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ABSTRACT: CIRCUMPOLAR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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The role of nomadic schools in the revival and preservation of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples of the North and the Arctic.

The creation of nomadic schools has been provoked by a series of critical social problems: disappearance of traditional ways of life, disturbances to the ecological milieu in which indigenous peoples live, and poor social conditions. Nowadays, there is process of growing self-consciousness and outside recognition of indigenous peoples' cultures. Recently, among scientists, researchers and representatives of indigenous people of the North, worries have arisen about the loss of native language, culture and traditions. The foremost worry is about the process of loss by indigenous people of North of their traditions, valuable forms of national culture, and native languages, with concern for its complete extinction in certain places. All this leads to the destruction of national psychology and culture.

Presently, with connections to the national revival of small indigenous groups of the North, there is a process of renewal in the new form of nomadic schools. This is now recognised as the most suitable form of education within the North, under the influence of deep socio-economic and socio-political transformations. In the North, factors such as the preservation of nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life, the intensive exploitation of virgin and long-fallow lands, and the expansion of living area in boundless tundra and leso-tundra space play a crucial role. This stimulated the development of the mobile settlements which comprise the nomadic school.

At the same time, the nomadic school is seen in some ways as a dilemma, and there are supporters and adversaries of this form of education. Many call it "golden", because of the big financial investments and costs involved. Others think that for nomadic reindeer herders, those schools are vital. People who do not know the nomadic

people and their culture may be puzzled. Why have these people decided to restore, what would seem an old form of teaching in modern times, when the schools are equipped with new equipment and teaching aids, and when innovative technologies are utilised everywhere?

The benefit of nomadic schools is access to education. Thanks to nomadic schools, people of the North can now move without constraints along with the reindeer from pasture to pasture, and the children go to the school and receive a basic education in this environment, living with their parents and in family home. Thereby, the reindeer herd grows, children receive full fledged education, and parents maintain this traditional and vital activity.

The specificities and advantage of the nomadic schools are as follows: firstly, under the working conditions of reindeer and fishing brigades (teams) following the migration, the most adaptive form of management is family contact, whereby the children have the opportunity from an early age to experience their parents' skills and knowledge, and spiritual culture of the own people. Secondly, the schooled children are not torn away from the family home. Thirdly, children experience a strong bond to the environment and the sense of being an owner of indigenous lands from early age.

In the process of education it is easy to use the progressive facets of traditional education of indigenous people of the North, where the positive example of the father and mother is valuable. In particular, reindeer breeding and herding is a profession transmitted through generations from father to son, from mother to daughter. Children are constantly in close and contact with the environment, which influences and educates them to treat the vulnerable ecosystems of the North with care.