



2019 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages



Министерство национальной
и региональной политики
Республики Карелия



Nordic Council
of Ministers

Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples and Civic Diplomacy "Young Karelia"
Youth Information and Legal Center for Indigenous Peoples "Nevond"
Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of the Republic of Karelia
Nordic Council of Ministers

Karelia contributes to preparation for the International Year of Indigenous Languages

As part of the preparation for the International Year of Indigenous languages in 2019 proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, the workshop “Realization of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the Municipal Level” took place in Petrozavodsk. Experts from Karelia, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Leningrad and Vologda regions, Republics of Mordovia and Yakutia as well as from Norway, Estonia, Finland and Switzerland were among the participants. The representatives of municipalities, non-governmental, scientific and educational organizations were also engaged.

The keynote reports featured the Karelian experience in developing self-government institutions and ensuring participation of indigenous peoples in the decision-making processes. Besides, the current multilingual situation in Russia and all over the world was analyzed. Zinaida Strogalschikova, senior research assistant to the Ethnology department of the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences and chair of the Association of Teachers of the Languages and Literature of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of Russia, shared the experience of the Veps volost, a unique Russian example of self-organization and realization of the rights of indigenous peoples at the local level. Eugene Kuzmin, deputy chair of the Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO Program “Information for All” and member of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, defined general disappointing trends in the area of development of both indigenous and official regional and national languages. The expert represented unfavorable prospects and set a range of goals for the international community to preserve the linguistic diversity.

Apart from the analytical reports presentation the interactive dialogue was held during the workshop. The federal, regional and international experts discussed the reciprocal influence of global and local processes in the area of indigenous peoples’ rights and use of best practices. The heads of the municipalities where indigenous peoples live along with the Ombudsperson in the Republic of Karelia studied realization of the indigenous peoples’ rights at the local level.

The actions at the municipal level for the International Year of Indigenous Languages were also discussed. The experts proposed active participation in the legislation improvement and data collection for the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages. The participants also suggested conducting more training sessions for municipal administrations on indigenous peoples issues, giving more attention to the staff



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training and work with parents on whom it depends whether the children will study native languages or not. It was underlined that the actions to support languages should be undertaken in education, culture and other sectors in order to make the indigenous languages knowledge a strength. The special emphasis was made to the youth subculture that is now almost excluding indigenous languages.

Aysa Mukabenova and Alexey Tsykarev, members of the Steering Committee of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, said about the efforts of the UN and UNESCO. In conclusion, the relevant civil society initiatives were presented, in particular the program of mini-grants for the revitalization and development of indigenous languages. The participants also attended the opening of the Resource Language Media-Center of the Karelians, Veps and Finns in the “Periodika” publishing house.

The workshop was organized by the Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples and Civic Diplomacy “Young Karelia” and the Youth Information and Legal Center for Indigenous Peoples “Nevond”. It was held with the support of the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of the Republic of Karelia as part of the project “Finno-Ugric peoples of Karelia: development of civic diplomacy and strengthening of internal potential”. The workshop was also the final event of the project “Indigenous peoples’ and ethnic minorities’ cooperation and networking increase facility in the Nordic countries and Northwest Russia” supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The project “Finno-Ugric peoples of Karelia: development of civic diplomacy and strengthening of internal potential” is aimed at the development of the organizational and expert potential of public organizations and movements of the Finno-Ugric peoples of the Republic of Karelia for their more effective participation in relevant regional, interregional and international processes. The project will also allow informing citizens of the republic about the agenda and the work of the national movement of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of Karelia.

The project “Indigenous peoples’ and ethnic minorities’ cooperation and networking increase facility in the Nordic countries and Northwest Russia” created conditions for the exchange of experience and mutual learning of organizations of indigenous peoples of the Northwest of Russia and the Arctic.

More information about the projects of the Center “Young Karelia” on website: www.nuorikarjala.ru

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