

Overview:

**A profile of
South Sulawesi's youth**

By Dr Hasnawati Saleh

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South Sulawesi.

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"Give me 1,000 elders, I will definitely unplug Mount Semeru from its roots. Give me 10 youth, I will definitely shake the world."

Soekarno, first president of Indonesia

The statement of President Soekarno strongly reflects the important role of youth in Indonesia's independence and development. Indeed, Indonesia's history has been painted with their contributions. Delegates of the Indonesian Youth Congress on 28 October 1928 pledged the Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Oath): "One nation, one homeland, one language". The key role of young people, male and female, in Indonesia's independence in 1945 is recorded in numerous works of literature.

In Indonesia, youth is defined as ages 16 to 30, and this group have led the social and political transformation of Indonesia, from the fight for independence to the reformation era that led to the fall of Soeharto's New Order regime.

Recognising the important role of youth is fundamental to making optimal use of their potential to drive progress.

The current Joko Widodo administration has outlined youth development goals in its Nawa Cita agenda, aimed at strengthening diversity and Indonesia's social cohesion and prosperity. Nawa Cita sets out four priorities for policy and strategy around young people:

1. Expanding opportunities to obtain education and skills;
2. Increasing the participation of youth in social, political, economic, cultural and religious development;
3. Increasing opportunities for youth in entrepreneurship, pioneering, and leadership;
4. Protecting all young people from the dangers of drug abuse, alcoholism and the spread of sexually transmitted infections including HIV-AIDS.

Understanding youth from various perspectives will enable the government to better harness their potential as contributors to national development. Youth are critical assets for the sustainable development of Indonesia and their education and health is thus of primary importance. With this in mind, The Australia-Indonesia Centre's PAIR (Partnership for Australia-Indonesia Research) Program in South Sulawesi has youth as a cross-cutting focus.

This overview focuses on youth in South Sulawesi, particularly the most current developments in education, health and employment. Data used is mostly from Statistics Indonesia's 2018 reports on Indonesian and South Sulawesi youth. This is because at the time of writing, the 2019 South Sulawesi youth report is not yet published, making the 2018 report the latest complete data available.

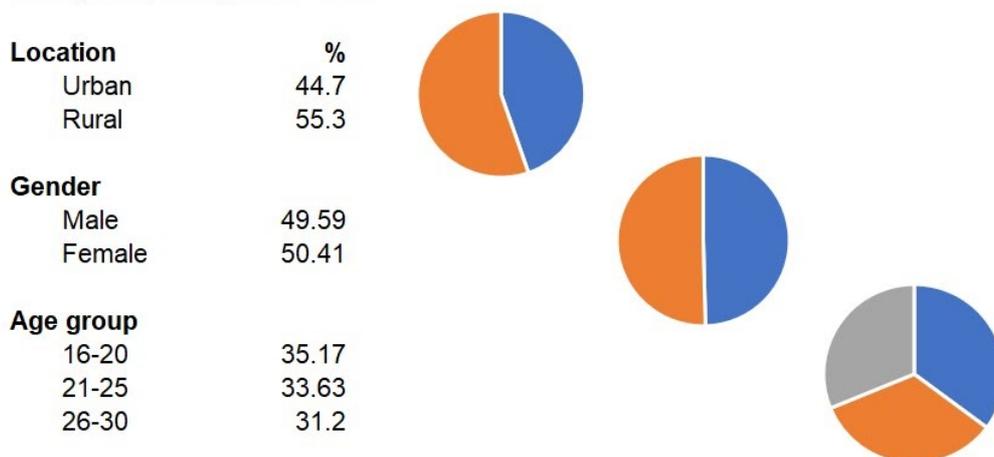
Demography

The population of South Sulawesi, or Sulsei, in 2020 is 8.85 million, making it the seventh largest province in Indonesia. It was 8.77 million in 2018, or 3.32 per cent of Indonesia's population. This includes about 2.25 million young people (25.62 per cent), or one in four. The biggest age group of Sulsei's youth is the 16 to 20 year olds, which make up about 35.17 per cent. These are high school/university ages. Following the national trend, Sulsei is seeing increasing urbanisation, though the number of youth living in rural areas is still higher than in urban areas (55.30 per cent versus 44.70 per cent). In addition, Sulsei has slightly more female youth than male youth (50.41 per cent versus 49.59 per cent), which is in contrast with national figures. Unfortunately, there is no mention of young people with disabilities in the 2018 South Sulawesi Youth Report.

The distribution of Sulsei youth by location, gender and age group is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. South Sulawesi's youth by location, gender and age group, 2018

Total population: 8.77 million
Total youth (16-30): 2.25 million



Source: South Sulawesi Statistic Report 2018

South Sulawesi has a relatively high number of underage marriages. In accordance with the current Indonesian law, the legal age for marriage is 19 years (previously 16 for females and 19 for males) but still, 4.68 per cent of youth are married before reaching the age of 16. This figure is almost two times higher than the national level. Underage marriage rates are 11.7 times higher for females than males. Rates are also much higher in rural areas.

Among 16 to 18 year olds, the marriage rate for females is still almost three times higher than that of their male counterparts. Across all young people, 47.83 per cent of females are married versus 28.25 per cent of males. Overall, 38.12 per cent of Sulsei youth are married and the majority get married between the ages of 21 to 24 years (45.19 per cent). Overall

marriage rates for youth are higher in rural areas compared to urban ones. Nationally, 6 out of 100 women give birth before reaching the age of 20. Young women take on family responsibility at a much younger age than their male counterparts.

Underage marriage and becoming a mother at a young age pose serious threats to health, particularly maternal and child health. Young mothers are at risk of pregnancy and delivery complications or even death. Underage marriages may also affect their mental health and reduce their opportunity to continue their education and access to jobs.

A survey of youth in South Sulawesi at three different technical schools revealed more than 50 per cent perceived themselves as having little to no control over their marriage (The Future of Youth in South Sulawesi, 2019). Culturally, the decision to marry is mostly decided by parents and family, particularly in rural areas.

People of Sulsel, like the rest of Indonesia, are a patriarchal society. Males are usually considered the head of family. Male youth are found acting as head of the family over five times more often than female counterparts. This is somewhat less than the national differential where over seven times more male youth take responsibility as head of the family. This may indicate that young women in Sulsel take responsibility more often for providing livelihoods for their families, compared to young women nationally.

Education

Level of education and health status are two factors that indicate quality of life. Education is the main factor in staying competitive in the labour market and also an important means for upward social mobility.

Indonesian youth in general are more educated than their parents and their grandparents.

South Sulawesi still has a small number of illiterate youth (0.42 per cent), which is seen at higher rates in males than females and also higher rates in rural areas than urban areas. This is probably due to a lack of access to education as a small percentage of Sulsel youth (1.17 per cent) do not attend school at all. The good news is there seems to be no discrimination against women in terms of education – There are more young women in schools than young men. While it is true that Sulsel has more young women than young men, it seems that female school participation rates are slightly higher than male rates. Furthermore, in line with national trends, youth in urban areas tend to have higher school participation rates than those in rural areas.

There are 226 private and 11 public tertiary institutions in Sulsel (plus a small number of religious based tertiary institutions) but this large number has its problems. There is a wide disparity in the quality of education they offer.

In the 19 to 24 age group (higher education age), less than a quarter (23.02 per cent) still studying. In general, only one in four youth in this province receive any higher education. Just 12.52 per cent of Sulsel youth have a university level education – slightly higher than national average (9.7 per cent). In line with this data, the number of Sulsel youth with high school level education (but no higher) is somewhat lower than the national figure (31.83 per cent versus 36.89 per cent). This might suggest the people of South Sulawesi place greater value on higher education for their children and youth. It is true that Sulsel has yielded a number of national political leaders, business leaders and intellectuals.

One of the most important challenges in education in Sulsel is that a significant number of youth (37 per cent) aged 16 to 18 (high school age) are no longer attending school. Compulsory school age according to Indonesian law is from 7 until 15 years old. One of the underlying explanations is early marriage (sulselsatu.com). In addition, a very small percentage of Sulsel youth (1.17 per cent) have no formal education at all – have never attended school. Combined together, Sulsel youth who have never been to school and those who have dropped out at primary school level form a segment twice as large (11.29%) as the national average (11.29 in Sulsel per cent versus 5.85 per cent nationally). This contrast provides evidence of high inequality in the province's education system. In the older youth age group (25 to 30 years) the majority (96 per cent) have finished their education, which can be explained by employment age. Only a small percentage of them are still enrolled in educational institutions (2.39 per cent), possibly pursuing postgraduate studies or prolonged undergraduate studies.

A survey of Sulsel youth in three technical high schools revealed that over 75 per cent felt they had control over decisions regarding their education (The Future of Youth in South Sulawesi, 2019). Unfortunately, the survey does not report gendered data to see whether there is any discrepancy here.

One important take-away of the report is the demonstration of weakness in critical thinking skills (average score 27.9 per cent) among the young respondents and to a lesser extent in agency (or, capacity to act independently and make free choices – average score 61.4 per cent).

It is important that the education system address these weaknesses to better prepare the youth to face complex life challenges and create change. Aside from access to education and facilities, the role of teachers as inspiring and engaging figures is critical. Quality and inspiring teachers often become a driving force for youth as they strive for success in life.

Similar to Indonesian youth in general, Sulsel youth also have sufficient access to the internet and many are active on social media. Around 71.62 per cent of Sulsel youth accessed the internet in the last three months of the Susenas 2018 survey. Urban youth have better access to technology than rural youth, and overall the age group with the highest rate of internet use is 16 to 18 year olds (78.90 per cent). Meanwhile there is no striking difference in access to mobile phones and the internet between males and females. There is no data on disabilities and use of technology in the South Sulawesi Youth Report 2018.

Health

According to the 2018 RISKESDAS, 35.6 percent of children in Sulsel are affected by stunting which is above the national figure of 30.8 per cent. That national figure represents vast improvement, from 37.2 in 2014, but also well above the standard set by the World Health Organization.

In addition, RISKESDAS recorded central (abdominal) obesity among 18.3 per cent of people in the province. These two statistics indicate a double burden of nutrition in Sulsel, as is also the case in many other provinces in Indonesia.

South Sulawesi has long been known as a tobacco producer. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were a high number of family-owned companies that produced traditional cigarettes or tobacco. However, they then failed to compete with Javanese big tobacco companies and only very few still exist that operate with home-scale productions. Not surprisingly tobacco

smoking is still high in the province – 25.5 per cent of the population are smokers. Unfortunately, the Sulsel Youth Report 2018 does not cover data on smoking.

Out of 100 young people in South Sulawesi, 19 experience health complaints and seven or eight are falling sick. One in five had a health complaint within one month of the survey, or 19.48 per cent, which is slightly lower than the national average of 20.16 percent. Youth morbidity rate is an indicator of a population's quality of health. The morbidity rate, or rate of falling sick, of Sulsel's youth is slightly higher than the national average (7.85 per cent versus 7.68 per cent). Morbidity rates are higher among young women and also higher in rural areas.

Out of those young people experiencing health complaints, roughly a third (32.79 per cent) have received outpatient treatment, a percentage somewhat lower than the national average of 38.63 per cent. The main reasons Sulsel youth do not seek treatment are: self-treatment (63.06 per cent of cases) and feeling it is not necessary (36.71 per cent).

At the national level, youth preference for self-treatment is a bit higher at 67.73 per cent. Self-treatment includes buying medicine without a prescription, traditional treatment such as kerokan (body scraping), or consuming jamu (herbal medicine). Less than 1 per cent of youth reported not seeking treatment because they had no money to pay medical costs, or no money for or means of transportation. More than half of young people with health complaints (50.25 per cent) opted to visit a puskesmas (pusat kesehatan masyarakat, government run local health centres). Second most popular was visiting doctors or midwives in a private practice (21.96 per cent).

The number of Sulsel youth hospitalised within one year of the survey was 6.19 per cent, with the rate for young women four times higher than males. In other words, significantly more young women experience sickness than young men. The majority of the hospitalised youth (60.25 per cent) required a stay of one to three days (considered mild cases). Over 75 per cent of those hospitalised preferred to be treated in government owned hospitals (50.78 per cent) or puskesmas (24.31 per cent). Only 21.67 per cent were treated in private hospitals. This preference for public hospitals and public health centres is possibly in part due to more complete facilities and health insurance cover in those institutions.

On maternal health, South Sulawesi is among the provinces with higher maternal mortality rates. As outlined above, family planning programs are government initiatives to control birth rates and ensure mothers' health. However, less than half (48.22 per cent) of married young women in South Sulawesi were found to be actively participating in family planning/birth control. Another roughly 12 per cent had participated in the program previously and 39.33 per cent had never participated at all. Throughout 2017, there were 115 cases of maternal deaths in Sulsel and 817 neonatal deaths. This means roughly two mothers and 16 newborn babies died in South Sulawesi every week in 2017 (South Sulawesi Health Office, Fajar.co.id).

Similar to the country as a whole, Sulsel is experiencing the triple burden of disease (communicable diseases, NCDs and emerging diseases). Poor access to sanitation, clean water and nutrition, particularly among low income communities in urban and rural areas, as well as risk behaviours such as poor diet and smoking, exacerbate the multiple burden of disease in the province.

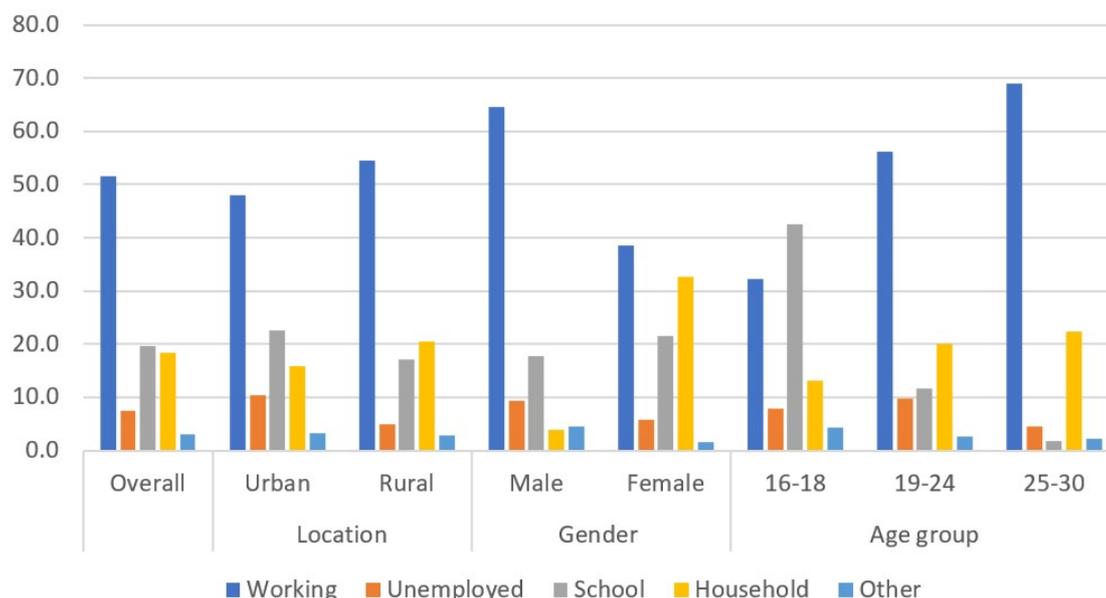
Employment

The productive age in Indonesia is considered to be from 15 to 64 years. In general, young people in Indonesia have been better educated than their parents for at least the past three generations. Unfortunately, this is often not accompanied by suitable job availability, leading to unemployment or underemployment in South Sulawesi.

More than half of Sulse youth are working (51.52 per cent), one-fifth are at school or studying (19.64 percent), and just under that amount are working domestically by taking care of their households (18.27 per cent). The proportion working is slightly higher in urban areas (54.50 per cent) than rural (48.09) and significantly more young men are working (64.65 percent) than young women (38.49 per cent). It is worth noting that youth in the 16-18 age group (high school age level) in this province are only less than half attending schools (42.53 per cent), 32.14 per cent are working and 7.87 per cent are unemployed and 13.22 percent are managing households. This is a great challenge faced by the administration in the province. The high number of school dropouts is of concern.

Among 19 to 24 year olds (university age), only 11.59 per cent are still studying, the majority of them are working (59.16 per cent), 19.95 are managing households and 9.74 per cent are unemployed (the highest unemployment rate of any age group). Among young people, the group with the highest rate of employment is 25 to 30 year olds (69.02 per cent), which makes sense since fewer of them are still studying or dependant on family. The main occupations of Sulse youth based on the 2018 South Sulawesi Youth Report is summarised in Graph 1.

South Sulawesi's youth by occupation, 2018 (%)



Graph 1. (Source: South Sulawesi Statistic Report 2018)

Agriculture related work is dominant in rural Sulse rural where 45.51 per cent of youth are working in that sector, predominantly young men. Young women in the province are predominantly working in the services sector, particularly retail. Indeed, Bugis people, one of the major ethnic groups in Sulse, are well known as traders (pedagang). It is noteworthy that many Bugis traders are women, especially those who work in the markets or running stores, often found in other areas in eastern Indonesia.

Of employed youth in Sulse, a high school education but no higher is the most common level (37.53 per cent of employed youth) followed by a university education (half that figure with 18.93 per cent). As with the nationwide situation, being more selective in choosing jobs or less availability of jobs that suit their education level is a possible explanation. It is interesting to note that young women with a university education have a much higher employment rate than their male counterparts (almost 30 per cent versus 12.6 per cent). Another example of feminisation of labour. When both are educated, the market seems to prefer employing young women than young men, especially in the services sector.

Now blending those education level groups, working youth in urban areas are predominantly those with a high school education or higher. In contrast, working youth in rural areas are predominantly those with a high school education or lower. In other words, the higher the education, the more likely youth will live in urban areas. This may mean that there are simply no suitable jobs for them available in rural areas.

This is an opportunity for the provincial government to provide more jobs in rural areas for educated youth so they do not have to migrate to urban areas. Moreover, internet penetration is getting higher in rural areas and most young people, including those in rural areas, have smartphones. Empowering rural millennials through the digital economy and capitalising on their closer knowledge of the agriculture sector in their area is one example.

The top five employment areas for Sulse's working youth are:

- Agriculture, forestry and fisheries (29.36 per cent);
- Wholesale and retail trade, car repairs and maintenance (20.60 per cent);
- Construction (9.14 per cent);
- Processing industries (9.07 per cent); and
- Government, defence and social security (5.7 per cent).

It is obvious from this data (Statistik Pemuda Sulawesi Selatan, 2018) that people in South Sulawesi are strong in agriculture, fisheries and trade.

The top three employment areas of working urban youth in the province are wholesale and retail trade, car repairs and maintenance (27.08 per cent of youth); construction (10.29 per cent); and government administration, defense and social security (8.52 per cent). In contrast, the top three employment areas of working rural youth are agriculture, forestry and fisheries (45.51 per cent); wholesale and retail trade, car repairs and maintenance (15.63 per cent); and processing industries (9.5 per cent).

In terms of gender, the top three employment areas of working young women are wholesale and retail trade, car repairs and maintenance (29.43 per cent); agriculture, forestry and fisheries (21.37 per cent); and education (10.13 per cent), while the top three employment areas of working young men are agriculture, forestry and fisheries (34.15 per cent); wholesale and retail trade, car repairs and maintenance (15.30 per cent); and construction (14.30 per cent). Sulse youth employment by sector is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. South Sulawesi's employed youth by sector, 2018

Main occupation	%
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	29.36
Wholesale and retail; car repair and maintenance	20.60
Construction	9.14
Processing industries	9.07
Government, defence and social security	5.70
Education services	5.37
Transportation and warehousing	4.76
Hospitality services	4.29
Health services and social activities	3.17
Finance and insurance services	2.32
Company services	1.39
Information and communications	0.88
Mining and excavation	0.49
Electricity and gas procurement	0.33
Water supply, waste management, recycling	0.27
Real estate	0.18
Other services	2.68
Total	100.00

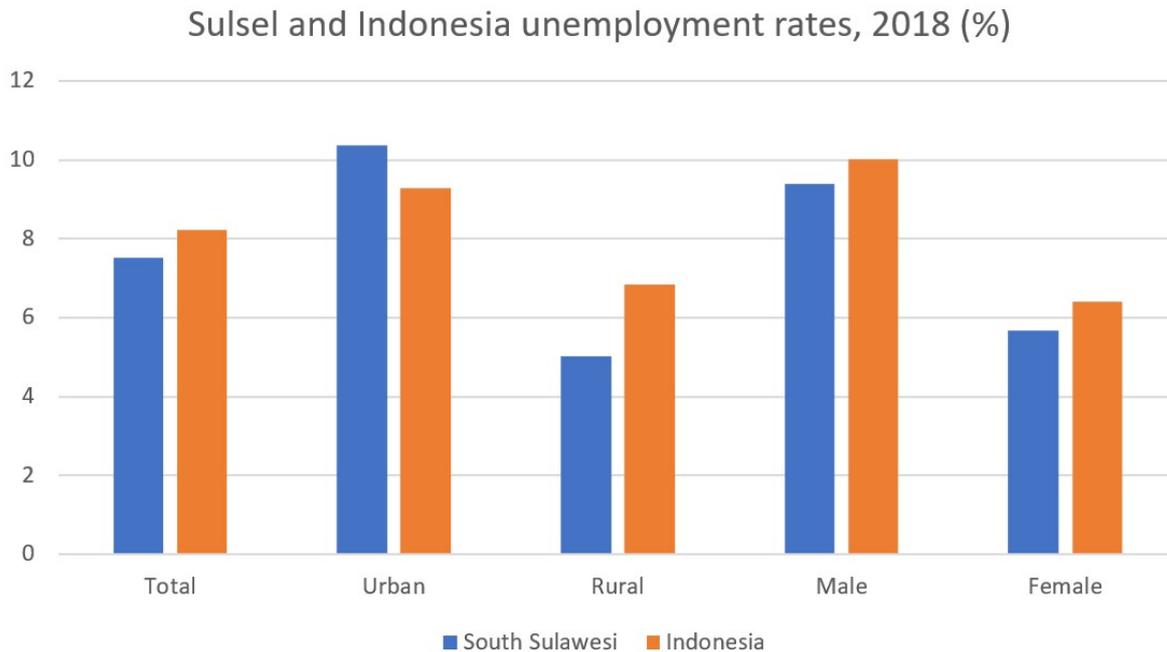
Source: South Sulawesi Statistic Report 2018

The number of working young women and the number who work domestically are similar (38 per cent to 32 per cent). Young women are taking care of the households 10 times more than their male counterparts. At the 25 to 30 age group, the number of working women is one-third the number for men. So, despite more females being enrolled in schools across all age groups of youth, they are more likely to work domestically than their male counterparts. They also tend to get married younger and then work domestically to take care of their families. Moreover, underage marriage rates (under 16 years old) in the province are almost twice national levels. Culturally, taking care of the household is perceived as a female responsibility. These factors together create underlying barriers to women's career advancement.

In terms of job status, 47.9 per cent of working youth in Sulsel are employees (working for others), 23.08 per cent work for family (unpaid) and only 11.07 per cent own a business. This suggests an opportunity exists in boosting entrepreneurship among young people to allow them to do business more independently.

In Sulsel, seven youth of 100 are unemployed (7.52 per cent). This rate is higher in urban areas (10.38 per cent) than rural areas (5.02 per cent) and higher among young men (9.38 per cent) than young women (5.66 per cent) (Statistik Pemuda Sulawesi Selatan, 2018). Of all the unemployment variables, Sulsel's unemployment figures are below the national average in all categories except urban youth, who are worse off. Moreover, the unemployment rate for young men is almost double (1.6 times) that of young women. This may cause frustration and lead to risky behaviours such as crime, drug abuse and other

social problems, and also mental health problems. Unemployment figures for South Sulawesi and Indonesia as a whole are summarised in Graph 2 below.



Graph 2. (Source: Indonesian Youth Statistics, 2018; South Sulawesi Youth Statistics, 2018)

It is alarming to see that the highest unemployment figures are among university graduates, even compared to those who finished their education in primary school. This high rate of unemployment, especially among university graduates, needs further understanding to assist evidence-based policy interventions.

Conclusion

South Sulawesi, like Indonesia, has a young population with a huge potential for personal development and huge potential to contribute to provincial development.

However, there are also several barriers related to limited access to quality education, health and work opportunities, which hinder that potential. Improving youth access to education, health and work will improve their development and in turn that of South Sulawesi and Indonesia.

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