



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

## SDWG PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

<p><b>Project Title:</b></p> <p>Arctic Children. Preschool education and smooth transition to school.</p>	<p><b>Lead Country/Project leader(s):</b></p> <p>Russian Federation Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of Russian Federation, Federal Agency for nationality affairs of Russian Federation</p> <p><b>Co-Leads:</b> Republic of Finland</p>
<p><b>Total Cost of Project:</b></p>	<p><b>Relationship to other AC Working Groups:</b></p> <p>TBD</p>

### **Project Objectives:**

- 1) Evaluation and assessment of the best practices in the sphere of free pre-school education for Indigenous children in the North (Arctic and Subarctic), providing traditional knowledge about state and national history and culture, native and state language, traditional economic activities;
- 2) Arranging the exchange of information with the stakeholders on a regular basis, aimed on sharing the best practices in the sphere of preschool education programs and projects oriented on smooth transition of pre-school children to elementary school.
- 3) Drafting of educational programs and teaching materials in the sphere of pre-school education for Indigenous children;
- 4) Creation of the official Internet portal dedicated to the Project and its implementation outcomes.

### **Background**

In view of the globalization and changing environment it is getting obvious that the current condition of nomadic education evokes profound concerns and witnesses challenging constraints. One of the critical gaps between the nomadic population and the mainstream population are the rates of enrollment retention, low levels of performance and completion of basic education. Indigenous educational deficits range from generalized exclusion to limited access to the upper levels of education, with admittance to higher education still being the exception. Facing the lack of access to basic services due to the geographical isolation nomadic children is facing severe issues with obtaining knowledge and skills necessary for living in the modern world.



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Moreover, another major shortcoming is that formal school systems rarely reflect the realities of indigenous livelihoods, traditional educational systems and local cultures. Most textbooks and other educational materials reflect the values, norms and traditions of mainstream society. Formal school education is provided mainly in the national language. School terms and daily schedules do not take into consideration Indigenous peoples' livelihood. Most non-indigenous teachers are not prepared to teach in indigenous communities. Elders and community members are not involved in setting the direction or educational goals of the school.

Many Indigenous peoples have come to see formal school education as a way of assimilating them into mainstream society and eradicating their cultures, languages and ways of life. This often causes cultural and generational conflicts between childrens and elders, and threatens the social cohesion in indigenous communities. Many indigenous childrens also experience the loss of an important part of their identity in their dealings with mainstream values and norms, while not fully becoming a part of the dominant national society. Research shows that the loss of cultural identity and school maladjustment are important factors in the high rates of substance abuse and suicide among indigenous childrens. These shortcomings have negative impacts and many Indigenous peoples worldwide share negative school experiences.

Therefore, taking into consideration the right to education for Indigenous peoples as a holistic concept incorporating mental, physical, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions, we believe that, although many Indigenous peoples live in geographically-isolated, self-sustaining communities, education in form of modern and innovative Nomadic Schools and other types of educational practices aimed on preserving traditional way of life and native languages may come as an effective solution to many abovementioned issues.

The implementation of the Project will thus allow to grow the recognition of the need for an intercultural education, one the one hand, rooted in Indigenous culture, language, values, worldview and system of knowledge but which, at the same time, is receptive, open to and appreciative of other knowledge, values, cultures and languages, innovations and techniques.

A flexible, inclusive and culturally-relevant educational system based on interculturalism will provide Indigenous children with the knowledge and skills necessary to function fully as an effective member of both their own community and mainstream society. If properly implemented, it will contribute to achieving individual and community empowerment.

### **Rationale for the Project:**

Project « Arctic Children. Pre-school educational practices» aims to promote the sustainable development of Indigenous peoples, their integration into modern society while maintaining their traditional way of life. Corresponding with the SDWG priorities (social pillar of sustainable development) the Project strives to build knowledge and develop skills needed to maintain vibrant communities in a changing region



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Indigenous peoples living in the traditional environment of remote and hard-reachable areas face the complicated organization of modern education for children of preschool and school age. Therefore, we believe that the implementation of the Project will contribute to the integration of the Indigenous children in modern society, as well as the preservation of the culture and language.

The information that will be collected during the Project will serve as a basis for the creation of teaching and learning materials and the development of the educational program for such institutions (schools) in other countries.

### **Activities and Outputs:**

- 1) Formation of stakeholder's pool
- 2) Evaluation of the costs needed for the organization of the Nomadic School and other types of educational practices aimed on preserving traditional way of life and native language;
- 3) Development of the plan of the project. The signing of the Plan in the framework of the International Congress of Indigenous Peoples (24 march 2017)
- 4) Creation of an information section about the project on the site of Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North ([www.raipon.info](http://www.raipon.info))
- 5) Formation of the delegation of observers and experts and determination of the expedition dates (previously July 2017)
- 6) Organization of exchange of delegations between stakeholders to review the information about educational practices aimed on preserving traditional way of life and native language
- 7) Creation of professional development courses for students (future pedagogues) and pre-and inservice school teachers aimed at providing necessary skills and knowledge sufficient to get acquainted with peculiarities of the Northern nature, culture and lifeways of Indigenous peoples;
- 8) Selection of participants of preparatory courses;
- 9) Provision of necessary infrastructure for the Project, organization of the educational process and logistics for participants and experts;
- 10) Organization of the educational process in the Nomadic Schools, collection of relevant information about its specifics for Indigenous preschool age children;
- 11) Development of the educational program and teaching and learning materials drafts based on the information collected;
- 12) Creation of the official Internet portal dedicated to the Project and its implementation outcomes.



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### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

Having participated in the Project, the Indigenous preschool and school age children will have an opportunity to enhance their skills which will contribute to the preservation of the national language, culture, values and traditional ways of life. One of the key elements of the Project is that, unlike common boarding schools, during the Project the Indigenous children will remain with their parents.

This practice will create a unique educational program that may be used by the other interested Arctic Council member states in order to increase culturally appropriate teaching practices as well as integration into the modern society of children of Indigenous peoples.

Project « Arctic Children. Pre-school educational practices » will also allow to assess the effectiveness of this practice, to develop proposals regarding its introduction in other Arctic countries and to support further training of professionals in the field of nomadic education, organization of high level pre-school and school education for the Indigenous peoples, thus guaranteeing the study of national and state history and culture of the native and state languages, as well as traditional management.

The Project will also make a major contribution to the protection of original habitat, traditional way of life, livelihoods and crafts of Indigenous peoples.

### **Deliverable:**

- Report on the activities;
- Draft of the educational program and teaching and learning materials on the basis of the information collected;
- Preparation of recommendations for teachers who dealing with Indigenous children
- Creation of the official Internet portal dedicated to the Project and its implementation outcomes.

### **Timetable and Project Completion:**

*First stage (March - September 2017) – preparation.*

Communication with stakeholders.

Development of the plan of the project. The signing of the Plan in the framework of the International Congress of Indigenous Peoples (24 march 2017).

Creation of an information section about the project on the site of Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North ([www.raipon.info](http://www.raipon.info)).

Organization of the first expedition to study the practices of the Nomadic School and other types of educational practices aimed on preserving traditional way of life and native language that are used in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (previously July 2017).



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Preparation of the consolidated report on the results of the expedition and creation of presentations for publication on the website (august 2017)

*Second stage (September – Desember 2017) – basic.*

Organization of exchange of delegations between stakeholders to review the information about educational practices aimed on preserving traditional way of life and native language.

Organization of exchange of delegations for studying the experience of the Saami Council and the Association "World Reindeer Herders' on the organization of educational programs aimed at preserving the ethno-cultural characteristics of indigenous peoples

Selection of participants of preparatory courses among pre-and inservice school teachers. Selection of the representatives of the expert community. Organization of the preparatory course. Provision of infrastructure for accommodation of teachers. Organization of the educational process.

Organizing expeditions of experts and teachers to the Arctic regions of Russia to get acquainted with the practices of Nomadic Schools and other types of educational practices aimed on preserving traditional way of life and native language, collection of relevant information about its specifics for Indigenous preschool and school age children.

Preparation of the consolidated report on the results of the expedition and creation of presentations for publication on the website

*Third stage (January-March 2018) – final.*

Preparation of a report on the best teaching practices for Indigenous children.

Analysis of the data.

Development of the educational program and teaching and learning materials drafts on the basis of the information collected.

Preparation of recommendations for teachers who dealing with Indigenous children

Identification of avenues for future, trans-boundary collaborations on research.

Creation of the official Internet portal dedicated to the Project and its implementation outcomes.