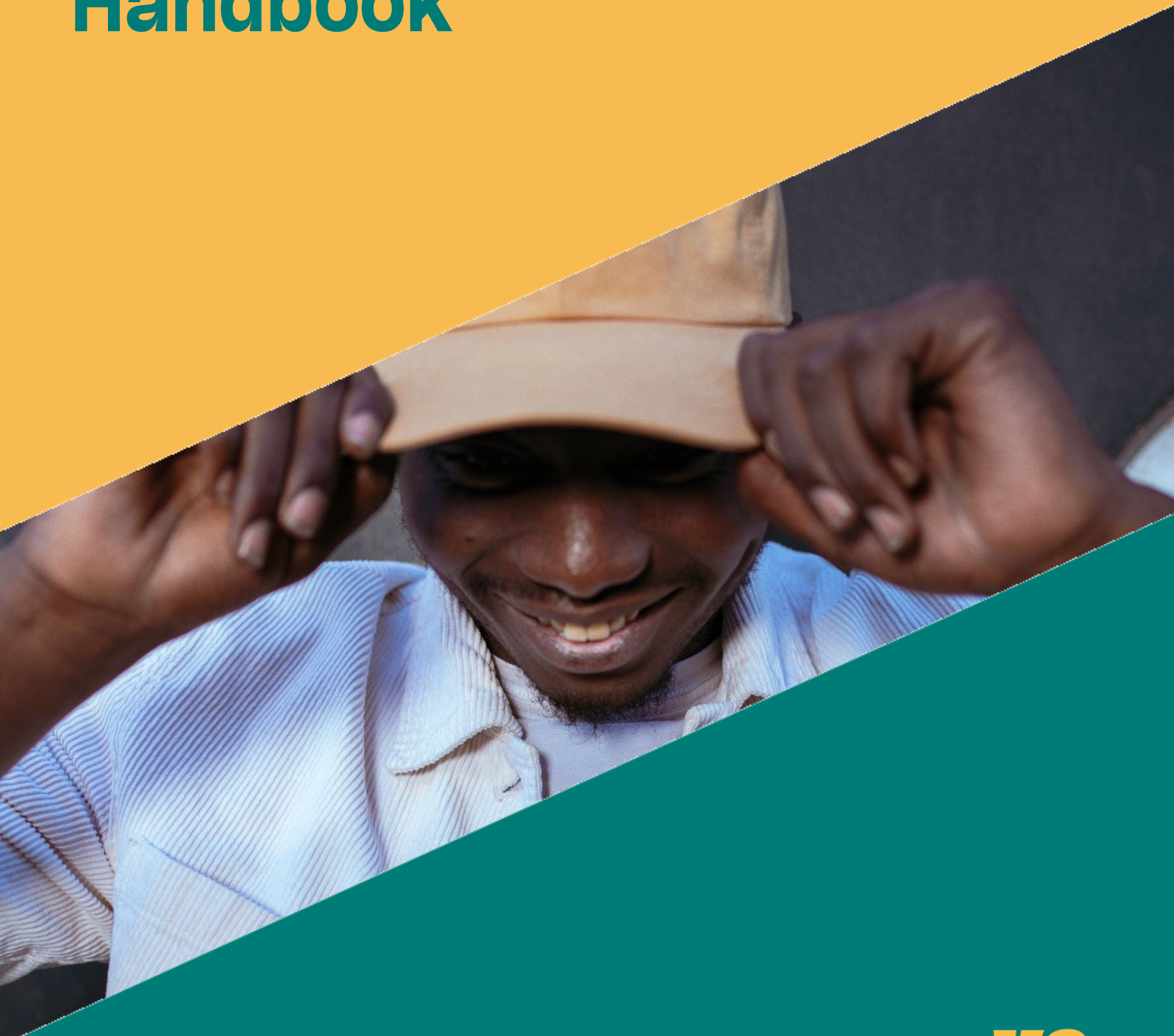


YOPE P2P MODEL

Handbook



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YOPE P2P Model!

A peer-support model for children and youth deprived of liberty

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About Young Perspectives

YOPE works with young people who experience detention and closed juvenile care and professionals from across the juvenile justice system.

Using creative methods, from spoken word to social design, we put the perspective of young people at the heart of everything we do. This is how we work towards youth-friendly justice and a meaningful future for young people.

Through our creative and sports workshops, we meet young people deprived of liberty. The workshops take a trauma-sensitive approach, provide a safe space and support for authenticity, self-expression and positive engagement – providing an alternative to more traditional, treatment-centered approaches for rehabilitation.

The workshops are strengthened by a diverse, representative body of committed workshop facilitators, who bring a bit of the outside world into the closed facilities and help maintain positive ties between young people and the culture and society outside. They seek to foster holistic wellbeing among all participating young people and act as relatable, approachable, and positive role models – helping youth have a more positive and forward-looking outlook to life.

Each facilitator is trained by YOPE, and approaches the time with youth as an opportunity to amplify their voices, listen to their thoughts and opinions, encourage cooperation and pro-social skills, and provide a safe environment for sharing and growth.

Once they leave detention, young people can contribute to YOPE as an Expert (by experience)¹. In this role, they meet professionals of the youth justice chain in during various activities:

- **YOPE training sessions** offer young people and professionals the opportunity to exchange perspectives and engage in conversation with each other. Through creative forms of conversation, such as storytelling, role-playing or spoken word, young people share their personal stories they talk about opportunities and areas for improvement in the contact between professionals and youth

¹ Young people with lived expertise are referred here as '(experience) experts', 'experts by experience', or simply 'young person'. The young people who are currently in a closed facility and join the P2P session are referred to as '(young) participants'.

- **Advice and consultations:** Young people's experiences and ideas are central to their advice to policy-makers and other professionals. YOPE translates advisory assignments into the lives of young people using creative working methods inspired by social design, storytelling and philosophical discussion. In this way, YOPE Experts are involved in the development of new policy, existing interventions and scientific research
- **Creative contributions:** The Experts are regularly asked to make creative contributions and presentations for podcasts, media appearances or special events.

Creative Liberates!

1. Introduction

Why we designed this model

YOPE has been working for years with young people with lived expertise in the justice system who directly engage with their peers and justice professionals. In the peers sessions specifically, YOPE Experts with lived experience return to youth justice institution in order to engage in dialogue with young people currently deprived of liberty. They aim to share their story, inspire, answer questions support their peers who are still experiencing the justice system.

In these meetings, we repeatedly saw how powerful recognition can be: conversations become open, honest, and deep because young people feel seen by someone who understands their world.

At the same time, we noticed that peer sessions were intense for the young people leading it and difficult to embed structurally within the broader workshop program². There was a need for a work form that:

- integrates experts by experience safely and structurally
- provides educational frameworks
- enables recognition and depth
- supports both young participants and experience experts
- is guided by a fixed YOPE Facilitator who maintains oversight.

During the development of earlier workshops, it became clear that some conversations cannot be led by an Facilitator, because they have not personally experienced detention. Young people need someone who not only understands what a system is, but has lived that system.

This led to the development of the peer-to-peer (or P2P) model: a dual system in which an expert serves as a source of lived expertise for the young people leading and those participating in the program. This makes the method sustainable, pedagogically responsible, and content-rich.

The workshop series is designed to:

- enable real, safe conversations
- help young people reflect on their past, inner world, and future

² Learn more about YOPE's workshop program: [Meet YOPE – Young Perspectives](#)

- connect creative activities to the story of the expert
- support experts as they grow toward an Facilitator role
- show professionals how YOPE connects experts, pedagogy, and creative learning.

2. The interview method

What the method involves and why it was chosen

The P2P workshops use an interview-led method. This method was chosen because it:

- creates space for the young person's personal story
- provides structure for Facilitator
- safeguards safety within a complex group
- invites young people to reflect
- prevents the expert from having to carry a monologue.

Characteristics of the interview method

- 1) The Facilitator asks targeted, open questions that open the young person's story without forcing.
- 2) The Facilitator leads the conversation, monitors time and safety, and connects the story to experiences recognizable to young people.
- 3) The young person does not need to perform or "lecture"; they answer, reflect, and share authentically. Young people are invited in with questions such as:
 - a. Who recognizes this?
 - b. What would you do in such a situation?
 - c. What is difficult for you about being inside or outside?
- 4) There is explicit room for young people to share their own experiences, without pressure to go deep.

The method works because it reduces pressure on the young person, prevents conversations from becoming too heavy or chaotic, invites young people into the process, and keeps lived expertise and pedagogy intertwined.

3. Objectives

Feedback from pilot sessions, evaluations, and insights from young people and group leaders shows that the P2P workshop achieves three core objectives:

1. Creating space for self-reflection

Young participants recognize elements of themselves in the story of the experience expert. In the stories of our Experts, themes such as insecurity, group pressure, instability, loyalty, loss, identity search, and the tension between inside and outside appear. This recognition opens conversations and reduces resistance to participation.

2. Creating recognition

Using interview questions, story structure, and creative, young people are invited to think about their own story in parts: past, detention, transition, and future.

4. Developing safety and openness in the group

The presence of an young person with lived experience brings a tone and attitude that young people normally only see in their peers inside. The Facilitator translates this into a safe, learnable setting. This leads to conversations that otherwise would not take place.

3.1 Developing a sustainable, pedagogically grounded approach

The P2P model is more than a single workshop – it is a structured method in which:

- lived expertise is integrated
 - the Facilitator maintains the lead
 - Experts by experiences receive support
 - young people participate actively and learn creatively
- In the documents from the Youth 1 workshop you can see how this interview structure works: the Facilitator leads the conversation in three fixed blocks (before detention, during detention and after detention). This structure makes the story manageable for young people, predictable, and emotionally safe.

3.2 Contributing to restoration, perspective, and agency

In both stories of the involved young people, change begins with honesty, insight, and small choices. Young people discover what they want to hold onto, what they want to let go of, and what inner movement they need to build a future.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the young person

When leading a P2P workshop, the young person do not present their story as a lesson but as experience. Their role is to:

- share personal experiences within clear boundaries
- answer interview questions
- name recognizable themes such as loss, pressure, loyalty, shame, growth, and choices
- respond to young people with humanity and authenticity
- avoid going into details of offences (the Facilitator helps frame this if needed)
- stay grounded and not "overperform".

The essential point: the young person does **not** carry the workshop – they carry their *story*.

The role of the Facilitator

The Facilitator has four essential roles:

- Timekeeping: ensuring all elements are addressed without overwhelming anyone
- Safety: guarding tone, tempo, boundaries, and protecting the young person
- Structure & flow: leading the conversation, summarizing, and redirecting when needed
- Activation of the group: involving young participants through questions, tasks, and interaction.

The Facilitator is also the professional counterpart to the young person. This means:

- offering support during tension or emotion
- giving direction to the conversation
- preventing that the young person presenting becomes overburdened
- supporting their growth toward an Facilitator role.

5. Work Methods and Lesson Structure

The P2P model uses conversation, storytelling, reflection, and creative processing. These forms guide young people from listening, to recognition, to reflection, and eventually to expressing their own perspective.

Work forms are simple and accessible, yet structured and pedagogically sound.

5.1 Method: The interview conversation

The Facilitator has four essential roles:

Goal: create connection, structure the young person's story, activate young people.

The conversation is always divided into three blocks:

- 1) **Past** — how it started
- 2) **Inside** — life in detention
- 3) **Future** — direction, choices, hope

The Facilitator introduces the themes, asks open questions, monitors safety, and activates the group. The young person answers from lived experience.

5.2 Method: Your story in four parts

Goal: help young participants structure their own story.

The four parts:

- Past — how it began
- Inside — what I learned here

- Transition — what I think about going outside again
- Future — what I want to change or hold onto

5.3 Method: Your Story in Five Sentences

Goal: help young participants focus on key life moments.

Prompts:

- 1) Where do you come from?
- 2) What shaped you?
- 3) What was a difficult moment?
- 4) Where did a turning point happen?
- 5) What do you want people to know about you? Inside — what I learned here

5.4 Creative Processing

Goal: convert emotion and reflection into creative expression.

Examples:

- Write four sentences about something you never say but do feel
- Write a rap or poem line
- Represent an emotion with a word, drawing, or movement
- Turn a sentence from your story into rhythm or rap
- Write a short scene about something you hope to do but still find scary.

5.5 Reflection Circle

Goal: let young participants share what impacted them, without pressure.

Questions:

- What touched you most?
- What do you take away?
- What do you recognize?

- What surprised you?

5.6 Workshop Structures

Two formats are available:

Format A — 60 Minutes	Format B — 75 Minutes
1) Introduction — 5 min	1) Introduction — 10 min
2) Interview — 20 min	2) Young person's story — 30 min
3) Mini-workshop — 25 min	3) Group reflection — 10 min
4) Closing — 10 min	4) Personal assignment — 10 min
	5) Sharing round — 10 min (optional)
	6) Closing — 5 min

5.7 Why this works

- Young people don't have to listen too long
- The young person's story helps them reflect
- Creative assignments activate without pressure
- They can share in their own way
- The Facilitator keeps balance, structure, and safety.

6. Evaluation and Feedback

Evaluation is an active part of the method. It supports reflection, development, and continuous improvement of the program.

Evaluations happen:

- 1) With the group
- 2) In a debrief between Facilitator and young person
- 3) Then shared with the P2P project coordinator

6.1 Evaluation with Young People and Staff

Final 10 minutes are used for:

- reflection
- recognizing themes
- group grounding
- gathering observations from group leaders

Questions:

- What do you take away from today?
- What surprised you?
- What had you never heard this way before?
- What do you recognize from your own life?
- What should we talk about next time?

6.2 Debrief Between Facilitator and young person

After each workshop, the Facilitator takes extra time for a follow-up discussion with the young person. This moment is essential within the P2P framework. It aims to:

- help the young person "land"
- process emotions
- reflect on what went well
- identify difficult moments
- prepare for next time.

Fixed components of the debriefing:

- What went well for you today?
- Where did you notice tension?
- Which questions or responses affected you?
- What support will you need next time?
- What would you like to do differently or take away with you?

NOTE: This debriefing is part of the two-sided peer model: the expert by experience is a peer to the young participants, but the Facilitator is a peer to the experience expert.

6.3 Feedback to the Coordinator

After the debriefing, the Facilitator actively feeds back the most important observations to the coordinator of the project. That includes:

- positive elements
- themes in the group
- signals that need attention
- challenges the young person being interviewed experienced
- suggestions for improving the program.

In this way, the peer-to-peer programme remains:

- pedagogically sound
- safe for all involved
- relevant to young people in terms of content
- in constant development.

6.4 Adjusting follow-up Workshops

Feedback is not a formality but a steering tool. Feedback guides adjustments such as:

- changing work methods
- adjusting tempo or structure
- deepening or closing themes
- offering individual space to a young participant
- preparing the young person for sensitive topics.

This results in workshops that are always in tune with the current dynamics of young people.

7. Professionalism and Safeguarding

The P2P is designed as a professional, pedagogically responsible, and sustainable model. Clear frameworks are essential.

7.1 Working from Pedagogical Safety

YOPE ensures safety by:

- always working with trained a Facilitator
- setting clear boundaries with the experts by experience
- using a fixed structure (past–inside–future)
- never forcing participants to share
- using creative exercises to "release" intense moments
- debriefing every workshop with the experience expert and Facilitator.

In this context, **safety means: space for emotion, but not for escalation; space for sharing, but never for oversharing; and space for vulnerability, but with professional protection.**

7.2 Professional attitude of the Facilitator

The Facilitator represents your organisation and is therefore responsible for monitoring:

- Tone and language use
- Viewing and listening skills
- Assumed neutrality
- Conscious guidance in momentary decisions
- Reflective ability
- Responsibility towards the experience expert(s) and young participants

This requires an attitude that is approachable and human, but also professionally restrained.

7.3 Professionalism of the expert by experience

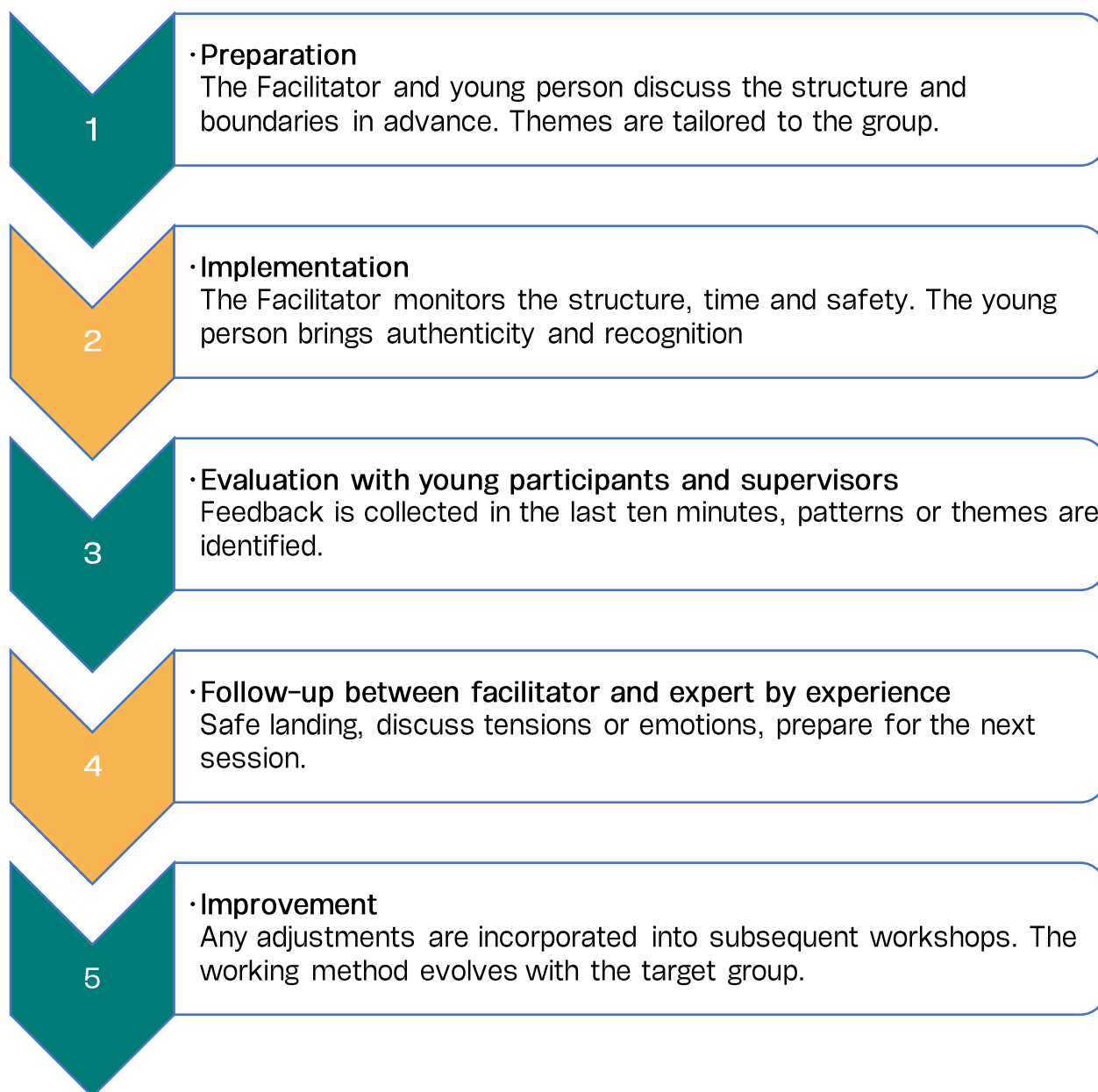
The young person brings experiential expertise, but is not a therapist, social worker or teacher. Within the P2P model, professionalism is ensured by:

- a clear division of roles: the youngster shares, the Facilitator guides
- pre-agreed boundaries on content (e.g. no details about offences)
- continuous guidance by the Facilitator before, during and after the workshop
- monitoring the pace and workload of the young person
- protecting the youngster from triggers, excessive demands or unrest in the group
- providing a safe development environment in which the young person can grow towards an educational role.

7.4 Quality assurance in the process

The quality of the P2P model is assured by a cyclical process:

- This cycle ensures a continuous learning system in which each workshop yields new insights that are immediately applied.





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