

DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURAL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIAL-EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONS IN THE ARKHANGELSK REGION

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INTRODUCTION

The large-scale processes associated with intensifying globalization in social, cultural and educational domains have generated new concepts of multiculturalism. In this context, new paradigms have emerged around personality development, one of which emphasises sensitivity to cultural features and diversity, as well as the ability to build intercultural dialogue. The implementation mechanism is social-educational, building the necessary skills for understanding and accepting diversity and difference across ethnicity, nationality, culture and other categories and supporting social justice. European countries have accumulated significant experience of this approach, which is inherently multicultural and inclusive, but certain parts of Russia, notably the Arkhangelsk region, also have unique experience and great potential in this regard.

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

This chapter analyses the historic and modern context for development of the Arkhangelsk region. The education and language situation is described, focusing in particular on inclusive education at different levels. In summarizing the experience of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, named after M.V. Lomonosov, as a regional centre for the development of multiculturalism and inclusion, our methods include the theoretical analysis of historical, geographical and ethnographical sources, including legislative documents and regulations.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of the Arkhangelsk region provides an interesting example of poly-ethnocultural development. This was most active in the twelfth to seventeenth centuries, and informed the development of the modern Arkhangelsk North territory (Chistov & Bernstam, 1981). Along with a relatively high level of freedom across social, economic and religious realms, the European north of Russia was distant from the centre of the fighting during the Mongol-Tatar conquest and its devastating internecine wars, and these factors influenced the region's development (Shumkin, 1990).

As a result, representatives of different nations and nationalities, including Slavs, Karelians, Komis, Vepps, Saami (Lapps) and others, migrated to the Arkhangelsk region. This movement to the north and the development of northern territories by ethnically distinct waves of migrants created a basis for intercultural interaction across the region. Over centuries of coexistence, these diverse peoples have developed a culture of tolerant interaction and communication across different social domains, and Arkhangelsk has become a multi-ethnic locale.

THE PRESENT CONTEXT

The ethnic composition of the Arkhangelsk population is relatively homogeneous. Although home to 108 nationalities, the All-Russia Population Census of 2010 reported that Russians account for 95.6% of the 98% of residents who

indicated their nationality. The remainder include Ukrainians (1.4%), Belarusians (0.5%), Nenets (0.6%), Komi (0.4%), Tatars (0.2%), and people of other nationalities (1.3%). Despite its ethnic homogeneity, the Arkhangelsk region includes unique populations, notably the indigenous people of the far north. The most numerous of these are the Nenets, who are descendants of the aboriginal White Sea coast population. Most Nenets live in the Nenets Autonomous District; formed on July 15 1929, it borders the Komi Republic. In the north of the District, the Yamal Nenets Autonomous District borders the White, Barents and Kara Seas. Its population of 43,997 includes 7,504 Nenets.

Several strategies and programmes have been developed to establishing priorities around interethnic relations and ethno-cultural development for Russians and other ethnic communities living in the Arkhangelsk region. These include the Arkhangelsk Region Government Order 'On International Relations and Ethnocultural Development of the Peoples of Russia and Other Ethnic Communities Living in Arkhangelsk region' (2010), 'About State Support of National-Cultural Autonomy in the Arkhangelsk Region' (Law of Arkhangelsk Region, 2013) and the Degree of the Government of the Arkhangelsk Region on Approval of 'Regional Strategy of State National Policy up to 2025 (according to the Strategy of the National Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025)'. These documents describe mechanisms for preserving the traditions, cultures and languages of indigenous people in the Arkhangelsk region and for ensuring their continued development on their ancestral territories.

NENETS REINDEER HERDERS AND SCHOOLING

The indigenous people of the Nenets Autonomous District lead a nomadic lifestyle. Reindeer husbandry has always been an integral part of the culture and identity of the Nenets, and the state creates the conditions for modern Nenets to continue to pursue nomadic reindeer farming across the tundra. Because reindeer will eat all the moss at a given location, herders can only keep their animals in one place for 1-2 months.

To prepare for school, Nenets children are taken from the camp at the age of 6 years to live in boarding schools in larger settlements, where they receive pre-

school training. From the age of 7 years, the children are sent to boarding school, transported from the tundra by helicopter in late August/early September. They live at boarding school from September to May and return to their family for the summer. This process of removing children from their family during the year and returning them to a traditional lifestyle only in the summer can cause problems. During their life in the city, children can lose some of the skills acquired in the tundra and must therefore readapt each year.

The nomadic lifestyle of the Nenets people makes it difficult to implement local programmes that address the psychological and pedagogical needs of Nenets children in adjusting to long-term city living. For that reason, it is necessary to develop and implement such programmes during their adjustment to a formal educational setting.

There are 26 such schools, which include primary and secondary levels of education: primary education (from 1st to 4th grade, incomplete secondary education from 5th to 9th grade and complete secondary education from 10th to 11th grade); grades 1 to 9 are obligatory for all children. Institutions in the Nenets Autonomous District include a vocational school, a socio-humanitarian college, an agrarian-economic technical school and 22 kindergartens. The District's state authorities help citizens to organize their children's upbringing and education in the Nenets language. All schoolchildren in grades 1 to 9 study a subject called 'Our Land' to deepen their knowledge of the language, traditions and culture of the Nenets people (Flotskaya et al., 2017). Following their school and college studies, up to 80% of young Nenets return to their home on the tundra to pursue their traditional lifestyle and work on reindeer farms.

LANGUAGE POLICY

One of the mechanisms for ensuring inter-ethnic dialogue and multicultural interaction is the region's language policy. As it is part of the Russian Federation, Russian is the state language and the language of inter-ethnic communication in the Arkhangelsk region. However, examples of bilingualism can be found in the Nenets Autonomous District (which has its own authorities). Under article 1 of the law entitled 'On the Nenets language in the Nenets Autonomous District', the

Nenets language is recognized as 'an integral part of life, the culture, the traditional way of life of the Nenets people in the Nenets Autonomous District, and use of the Nenets language in everyday communication, in important spheres of social relations'. This includes issues related to upbringing and education, mass media, translation of the District's laws into the Nenets language and official recordkeeping in the Nenets language in places with a dense Nenets population. The law 'On the Nenets language in Nenets Autonomous District' was adopted by the Deputies Council of the Nenets Autonomous District, Resolution No. 21-sd on 6 March, 2013, based on the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Federal Law No. 1807-1 of 25 October, 1991 'On the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation' and the Charter of the Nenets Autonomous District.

Schooling in the Arkhangelsk region is conducted through the Russian language. However, according to article 4 of the law 'On the Nenets language in Nenets Autonomous District', the NAD government authorities must promote various forms of upbringing and education of children in the Nenets Autonomous District using the Nenets language, regardless of their number and according to their needs. Much has been done to implement a national component in educational institutions for Nenets schoolchildren. All pupils in national schools and kindergartens study Nenets language regardless of how they identify their nationality, and seven kindergartens and thirteen schools teach the native language.

In addition to indigenous peoples, there are migrants and foreign students at local universities living in the Arkhangelsk region, principally from the Tatar and Azerbaijan diasporas. Responsibility for assisting migrants to learn Russian and to enhance relevant language competencies is shared by a number of entities, including the Office of the Federal Migration Service in the Arkhangelsk region. Tests in Russian language proficiency for foreigners are now conducted at the Northern Arctic Federal University (NArFU). If a foreign citizen is not ready to take the test and needs to improve their proficiency in Russian, relevant courses are available at the linguistic centre Polyglot in the Higher School of Social and Human Sciences and International Communication at NArFU. The Federal Migration Service of Russia in Arkhangelsk also assists with recruitment of students for this course. Information in relation to these courses can be found on the organization's official website and is sent to all diaspora leaders.

Summing up, it is important to note that although the Russian language predominates as both the state language of the Russian Federation and the language of inter-ethnic communication, measures are in place to preserve the languages of national minorities living in the region.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

With increasing numbers of foreign citizens attending Russian Federation universities, research on multicultural and inclusive components of higher education has intensified. Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov serves as a platform for intercultural education. During the period 2010–2015, the number of foreign citizens studying at the University increased more than twentyfold with the Internationalization Program and the further development of international cooperation in research and education. This significant increase in the number of foreign students has become a determining factor in the development and promotion of a multicultural educational process, prompting the development of an additional professional training programme called 'Foundations of Multicultural Education' (NArFU, 2016). A pre-case study showed that although lecturers gave themselves fairly high scores for multicultural competence (i.e. average and upper), 85% of respondents expressed a wish to participate in this continuing professional development programme. Respondents noted the difficulties they faced when working in a multicultural educational environment in relation to teaching, establishing a mutual understanding with foreign students and organizing educational activities. Lecturers were primarily interested in mastering specific methods and techniques for working with a multicultural audience and in becoming familiar with foreign students' culture and the best practices of Russian and foreign universities.

As multicultural education encompasses the whole system, the basic institution is the eleven-year school. In schools, education and training is grounded in mastery of native and Russian languages, foundations of civil identity and world outlook and spiritual and moral development, including acceptance of moral standards and national values. The system of higher education also needs future specialists in foreign languages, intercultural communication skills and the development of tolerance in multicultural settings. Initiatives to improve students' multicultural

competence implemented at NarFU include courses such as 'Postcolonial and Multicultural Research', 'Psychology of Conflict' and 'Ethnopedagogics'. Students at the University can also study at the School of Tutors for foreign students in order to assist foreign first-year students during their adaptation period. Because successful socio-psychological adaptation is the key to successful completion of assigned academic tasks, NarFU pays special attention to adaptation and tutorial support for foreign students. An orientation period helps foreign first-year students to become acquainted with the University and its campuses, including all the services the student will interact with during their studies, and with Arkhangelsk and its history.

As a part of the multicultural educational platform, NarFU and the regional non-government organization Revival of Russian Culture have organized a pilot school for intercultural communication for foreign first-year students as an additional adaptation mechanism. During the period 2010–2015, more than 200 students from Azerbaijan, Angola, Indonesia, China, Norway, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Tadjikistan and Turkmenistan studied at schools offering this programme. Teachers who work on NarFU's programme for first-year foreign students complete a training programme entitled 'Basics for Multicultural Education'.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLING

One of the key elements of education policy in the Arkhangelsk region is the implementation of inclusive education. The main goal of inclusive education is to eliminate any discrimination in the education process, ensuring access to education for all. To this end, a programme entitled 'The Concept of Development of Education for People with Disabilities (including inclusive education) in Arkhangelsk region 2015–2021' was developed and approved. In the Arkhangelsk region, more than 70% of children with disabilities study in secondary schools, and 60 secondary schools (13.5%) are licensed to implement special programmes. The system includes 17 special schools and more than 400 hundred groups and classes in educational institutions for children with hearing, visual, speech, musculoskeletal, psycho-development, mental and multiple impairments, as well as 10 centres for children in need of psychological-pedagogical, medical and social help. Five state educational institutions for pupils with disabilities and three state

vocational schools also serve as inclusive education resource centres (in the cities of Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk, Novodvinsk, Kotlas and Njandoma).

The main focus of 'The Concept of Development of Education for People with Disabilities (including inclusive education) in Arkhangelsk region 2015-2021' is the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education. However, other categories of students in need of an inclusive approach remain outside this framework. In particular, special consideration must be given to the inclusion of indigenous children and adolescents from the Far North who are separated from their families and traditional lifestyle and may experience social and psychological difficulties in adjusting to their new social and educational environment. In our opinion, the issue of inclusive education for indigenous schoolchildren should form part of the concept of development of education in the Arkhangelsk Region. As there are currently no developed programmes for the inclusive education of this category of students, teachers find it difficult to develop appropriate methods and techniques for working with them.

INCLUSION IN SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In the Arkhangelsk region, the secondary vocational education system includes 26 technical schools, 7 colleges and 1 vocational school. After secondary school, young people go on to pursue their various professions and specialties. Arkhangelsk' long-term 'Accessible Environment' programme provides secondary vocational institutions with technological and rehabilitation equipment for students with disabilities. Inclusive education resource centres for people with disabilities at three of these institutions provide psychological and pedagogical support for students with disabilities studying at technical schools and colleges, as well as methodological assistance for teachers working with these students. Resource centres support social adjustment and provide for the schooling of graduates from correctional schools. Special programmes in the region finance free meals, free accommodation and scholarships for students with disabilities at technical schools and colleges.

In the Nenets Autonomous District secondary vocational education system, three colleges provide vocational training in various specialties, including those oriented

to the needs of indigenous peoples from the Far North (e.g. reindeer herder, mechanic reindeer herder, national cuisine cook). There is a special budget for indigenous students, who receive free meals, accommodation and scholarships.

INCLUSION IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Higher education institutions in the region have also implemented inclusive education measures. One Northern Arctic Federal University initiative called 'Providing comfortable and developing space and social-cultural education' forms part of 'The Program for Development of the Federal state autonomous educational institution of the higher professional education "Northern (Arctic) University" for 2010-2020'. To organize education provisions for people with disabilities and to conduct research on inclusive education, NArFU has opened the Regional Resource Centre for Inclusive Education. The work of this innovative multifunctional body includes psychological, pedagogical and methodological supports for inclusive education; training of inclusive education specialists; scientific research in inclusive education; and teacher training and re-training for work with disabled people. The Resource Centre for Inclusive Education is located at the Intellectual Centre (the University's Scientific Library); its innovative equipment enables people with special needs to access information easily in different languages (English, German etc.). Scanning equipment and a sensory information terminal with specialized software enables people with different impairments to access information easily. Support for inclusive education includes the development of recommendations for methodological and technical assistance, counselling for teachers and staff and individual and group sessions at the Resource Centre.

There are also indigenous students at NArFU, with a distance education option for those who do not wish to leave their permanent home that includes online lectures and webinars. Distance students come to the University in Arkhangelsk only to sit their final exams and to receive their diploma. Their research topics commonly address the real issues facing indigenous peoples.

CONCLUSION

The priority for education systems, both in Russia and elsewhere, is to ensure that students can develop the necessary skills and capabilities for self-realization and harmonious coexistence with others in the context of intercultural dialogue. As a leading global state, Russia faces challenges in relation to intercultural engagement, necessitating the creation of inclusive educational environments across all regions. The Arkhangelsk region is a good example of a poly-ethnic-cultural environment based on inclusive practices. Migration does not significantly impact the development of the regional economy, and the inter-ethnic situation in the region is stable, with no inter-ethnic conflicts in recent years. Nevertheless, there is a need to build and maintain a dialogue between the local population and ethnic groups and minorities, including indigenous peoples, in order to avoid possible conflicts caused by increased migration. As noted earlier, the Russian language is dominant, but examples of bilingualism can be found in the Nenets Autonomous District. Legislation provides for use of the Nenets language in the realm of social relations, including childrearing, educational provisions and mass media. Additionally, laws and official records in the Nenets Autonomous District have been translated into the Nenets language. To improve the language situation in the Arkhangelsk region, it is necessary to diversify courses in Russian as a foreign language to meet the needs of different target groups while supporting the national languages of diasporas and ethnic groups.

Multiple historic, geographical and social factors contribute to the considerable tolerance in the region for people of different nationalities. Along with the activities of ethno-cultural associations and support from the regional government, state regional policy can be implemented progressively to avoid escalation of interethnic tensions. However, the region has not yet created an adequate infrastructure to meet the social and educational needs of indigenous people. By offering special adjustment programs and courses, the Centre for Social and Cultural Adjustment can be a potentially important component of such an infrastructure. The issue of inclusive education for indigenous peoples at different levels should be set out in more detail in the 'Concept of Development of Education in Arkhangelsk Region'.

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