

Labour Market Integration of Indigenous Youth in the Republic of Karelia, Russia

Ruslan Garipov

Kazanskij federal'nyj universitet, Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian
Federation

garipov@american.edu

Abstract

This article highlights the main conclusions of a recent study within the World Bank Group project that is based on April-May 2017 fieldwork and looks at the labour market integration of indigenous youth in the Republic of Karelia, northwest of Russia. The main purpose of the study is the better understanding of the social inclusion or exclusion of indigenous youth in the Republic of Karelia by examining their integration into the labour market in the short and long terms.

Keywords

indigenous peoples – youth – social inclusion/exclusion – labour market – integration – Republic of Karelia – Russia

1 Introduction¹

According to Article 69 of the Constitution, the Russian Federation shall guarantee the rights of indigenous minority peoples according to the universally recognised principles and norms of international law and international

¹ I am thankful to the World Bank Group team members who initiated, and helped shape this project, as well as those who participated in the fieldwork collecting the materials: Luis Felipe Duchicela, Stavros George Stavrou, Jennifer Shkabatur, Alexey Tsykarev, and Pavel Stepantsov. I am also grateful to my Woodrow Wilson Center intern Grant Gardner for providing invaluable assistance revising this report. This article was written with the financial

treaties and agreements of the Russian Federation.² At the same time, Russia has not signed and ratified ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989) and has not endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the two most important international documents for indigenous peoples' rights protection.³

Indigenous peoples (IP) are among the most excluded socioeconomic groups in the Russian Federation. IP are highly susceptible to unemployment, face a variety of socio-economic challenges, and find it difficult to preserve their traditional activities, often losing their native language and culture over time.⁴ While IP in Russia have a wide range of formal benefits and rights guaranteed to them, there is a gap between formal indigenous peoples' rights under Russian legislation and their extent in practice.⁵

The IP of Russia are exposed to significant pressure merely by participating in mainstream Russian society. The labour market, public bureaucracy, the political system, consumer forces, and the mass media narrative are all manifestations of these pressures. This hostile atmosphere can force assimilation and cultural erosion, weakening indigenous peoples' unique cultural-national identity and their ability to preserve it. Because of this, indigenous groups often stand to benefit the most from added protection measures.

This article highlights the main conclusions of a recent study which looks at the labour market integration of indigenous youth in the Republic of Karelia, Russia. The main purpose of the study, which relied on fieldwork carried out in the region in April and May 2017, was to ascertain the level of inclusion among indigenous youth in Karelia by examining their labour market integration in both the short and long term.

The Republic of Karelia is located in northwest Russia, and is included in the Russian Federation's northern economic region. Bordering Finland to the west, Leningradskaya Oblast to the south, Murmanskaya and Arkchangel'skaya Oblasts to the east, and the White Sea to the northwest, Karelia covers 180,500 km² (1.06 per cent of the total territory of Russia). The northern border of Karelia coincides with the state border of the Russian Federation with

support of the World Bank, but the opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the view of the World Bank Group.

2 Constitution of the Russian Federation, 1993 (Article 69).

3 R. Garipov, 'Indigenous Peoples' Rights Providing by International Legal Tools', (v) 10:17 *Astra Salvensis* (2017) p. 24.

4 Russian Federation Indigenous People Regional Dialog. World Bank Report (2015) p. 4.

5 Р.Ш. Гарипов, 'Коренные малочисленные народы в России: гарантии прав и свобод' 6 *Журнал российского права* (2012) с. 67 [R. Garipov, 'Russian Indigenous Minority Peoples: Rights and Liberties Guarantees', 6 *Journal of Russian Law* (2012) p. 67].

Finland, which stretches 723 km. According to the Statistical Bureau of Karelia (2007), the Karelian population consists of 690,653 inhabitants. 76 per cent of the population is classified as ‘urban’, of which a significant percentage (about 39 per cent) reside in Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Republic of Karelia. Population density in Karelia is about four persons per km².⁶ Economically, the Republic of Karelia is considered a subsidies-receiving region, whose allotment from Moscow is two times its annual budget. The unemployment rate is 8.4 per cent, and the average salary is RUB 36,305 per month.⁷

The Republic of Karelia is the homeland of two IP – Karelian and Veps – who constitute 7.61 per cent of the total population.⁸ Veps meet the criteria for inclusion in the Russian Federation’s list of minority indigenous peoples, making them eligible for benefits originating from the targeted state protection policy.⁹ Karelians, by contrast, do not meet the criteria of minority indigenous people on the federal level, as their number exceeds 50,000, and therefore, are not covered by Russia’s classification of IP.¹⁰ The regional authorities, however, allocate Karelians equal measures where possible.¹¹ In the Republic of Karelia,

6 Socio-Economic Development through Finno-Ugric Culture in Kalevsky District, The Republic of Karelia: Summary Note & Strategic Framework, World Bank Document (2016).

7 Territorial Body of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Republic of Karelia, <http://krl.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/krl/ru/statistics/employment/>, accessed 5 November 2018.

8 *Ibid.*

9 The definition of IP in the Russian Federation relies on several cumulative requirements, outlined in the Law On Guarantees of the Rights of Numerically-small Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation (1999) is as follows: (a) Living in the historical territories of their ancestors; (b) Preserving their traditional way of life, occupations, and folk art [handicrafts]; (c) Recognizing themselves as a separate ethnicity; and (d) Numbering at most 50,000 people within Russia. In order to be legally recognized as minority IP, an indigenous community has to be formally registered in the ‘Unified Register of Indigenous Minority Peoples of the Russian Federation.’ The Unified Register currently enumerates a list of 47 indigenous minority peoples, 40 of which inhabit territories belonging to Siberia, the Russian north and the Russian Far East.

10 IP that number more than 50,000 persons are not granted special privileges or protections by the Russian Federation, and are treated as a non-indigenous group.

11 Karelians are also called a ‘Titular Nation’, which means an ethnic group after whom the region was named. All peoples in Russia are divided into four groups in the legal literature: Titular Nation (Russians), Titular Nations in Republics (such as Tatars, Chechens, Udmurts, Karelians, etc.), Indigenous Minority Peoples, and National Minorities. See *further*: O. Mironov (ed.), *Human Rights and Peoples’ Rights* (INSR Center Publishing, Saratov, 2006) p. 258.

there are three so-called ‘national municipal districts’: Kalevsky, Prazhynsky, and Olonetsky. These are the territories of traditional and compact residences of the Karelian people. For a ten-year period, from 1994–2004, Veps had semi-autonomy within the borders of the so-called *Vepsskaya natsionalnaya volost*. Now, the territory of traditional residence of the Vepsian people is spread across three Vepsian settlements: Sheltozero, Rybreka, and Shokshinskoe, in the Prionezhsky municipal district of the Republic of Karelia, and goes beyond the Republic’s borders into Leningradskaya and Vologodskaya oblasts.

This study focuses on four different settlements in the Republic of Karelia: Petrozavodsk (regional capital), Olonets (municipal centre), Sheltozero (Vepsian settlement), and Rybreka (Vepsian settlement). Together, these places represent a diversity of various socio-economic conditions, employment opportunities, and percentage of the population classified as IP.

1.1 *Petrozavodsk*

Petrozavodsk is the capital of the Republic of Karelia. Its total population is 277,111 people, of which 9,889 are Karelian (out of 45,570 in the Republic), and 1,971 are Veps (out of 3,423 total). There are three schools that teach the Karelian language, while Vepsian language is taught in only one school. At the university level, the Pedagogical College of Petrozavodsk prepares students to teach the Karelian language, and the philological faculty of the Petrozavodsk State University contains a department for the Karelian and the Vepsian languages. Additionally, the Institute of Language, History and Literature of the Karelian Research Centre offers language, culture, anthropology related studies. Petrozavodsk has both a newspaper in Karelian and one in Vepsian, which are both published by *Periodika*. Within the regional government, the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs coordinates indigenous support. Finally, key Karelian and Vepsian NGOs are based in Petrozavodsk: The Council of Representatives of Karelian People, The Vepsian Cultural Society, The Union of Karelian People, The Centre for Support of IP and Civic Diplomacy *Nuori Karjala*, The Union of Vepsian Youth *Vepsan Vezad*, and others.¹²

1.2 *Olonets*

Olonets is the municipal centre of the Olonetsky national municipal district. Olonets is located 150 km to the south of the Karelian capital Petrozavodsk. It is the only district in the Republic of Karelia where Karelians are a majority, according to the 2010 Russian census. 58 per cent of the city’s population are Karelians (5,827 out of 8,162 total Karelians). The major Karelian

¹² See <<http://www.petrozavodsk-mo.ru/>>, accessed 5 November 2018.

organisation in the district is *Olonetskiye Karely* (Karelians of Olonets). Before the establishment of the Republic of Karelia in 1920, Olonets was a capital of the Olonetskaya province. The Museum of Livvi Karelians, the district library and the ethno-cultural centre are the major organisations that protect cultural self-determination of Karelians. Karelian language is taught in many of the district's schools, at both the primary and secondary level. Women comprise 55.6 per cent of the population, and youth make up 18 per cent. 75 out of 1000 of Olonets' youth possess high education, 320 out of 1000 have secondary level professional education. 2,437 out of 2,936 are economically active among youth. There are 324 people who are unemployed.¹³

1.3 *Sheltozero*

Situated 82 km from the regional capital of Petrozavodsk, Sheltozero is the centre for the *Sheltozerskoe vepsskoye selskoe poselenie* (SheltozeroVepsian Settlement). Out of a population of 1,019 people, 385 are Veps. The major cultural centres are the local Vepsian museum and Vepsian chorus. There are registered Vepsian communities in the settlement. Vepsians are represented in the municipal council. The head of the settlement is also Veps. Sheltozero is eligible to appoint two representatives to the Council of Representatives under the Head of the Republic of Karelia.¹⁴

1.4 *Rybreka*

Rybreka is an old Vepsian settlement 130 km from Petrozavodsk, and the centre for the *Ryboretskoe vepsskoye selskoe poselenie* (Rybreka Vepsian Settlement). The population of the settlement is 427 people.¹⁵

2 Economic Conditions and Employment Market for Indigenous Youth

With regard to average income, employment, career opportunities, and access to education and other public services, the overall economic situation and employment market for indigenous youth in Petrozavodsk, Olonets, Sheltozero and Rybreka do not greatly differ from the conditions the non-indigenous youth in Karelia face. Based on the results of the fieldwork, there are no specific problems of integration that indigenous youth face which non-indigenous

13 See <<http://olon-rayon.ru/>>, accessed 5 November 2018.

14 A. Titov (ed.), *Karelia: Encyclopedia* (Petro Press, Petrozavodsk, 2011) p. 384.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 282.

youth do not also face. Education, experience, skills, and as well as networking, matter more than ethnicity in attainment of both short-term and long-term positions – and professional growth. Because it is difficult to distinguish indigenous from non-indigenous youth in the Republic of Karelia, IP are not under-represented or discriminated against in the labour market, or denied access to financial services and business opportunities because of their identity. There are also no pronounced specific sectors in which indigenous youth are more or less likely to be employed.

Petrozavodsk plays an important role as a main centre of business, employment, and education in the region. Almost half of the Republic's population resides in Petrozavodsk. Indigenous youth come to Petrozavodsk for secondary technical training, college education and employment, both in the public and private sectors. Indigenous young women often marry and stay in Petrozavodsk, a phenomenon that results in significant outmigration of young women from their settlements to Petrozavodsk. Opportunities for employment and business in the city are rather wide: machine industry, carpentry, stone manufacturing industry, construction business, etc.

Being only a small municipal centre, the economic conditions and employment market that Olonets can provide are limited. The dairy industry and a bread-making plant are the main employers in the city. Olonets and the surrounding area is well known for its agriculture complexes and farms. Indigenous young women usually work in the public sector as administrative clerks, teachers, nannies, cooks, etc; indigenous young men are mostly involved in a service sector: car repair, plumbing, electrification, etc.

Youth from small settlements, such as Sheltozero and Rybreka, mostly work in quarries, which are owned by the *Karelkamen* mining company.

2.1 *The Mining Industry is the Main Employer of Young People*

Not only are local indigenous youth involved in mining, but many migrants fill the vacancies in this field. This labour market is specific to young men who work as a shift team, with two weeks of work and two weeks of rest. Based on fieldwork results, the gender proportion among the quarries' employees is: males – 90 per cent and females – ten per cent.¹⁶ Because Petrozavodsk is relatively close, many workers come from there. Many of them are originally from Vepsian settlements and reside at their parents' houses during their work periods. After the shift they return to Petrozavodsk for two weeks where their families live. There are two reasons for such movements: first, lack of housing in the settlements, and second, lack of social infrastructure in these settlements.

16 Interview with Natalia Kertsova, CEO of the *Karelkamen*, April 2017.

Taking into account that most indigenous youth work in the quarries because they make more money compared to other occupations, they can afford such movements, and are able to be more integrated into mainstream city society.

According to the focus group discussions, there is no overt hiring discrimination by origin or ethnicity. Applicants are primarily judged by their education, experience, and skills. Many families have generations of mine workers, where children follow their parents' profession and come to work in the quarries. As working in the quarries is often the only way to make a decent living in the area, many indigenous youth choose to do so. Work in quarries provides a good income but is physically harmful, for this reason some indigenous youth choose other strategies. One of these options is self-employment in tourism.

2.2 *The Development of Ethno-cultural and Ecotourism is a Promising Approach to Strengthen Indigenous Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship*

This approach aims to address the challenges of indigenous youth unemployment and loss of cultural heritage by developing a tourism industry around ethno-cultural activities. Such actions invite tourists to take part in festivals and contests focussing on indigenous peoples' heritage or engage them in traditional subsistence activities (fishing, hunting, craftwork). If successful, this approach achieves several objectives at once: it contributes to the preservation and popularisation of indigenous peoples' intangible cultural heritage and traditional subsistence activities, and also provides IP with employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in the tourism industry, thus boosting the local economy.¹⁷

Even though it is a good strategy to encourage indigenous youth's self-employment opportunities and possible business models, there are some specific challenges to tourism development in the region. First, due to the climate, this is a seasonal venture. Secondly, lack of proper infrastructure and facilities, including roads, transportation and accommodation, are main challenges for this sector. And finally, bad management and lack of statistical data is another problem, and as a consequence, tourist numbers are low.

Business regulations are often rigid, generic and outdated. In many cases, they are not sufficiently tailored to the scope of a given enterprise, particularly a small one. In fact, there are no targeted tourism industry regulations. Stakeholders attested that complying with regulations increases operational

17 Indigenous Peoples in the Russian Federation: Approaches to Strengthen IP Socioeconomic and Cultural Development in the Republic of Karelia, World Bank Document (2017).

costs by about 20 per cent.¹⁸ Therefore, tourism usually constitutes an informal sector of the local economy. People do not register their business officially, as they want to avoid taxes and problems with state regulatory institutions, such as the Sanitation Department and Fire Department. By virtue of these facts, entrepreneurship in the Republic of Karelia is exceedingly low. For example in 2014 10,869 individual entrepreneurs were registered,¹⁹ only 1.6 per cent of the Republic's population.

2.3 *Indigenous Youth Does Not Associate Their Future with Traditional Occupations*

Even though activities such as agriculture, herding, hunting, fishing, gathering, and craftwork are still traditional Karelians and Vepsians occupations, and many still see the land, forest, and water as a main wealth of the remote settlements, where people could get revenues from using these resources properly, there is a decreased interest among young indigenous people to pursue self-employment, entrepreneurship, and traditional forms of work. They are considered to be more risky and unstable types of work, which, even if they are even successful in the first place, will provide a lower level of income over the years. Hunting and fishing is mostly considered by local indigenous youth as a hobby, not as a main source of sustenance.

There are several reasons for this. First is industrialisation of the region. Territories of indigenous, minority peoples in Russia have been industrialising since the middle of the 20th century. The mining industry causes environmental pollution in the area, and many indigenous minority peoples have lost access to adequate resources to maintain their livelihood.²⁰ As was mentioned before, Sheltozero and Rybreka, are in close location to the quarries that cause game and fish depletion.

Another reason is that in Russia forests are vested in the federal Forest Fund, and they are considered as a state property. Indigenous peoples' traditional ownership of their forests is not acknowledged. This increases the danger that forests are taken out of indigenous communities' control and end up in the hands of third parties who rarely display sufficient understanding of indigenous peoples' customs, traditions and values, and do not seek indigenous peoples' free, prior and informed consent. As the southern part of the Republic

18 World Bank Document, *supra* note 6.

19 Republic of Karelia in Numbers 2016, official issue of *Kareliastat* (2016).

20 R. Garipov, 'Extractive Industries and Indigenous Minority Peoples' Rights in Russia', 1 *Nordic Environmental Law Journal* (2014) p. 67.

of Karelia that we focused on is mostly covered by forests and lakes, it is an urgent problem for the region.

Finally, legal bans on some traditional activities have negatively impacted this sector of economy. For example, fieldwork revealed that the ban on using fishing nets during the fishing season, even though it was traditional for Karelians and Veps, made it unattractive for indigenous youth's self-employment strategy. What is left in the wild for open access is berry and mushroom gathering, which people usually sell near highways.

Thus, hunting rights, and access to forests and aquatic resources present a challenge. These areas are regulated by codes which define limitations on the concepts of usufruct and ownership and obligate IP to compete in commercial tenders for hunting and fishing grounds with private businesses. These legislative provisions substantially endanger indigenous peoples' continued access to their sources of subsistence, food, and income.²¹

Farming and cattle breeding are mostly considered by indigenous youth for personal needs. Very few entrepreneurs sell hay and meat as their primary business. The situation seems particularly difficult in outlying settlements, where agricultural production had been halted as a result of the liquidation of the Soviet collective farms model.²² Almost all families in Sheltozero and Rybreka have their own gardens, livestock, and poultry that provide them with food. Usually, children learn skills from their parents of how to deal with livestock and poultry and use them when grown up.

2.4 *Knowledge of the Indigenous Language is Not Converted into Economic Benefits*

Most of the existing programs on indigenous peoples' language support are aimed on its preservation, but not promotion. Some state institutions give preference for employees with fluency in indigenous peoples' language, but this is not mandatory in order to get a job. According to the fieldwork information, there are sufficient numbers of indigenous employees who work in the regional and local authorities. Therefore fluency in one of the indigenous peoples' language formally gives few advantages when working in the public sector, specifically in positions requiring knowledge of the indigenous peoples' language. For example, teachers at schools and kindergartens who teach the Karelian language receive a regional bonus from RUB 1,000 to 3,000 per month.²³ This amount is very low and does not attract young people.

²¹ World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

²² World Bank Document, *supra* note 17.

²³ From USD 18 to 53.

3 Unemployment and Other Social Problems that Indigenous Youth Face

The main socio-economic complexities faced by indigenous youth in Republic of Karelia are of an economic and geographical nature. The Republic of Karelia is a subsidised and sparsely urbanised region. A significant part of indigenous youth still live in small towns and rural settlements. As a result, indigenous youth face the same problems that other youth in remote places of Russia face. Specifically, lack of choice in employment, and very low-income levels.

3.1 *Discrimination*

Due to their typical non-Russian, Asian appearance, IP in Russia are subject to racial stereotyping, and even racist assaults. Some of which have been reported by indigenous students in Saint Petersburg.²⁴ In their traditional regions of residence, too, IP are often subject to racist stereotyping. They are seen as child-like, incapable of real work, entirely addicted to alcohol and overly benefiting from state welfare and support.

According to the fieldwork, the situation with IP in the Republic of Karelia is different. The problems and opportunities of the indigenous youth are not based on their belonging to IP or their identity. Because of the strong assimilation of IP in the region, they are indistinguishable from the dominant Russian population of the region. Indigenous youth have free, full command of the Russian language. Therefore, there are no linguistic or ethnic barriers when entering the labour market or pursuing a career. No respondent mentioned any challenges related to their indigenous identity or language. Furthermore, respondents and experts said that it is impossible to distinguish Karelians or Veps from ordinary Russians based solely on their appearance.

3.2 *Indigenous Youth Unemployment*

Indigenous youth unemployment is connected to the lack of proper education, experience and very small labour market in the places of their residence. It is important to emphasise that this is not specific to indigenous youth but Karelian youth in general. Education as a main criterion for finding employment does not often fit the vacancy requirements. For example, unemployed youth in Olonets, during the focus group discussion, mentioned vacancies in Olonets' police and hospital, but none of them met the minimum requirements in education. Investment in one's legal or medical education are not liable to earn a return, as wages in the police and hospitals are very low. Lack of experience is a

24 IWGIA Report 18: Indigenous Peoples in the Russian Federation, 31 (2014).

common problem for youth as employers usually prefer experienced employees as they do not want to invest money and effort in employee training. In one fieldwork interview, it was mentioned that one company even hires newcomers only if there is an experienced relative working in the company who can train the newcomer. This situation speaks for itself and demonstrates another problem for youth newcomers – profitable connections.

As for the limited labour market, according to the fieldwork outcome in small cities, such as Olonets, there are not many vacancies. Usually all of the business areas are already staffed. In state and municipal institutions, police, hospitals, and schools, people work far beyond the pension age, so there is little change of personnel. Therefore, an employee past retirement age may continue to work while simultaneously receiving his/her pension. As a result, public sector resources are further strained, while the private sector's profit possibilities are significantly reduced.

3.3 *Decline of Traditional Subsistence Activities*

Reduction of indigenous youth engagement in fishing and hunting, as well as folk crafts, has led to considerable rates of unemployment among IP. The precise unemployment rate among IP is difficult to determine due to the lack of disaggregated statistical data on local unemployment in Russia. However, it is commonly estimated that indigenous unemployment is at least 1.5 to 2 times higher than the average in Russia.²⁵ The main reasons are contradictory laws and regulations, as well as a lack of enforcement that can result in the de-facto denial of many of the fundamental rights accorded to IP, such as land rights and access to traditional subsistence activities.²⁶

Based on the focus group discussion with unemployed youth in Olonets, they do not consider traditional occupations as a way to make money. According to them, it is very hard work, and there is less and less game in the forests, and fish in the lakes and rivers. Additionally, these activities mandate investments, such as boats and fishing nets. Traditional handicraft is also considered by indigenous youth as not a main activity for making a living. The main reason for this is the very low consumer potential of local people as marketing outlets in the region.

25 World Bank (2014), 'Russian Federation: Indigenous Peoples of Russia Country Profile, online at: <http://imagebank.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2014/06/27/000350881_20140627161112/Rendered/PDF/891510WPoBox38ogualoflipbookoGBoW EB.pdf>, accessed 5 November 2018.

26 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

3.4 *Access to Housing*

The youth housing problem is highlighted in the Concept of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Karelia, where housing is emphasised as an important element of youth's wellbeing and as a factor in strengthening their potential.²⁷ In all three IP settlements, Olonets, Sheltozero and Rybreka, respondents mentioned problems with housing. Young families cannot afford to buy land and build a house. The purchase of land itself is mostly problematic for legal rather than financial reasons. This is due to the fact that most of the land fund is registered as a 'zone for traditional nature use', or belongs to the mining companies, making the acquisition of plots difficult.

To address these problems, experts note the need to create qualitative urban development plans for settlements, and to approve them at the regional level. There are also no hotels or motels where visitors can stay. People usually do not offer their houses for rent, although it could be a good business. A significant portion of young males rent apartments in Petrozavodsk (where their families live), and commute to the Vepsian settlements for work. The shift schedule allows them to work for two weeks in the mines and spend the other two weeks with their families.

3.5 *Access to Healthcare*

There are problems with healthcare access in remote settlements. This was highlighted during an Expert Seminar in Petrozavodsk in May 2016.²⁸ Structures and medical facilities are old and outdated; for example, the head doctor of the Prionejskiy district central hospital mentioned that the maternity obstetric building was built in 1920.²⁹

Access to healthcare has three dimensions: physical accessibility, financial affordability, and acceptability.³⁰ The requirement that services be physically accessible is fulfilled when these are available, of good quality, and are located close to the people. Veps in Sheltozero and Rybreka have problems with accessibility because, in order to get good health services, they have to go to Petrozavodsk.

Work in quarries is linked to huge damage to human health, as people breathe in a lot of dust and work with drilling equipment. It is very harmful,

27 See <<http://www.gov.karelia.ru/Leader/Document/Concept2017/4.3.html>>, accessed 5 November 2018.

28 Expert Seminar 'Finno-Ugrian People and Sustainable Development. Indigenous People's Health', Petrozavodsk (26–27 May 2016).

29 Isabella Kraskova's Report, *ibid*.

30 91 *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* (2013) pp. 546–546A.

industrial work, and by the age of 45, those who work at the mining usually have ruined their health. Respiratory diseases are the highest in the region compared other diseases.³¹ Many Veps suffer from silicosis as a result of working in quarries.³² A significant portion of female respondents said that they did not want their husbands or children to work in the mines. This contributes, among other things, to the fact that mothers prefer that their children seek a lower-paid job in Petrozavodsk rather than working in the quarries.

3.6 *Alcohol Addiction*

Alcoholism is a common problem for IP around the world, and indigenous youth also suffer from it, as was stated last year by the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of IP.³³ As the World Bank report states: “from the 1970s, hidden unemployment, alcoholism, broken families and the undermining of traditional culture all continued to increase among Russian IP”.³⁴ It is well-known that IP become addicted to alcohol much more easily than other ethnic groups in Russia,³⁵ and the Republic of Karelia is no exception.³⁶ As one expert said, 90 per cent of those who collect and sell berries, do so in order to buy alcohol.³⁷ Often those youth who come back from Petrozavodsk to their settlements are surrounded by marginalised youth and become subject to their influence. Later, they become part of this marginalised society. This increase is, among other things, attributed to an uncontrolled flow of alcohol into the regions inhabited by IP.³⁸ Meanwhile, it is important to emphasise that alcoholism is conditioned among indigenous youth not because of their indigenous identity, but is determined by social vulnerability, low income and unemployment in rural area of Russia.

Traditional way of living such as reindeer husbandry, hunting and fishing are impossible to mix with alcohol consumption, as people have to be in good shape and with a cool head. This is why declines in traditional occupations among indigenous youth correlates with higher levels of alcohol consumption.

31 Kareliastat, *supra* note 19.

32 Expert Seminar, *supra* note 28.

33 Right to health and indigenous peoples with a focus on children and youth. Study by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (10 August 2016) A/HRC/33/57

34 World Bank, *supra* note 25.

35 N. Khayrullina, ‘Alcoholism Problems among Northern Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples’, 1 *Modern Problems of Science and Education* (2015).

36 Expert Seminar, *supra* note 28.

37 Interview with Natalia Antonova, Karelian activist and indigenous peoples’, NGOs leader, April 2017.

38 IWGIA, *supra* note 24, p. 33.

Additionally, hunting and fishing are a way to relax, whereas many indigenous youth and incomers do this with alcohol consumption in Russia.

This problem could be one of the reasons why local businesses in the settlements often belong to newcomers from Moscow, other regions of Russia (Dagestanians in Olonets), as well as from former Soviet Republics (Armenians in Sheltozero).

4 Existing Support Programs Aimed to Indigenous Youth Needs

There is a deficiency in specific local and regional programs and protection measures to support indigenous employment and self-employment. Fieldwork respondents and experts also indicated the absence of special support programs from local authorities and private sector companies to develop the labour market for indigenous youth, or support other economic needs of indigenous youth in the region. Special benefits or tax exemptions for indigenous entrepreneurs and indigenous employees are also lacking.

Based on interviews with the authorities, the Ministries of Agriculture, and Labour and Welfare, have support programs for small businesses for those in agriculture. These support programs are not aimed specifically at IP, but cover any applicants from the Republic of Karelia. There are also special support programs aimed at those under 35 years old, but again, are not aimed specifically at indigenous youth. Fieldwork experts' interviews and focus group discussions revealed that there is a lack of information among people about these existing support programs. Also, respondents complained about bureaucratic problems to get this support.

Often complex and demanding, the regulatory framework needed for operating a business tends to reduce the number of applicants. "The ultimate reasons for low entrepreneurship in Russia lie in an unfriendly regulatory environment, with rules that are often arbitrarily enforced, and markets dominated by incumbents".³⁹ Among the problems in attaining business start-up support are big burdens on financial and legal accountability, complexity in taxation, lack of knowledge and information about regulations, and high interest rate of bank loans. Finally, there are very low levels of confidence in authorities among the Russian population. All these factors make any business initiative unprofitable and deter future entrepreneurs. They are not specific and peculiar to IP, but endemic to all. There is also no connection to particular types of business, gender dimension or age.

39 World Bank, Russia Economic Report # 32, September (2014) p. 41.

An important document was recently adopted by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples aimed at tackling these problems. It says that the state's policies and regulation can contribute to successful business development by creating an enabling environment for indigenous enterprise. The type of support provided by states for indigenous peoples' economic development can be grouped into the following categories:

1. legislative and regulatory reform, including land acquisition, tax law, special economic zones and exceptions to trade agreements;
2. grants, low cost loans and subsidies;
3. support to increase indigenous peoples' access to markets, such as procurement policies and minority supplier development councils, which encourage the use of indigenous businesses;
4. business mentoring and development assistance.⁴⁰

4.1 *Federal Funding*

Veps, being officially registered as indigenous minorities, have some additional programs to support their needs. The main support for Veps comes from federal budget, as it is a federal support program. But at the same time, the amount given from the federal budget becomes less and less. In 2017, RUB 127 million⁴¹ was allocated to all Russian IP.⁴² In other words, approximately RUB 500 per indigenous person annually.⁴³ Many experts are very sceptical of this 'support', deeming it inadequate. The federal grant to support indigenous minority people is distributed between three Vepsian settlements, and its main goal is the development of the local social infrastructure. Based on fieldwork data, the subsidy of the Vepsian settlements allowed for the renovation of the district hospital, the expansion of the school building, and the purchase of an ambulance that could serve all three Vepsian settlements.

4.2 *Support to Indigenous Youth is Mostly Aimed at Culture and Language*

The primary regulatory priority with respect to IP in Karelia includes government assistance for the preservation of indigenous peoples' cultural heritage (indigenous languages, cultures, primordial inhabitants and a traditional way

40 EMRIP Study on Practices and challenges, including discrimination, in business and in access to financial services by indigenous peoples (2017).

41 USD 2,230,000.

42 See <<https://www.pnp.ru/politics/gilmutdinov-128-mln-rublej-budet-vydeleno-na-podderzhku-korennykh-malochislennykh-narodov.html>>, accessed 5 November 2018.

43 USD 9.

of life). Karelia has a solid legal framework in support of indigenous languages, and several programs and incentives are designed to encourage the learning and transmission of native languages. Remarkable support is also provided to publications in native languages, notably through the financing of the *Periodika* publishing house.

Other programs are generally designed to preserve targeted groups' culture through the provision of subsidies. The Karelian government also supports the preservation of native culture and languages through a number of ethno-cultural centres. Based on the fieldwork's outcome, most state grants are allocated to NGOs and individuals for organising concerts, cultural events, festivals, etc. State institutions, regional media, public schools, and kindergartens have a small wage supplement for their employees who are fluent in any indigenous language. The same supplement is allocated to students who learn an indigenous language at college.

However, existing programs are mostly targeted at preservation, rather than promotion, of native languages and culture. Preservation of national languages, traditional arts and cultures could be more focused on promotion and sustainability. Programs should include monitoring and independent review to ensure their effective implementation. It is also important to engage indigenous peoples' representatives in negotiations concerning industrial development of their traditional territories.⁴⁴

Indigenous peoples' NGO support and activities also concentrate mostly on languages, theatre, education, cultural events. The professional specialisation of the leaders and participants determines the agenda of NGOs that protect the rights of IP largely with a focus on the restoration, dissemination, and propagation the indigenous language and cultural traditions. Social, economic and legal agenda are almost absent.

According to experts, there are no competent lawyers and economists among the representatives of the indigenous peoples' NGOs, who can raise these issues. While some Karelians and Veps obtain university degrees in law and economics, they generally do not acquire a pronounced national identity, unlike the graduates of the Finno-Ugrian department. As a consequence, the low-paid, proactive work of NGOs in defending the interests of IP is unattractive to them.

Many respondents do not know about these organisations. Others see their activities as inefficient because they do not pay attention to social problems and the lack of social facilities in remote settlements. NGOs do not provide support to indigenous youth in their employment, either in the private or public

44 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

sector. According to respondents, they are not helpful in starting businesses, or identifying opportunities for retraining. Fieldwork respondents expressed their need for support to develop community centres, as well as entertainment and sport facilities, such as clubs, cafes, and stadiums. This is very critical for indigenous youth in remote settlements, as the social infrastructure is not developed there.

At the same time, it was mentioned that international attention to indigenous peoples' issues, which could be attributed to indigenous peoples' NGOs and activists, plays an important role in supporting indigenous peoples' interests at local level. International forums and conferences could be used by indigenous youth to gain their interest in the socio-economic sector. For example, the international community's pressure on the Russian authorities helped secure the reactivation of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the north, Siberia and the Far East, after its suspension by Russia's Ministry of Justice in November 2012.⁴⁵

4.3 *Essential Measures Must Be Undertaken*

The right to an adequate standard of living is a fundamental human right, as set out in Art. 11 of the ICESCR.⁴⁶ Human rights are indivisible and interdependent. Economic, social and cultural rights are no less fundamental and inalienable than civil and political rights. The former include e.g. the right to food and an adequate standard of living, to subsistence, culture and language.⁴⁷ When people are denied access to adequate food, enjoying the right to freedom of expression may often become impossible. At the same time, the exercise of civil rights such as the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs may often be essential to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights are protected and fulfilled.

Given that social exclusion often stems from a lack of equal opportunities and absence of power authorisation of IP, any programs aimed at strengthening indigenous decision-making institutions and increasing their participation in all spheres of social, economic and political life will also necessarily need to form an integrated part of the national campaign to combat the exclusion. The national sensitisation campaign will in turn need to ensure that

45 According to the Ministry, the indigenous minority peoples' organization was closed because of alleged lack of correspondence between the association's statutes and federal law.

46 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3 (ICESCR).

47 IWGIA, *supra* note 24, p. 30.

dominant Russian society which currently control decision-making processes understands, accepts and welcomes the rights of IP to participate in, and have control over, decision-making processes.

Participation in decisions that affect their livelihoods is part of indigenous peoples' core developmental priorities, based on the views of indigenous peoples' representatives and stakeholders that were interviewed as part of the World Bank's Russia's Indigenous People Profile preparation.⁴⁸ World Bank's OP 4.10 provides that the Bank may offer financial assistance to support initiatives that protect IP. The World Bank may support the country in its development planning to improve the inclusion of IP in the development process by incorporating their perspectives in the design of development programs and poverty reduction strategies, and providing them with opportunities to benefit more fully from development programs through policy and legal reforms, capacity-building, and free, prior, and informed consultation and participation.⁴⁹

It is important to enable IP in the Republic of Karelia with the opportunities to affect their problems, and participate in the creation and enforcement of the programs aimed at their needs. The Law on Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Minority Peoples of the Russian Federation also requires the participation of IP in law-making. The law provides for the inclusion of IP, via their authorised representatives, in the "development and assessment of projects of federal laws and other normative legal acts of the Russian Federation" (§5.1.1). It also requires the engagement of IP in decisions regarding "limitations on non-traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples' organizations in federally owned places of traditional residence and economic activities of IP" (§5.1.5).⁵⁰

5 Indigenous Youth Access to Education

5.1 *Less Advantageous in Access to Education*

In remote settlements, the quality of education received in the schools is typically inferior to the national average. This is because of a shortage in qualified staff, school equipment, and library resources. This, in turn, limits indigenous youth opportunities in mainstream society when they finish school and come to Petrozavodsk for college education. indigenous youth, freshly arrived from

48 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

49 World Bank's Operational Directive (4 October 2005).

50 Russian Federal Law of 30 April 1999 No 82-FZ 'On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Minority Peoples of the Russian Federation' (1999).

remote settlements, find it difficult to compete with the city's youth. This explains why Finno-Ugrian philological studies at the Petrozavodsk State University are more popular among indigenous youth. Because of this, indigenous youth also often pick up specialised secondary education in Petrozavodsk instead of higher education at university. Another reason for the abandonment of higher education among indigenous youth is family traditions. According to respondents' replies during the fieldwork, there is often a succession of education and professions from parents to children.

The main channel for the mobility of young people from indigenous settlements to Petrozavodsk is education. After school, youth usually go to Petrozavodsk to get a college education or secondary technical training. This is often when young men go to study mining in Petrozavodsk, because it increases their chances in the quarry labour market. Indigenous young men usually return back to their home settlements to work, staying because they can earn good money in the quarry, they bond with their relatives there, and they feel strong connection to their land. Young indigenous women very often remain in Petrozavodsk and get married there.

Vepsian young men have no trouble in finding employment at the mine back home. A typical labour trajectory is: school, followed by several years of training at a technical school in Petrozavodsk (often accompanied by practice or part-time mining work), leading to full-time employment at the mine. *Karelkamen* provides young people with the opportunity to improve their qualifications and receive additional education for three to four years after the commencement of their employment. This expands qualifications of young professionals, contributing to long-term income growth.

There are no colleges or specialised secondary schools in the remote settlements, which is why indigenous youth go to Petrozavodsk. Now there is no difference in access to education at colleges and universities in Petrozavodsk between indigenous youth and the mainstream society, but special quotas for indigenous youth existed previously. Education is associated with higher income and inclusion into mainstream society, and for this reason, most indigenous youth aspire to go to Petrozavodsk.

5.2 *Education at the Finno-Ugrian Department Shaped the National Identity of the IP*

The graduates of the Finno-Ugrian department of Petrozavodsk State University usually know indigenous peoples' language, its national traditions, and identify themselves with IP. At the same time, career prospects for graduates remain rather narrow: the philological education provides an opportunity to work in public sector organisations, education, specialised media, as well as in

the sphere of culture. The level of wages in these areas, however, is generally lower than in other sectors of employment. Additionally, experts note that the labour market in these areas is oversaturated, which will, over the course of the next three to five years, lead to serious problems with the employment of graduates of the university specialising in these fields. Other youth are applying to these college departments without specialising on national languages and culture. For these graduates, chances of employment and career opportunities, in general, are higher than those who graduated with a specialisation in philology. However, in this case, a connection with the national culture and ethnic community is not acquired.

6 Role of Indigenous Youth Location and Migration Processes

There is a centralisation of power, money, and resources in big cities. Petrozavodsk is not an exception, and many indigenous youth are moving there for work and education opportunities. As a result, Petrozavodsk is often regarded as a 'transit point', one of the points on a person's career path. Non-integrated youth are more likely to consider moving to another region (mainly St. Petersburg) with greater career development opportunities and higher wages. Those indigenous youth who were not successful in the city in finding employment come back to their settlements. Indigenous activists and intelligentsia mostly reside in regional capital, and the working class in municipal centres and remote settlements where the mining and logging industries are. Thus indigenous youth choose their place of residency based on economic opportunities and employment.

What is significant is that many indigenous youth who come back from Petrozavodsk to their remote settlements usually faced in the city, not economic burden, but social discomfort. Rural youth feel more comfortable in their own small societies rather than in the distant and individualism-based urban environment. This is the difference between rural youth and mainstream youth. Those who are able to accept the new conditions of urban life quickly integrate and subsequently lose their native identity.

According to expert opinion, there is an imbalance between rural and urban areas in access to resources and services. Namely, access to education, medicine, and other services is limited in remote places. This affects indigenous youth by lowering their standard of living, and it kills their motivation for self-growth. This leads to an association of urban areas with better living standards. However, remote settlements are promising places for the development

of culture and language-based tourism clusters, and ethno-cultural activity is a strong aspect of this type of settlement.

6.1 *High Level of Mobility and Urbanisation*

Youth are currently at the highest risk of emigrating, feeling thwarted by an environment that does not meet their expectations. The cultural services provided are out of sync with the millennial generation's aspirations.⁵¹ According to the fieldwork statistics, 45 per cent of youth in Republic of Karelia want to move to a metropolis (Moscow, St. Petersburg) or abroad to study and work. People move to Petrozavodsk also because the social life is more developed there, with shopping centres, movie theatres, etc. Over two-thirds of Veps are urbanised and live in cities.⁵² Even as far back as 1989, More than 60 per cent of Karelians lived in towns. This high urbanisation rate has been driven by the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, which led younger generations to move to towns.⁵³ Nowadays, many people might be officially registered in the settlements, but in reality live in Petrozavodsk.

At the same time, few people felt a need to maintain a connection to their home settlements, mostly because the houses of their parents still stand there. Self-employed youth primarily come to Petrozavodsk from small settlements, and generally tend to feel a connection with the local community. The basis for this connection, however, is not national identity but a sense of community. Though many would like to return to their settlements, they are cognisant of the fewer opportunities for work and entrepreneurship there, making this option unattractive for the moment. The foundations of this sense of community are close, trust-based social ties: a close acquaintance with people who live or lived in the townships, and this offers the opportunity to get help if necessary, and to offer assistance.

Generally, youth in Karelia are not tied to their original land, being ready at any time to abandon their way of living and move to other places in search of better living standards. Based on respondents' opinions, indigenous youth usually have a consumer's attitude to the land instead of being keepers of their land. Youth do not consider themselves owners of their land. It is clear that more and more Karelians relocate to urban areas in search of employment and

51 World Bank Document, *supra* note 6.

52 M. Newcity, 'Protection of the Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions of Russia's "Numerically-Small" Indigenous Peoples: What Has been Done, What Remains to Be Done', 15 *Tex. Wesleyan L. Rev.* (2009) p. 376.

53 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

better educational opportunities for their children, and do not rely on fishing and hunting for subsistence. Rural areas are depopulating and schools are closing. Many lands are in long-term rent to commercial enterprises.⁵⁴ That is why the indigenous population of the Republic of Karelia has been steadily declining since the turn of the century mainly due to ethnic assimilation and migration to other regions of Russia or Finland.⁵⁵

6.2 *Migration Abroad*

Between 1995 and the 2000s the biggest wave of migrants came to Finland. A lot of Baltic-Finnish Philology and Culture Department of Petrozavodsk State University graduates left Karelia and moved to Finland. Many indigenous youth, especially those who fluent in Karelian or Vepsian, migrated to Finland, as their language is very close to Finnish. Many indigenous young women married Finnish males and move to Finland. An alternative strategy which many women choose is to marry non-indigenous men, who are more successful in mainstream society. There are special programs where children from mixed marriages can move from Karelia to Finland.

7 **Indigenous Youth Identity and Integration Processes**

Self-identification as a Russian is very common among indigenous youth,⁵⁶ an identity based on an individual's feelings rather than on facts. The result of such self-identification is the underrepresentation of IP in the population census. It is freedom of choice and absolutely harmless, but it is different when some preferences are given and based on belonging to any ethnic group.⁵⁷ In this situation attention should be given not only to subjective perception, but to external evidence as well (language, culture, mentality, way of living, etc.).

The Republic of Karelia was a 'melting pot' for a long time, where Karelians, Veps, Finns, and Russians mixed with each other, and borders between them were almost wiped out. Today indigenous youth mostly aim to integrate into mainstream Russian society. Very seldom do they put their identity, culture, and language first, as a priority to maintain and uphold. Additionally Karelians and Veps belong to Finno-Ugrian people, and there are no strong differences

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*

56 'Indigenous People's Youth World', 13 Appendix to the Magazine "*Indigenous People's World – Alive Arctic*" (2003) p. 44.

57 V. Kryazhkov (ed.), *Indigenous Minority Peoples of the North in Russian Law* (NORMA, Moscow, 2010) p. 288.

to Russians (Slavic people) in their appearance. Another important factor is that Olonets, Sheltozero and Rybreka are close to Petrozavodsk, which looks attractive to indigenous youth and serves as a nearby, ready opportunity for integration.

According to experts' interviews and focus groups discussions, indigenous young people do not have any specific problems in the local labour market based on their different identity, language, or culture. Based on focus group discussions, nobody has ever been refused employment or promotion because of their distinct identity or language. Meanwhile many indigenous youth do not see any benefits in terms of language or culture which they can gain from their identity. It does not affect their employment or improvement of their career growth opportunities.

Experts believe that from 15 to 20 per cent of ethnic Karelians and Veps consider and identify themselves as Russians. Fieldwork results showed the same results. In focus groups, young people overwhelmingly said that they were Russian, despite the fact that their fathers and mothers were Karelians or Veps. This is because they do not know the language, which they consider to be the primary grounds for identifying as IP.

7.1 *Language*

People usually identify themselves according to the language in which they are fluent. As many indigenous youth, including from mixed marriages, are fluent only in Russian, they identify themselves as Russians. As of now, several generations of IP do not speak and do not know their native language. These languages can no longer be acquired from the family. They can only to be studied specifically in specialised schools or at the university.

Only 51.5 per cent of Karelians considered Karelian to be their native language in 1989. In towns, the native language is typically lost even sooner than in rural places. The number of Karelians speakers steadily decreased during the Soviet era, mainly because the language was not taught in schools.⁵⁸ Usually people of 50–60 years old are not fluent in Karelian. Older generations are fluent because of the impact of the Finnish occupation during World War II.⁵⁹ Indigenous youth generally do not know the language, and do not see any

58 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

59 Eastern Karelia was occupied by the Finnish army from 1941 to 1944 with the goal of future annexation into Finland. The military occupation was justified by pointing to the kinship of nations in Eastern Karelia with Finland and by military security factors. L. Hannikainen, R. Hanski and A. Rosas (eds.), *Implementing Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts: The Case of Finland* (Springer, Dordrecht, 1992) pp. 87–88.

benefits in using it. All education at colleges and universities is conducted only in Russian.

Only 37.5 per cent of Veps consider the Veps language as their native tongue, and young Veps generally do not know the language.⁶⁰ Although the Vepsian language is a mandatory subject in the schools in Sheltozero and Rybreka, this is not enough for the language's survival. In addition, the study of Karelian and Vepsian languages in schools is perceived by some parents as an additional burden that does not give clear, future advantages to the child. They justify it with the observation that, as the language cannot be used for professional purposes, this knowledge does not increase the career prospects of the child. Furthermore, schools do not even provide official foreign language certificates for the Vepsian, Karelian or even the related Finnish language, which means students cannot obtain a certificate that would help with their university applications.

Before it was closed a couple of years ago, the Baltic-Finnish Philology and Culture Department of Petrozavodsk State University was a centre for local indigenous initiatives and development. It was a main point of origin for the local indigenous intelligentsia. These were people who were professionally engaged in the language and culture of IP. At the moment, the overwhelming majority of activists and representatives of NGOs working on indigenous issues are graduates of this department. Nowadays, different NGOs play an important role replacing this department. Indigenous peoples' NGOs try to popularise the culture and language of IP, educate them and attract people's interest.

This implies that languages that are still spoken by older generations will effectively be lost, and not transmitted to younger generation. This assessment is shared by Russian academics,⁶¹ who state that language preservation is not a priority for federal and regional authorities, who may even regard indigenous languages as a threat to the cultural unity of the Russian state.⁶² Scholars also

60 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

61 Z. Ostapova, *Implementation of the Project: "Finno-Ugric Languages and Cultures in Pre-school Education" and Its Prospects* (2016), online at: <http://lahti2016.fucongress.org/sites/lahti2016.fucongress.org/files/1.1.%20Ostapovan_eng_o.pdf>, accessed 5 November 2018.

62 Tatiana Degai, paper presented at the expert group meeting on the theme "Indigenous languages: preservation and revitalization (Articles 13, 14 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)," 19–21 January 2016, online at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/egm/Paper_Degai2.pdf>, accessed 5 November 2018.

note that available language classes are typically brief, and insufficient to obtain a working knowledge of the language.⁶³

The process of wiping out indigenous languages started during the Soviet Union, as authorities were nervous about proximity and impact of Finland. During the 1950s and 1960s, people were forced to leave their small villages and resettle in cities as a result of liquidation of such small villages. Indigenous populations were also assimilated through mixed marriages in these cities. As a result of these Soviet-era policies, the Republic of Karelia witnessed almost complete assimilation of its IP. There was a large-scale political drive to focus on Russian-language education in schools. Teachers strongly encouraged parents to speak Russian at home, so that their children could do better in basic school subjects. Several decades ago, it was considered shameful for people to identify themselves as Veps or Karelians, which is why many of IP identified themselves as Russians. Now that the situation has changed, more IP are proud to identify themselves as Veps or Karelians. There is also some pride in belonging to the Finno-Ugrian world and increased feelings of cultural unity.⁶⁴

Many experts and fieldwork respondents expressed their opinion that, through learning indigenous languages, youth can become more tied to and responsible for their territories. Today, youth fluent in Karelian or Vepsian mostly work in schools, kindergartens, and regional media including publishing houses. At the same time, the brain drain impacted the interpreters' market. For example, there are not enough qualified translators of Finnish language in Karelia because many of them migrated to Finland.

The Russian Constitution gives the right to Republics to apply for a second official language.⁶⁵ And almost all of the Republics in Russian Federation⁶⁶ have a second official language alongside Russian. But the Republic of Karelia is an exception. Karelian language does not have such a status. If Karelian language was made an official language of the Republic, it would help its revival. It would become a mandatory subject in all public schools, not only in the Karelian or Veps settlements. Legislation, trials, mass media, and city signs would be in Karelian.

63 *Ibid.*

64 The Finno-Ugrian movement is very active in Karelia, with more than 20 public organizations, which are in open dialog with the Karelian government. These organizations join efforts with bodies of the government, local self-government and representatives of local communities in activities focused on popularization of the native language and cultural heritage of indigenous and minority people. The Finno-Ugrian movement of Karelia has very close ties with Finno-Ugrian organizations across Russia and abroad.

65 Art. 68(2) of the Russian Constitution, 1993.

66 There are 22 Republics among 85 Russian constituent entities.

7.2 *Assimilation*

In the nineteenth century, Russia used limited and cautious intervention into the northern system of traditional social bonds, culture and economy. Russia stimulated the creation of northern social orders and value systems, and IP were granted the right to decide for themselves how to integrate into the dominant Russian society.⁶⁷ This policy was changed after the October Revolution. In the 1930s, the state stimulated the migration of Russian population into Karelia and gave preference to those migrants.⁶⁸ It must be pointed out that the Soviet Union supported the politics of assimilation and Russification of all non-Russian populations, including the indigenous minority peoples of the north.⁶⁹ These measures helped to sustain high level of migration to Karelia from other regions. From 1920 to 1939, the population of Karelia increased 2.3 times and grew to 470,000 people.⁷⁰ Most of these migrants worked in the logging industry and resided in rural areas. Many new settlements appeared during this time and the population increased to 651,000 people by 1959.⁷¹

The indigenous population of the Republic of Karelia has been steadily declining since the turn of the century, and this is mainly due to ethnic assimilation, and outward migration to other regions of Russia or Finland. Other reasons for this include inter-ethnic marriages and Soviet-era governmental policies. For instance, Veps villages were divided between different administrative and territorial units, and this tended to facilitate social disintegration and loss of cultural identity. Some indigenous (particularly Veps) villages were also demolished during the 1970s, and their residents subsequently moved to urban centres. An indigenous identity was considered inferior during this time and some IP preferred to present themselves as Russians for official purposes. There are also cases in which the government refused to register an indigenous identity.⁷²

Other factors that play an important role in indigenous youth losing their identity and facilitating their integration into mainstream Russian society are:

67 R. Garipov, 'Resource Extraction from Territories of Indigenous Minority Peoples in the Russian North: International Legal and Domestic Regulation', 1 *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* (2013) pp. 4–5.

68 V. Pivoev, V. Birin, L. Shvets and N. Ijikova (eds.), *Social and Cultural Portrait of the Republic of Karelia: Based on the Results of Social Study* (Direct-Media, Moscow, 2013) p. 18.

69 D. Gorenburg, 'Soviet Nationalities Policy and Assimilation', in D. Arel and B. Ruble (eds.), *Rebounding Identities. The Politics of Identity in Russia and Ukraine* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press with John Hopkins University Press, Washington, DC, 2006) p. 273.

70 Pivoev, *supra* note 68, p. 19.

71 *Ibid.*

72 See <<http://knk.karelia.ru/demografija/>>, accessed 5 November 2018.

1. *Common history and religion.* Slavic tribes started to interact with the indigenous population many centuries ago. Karelians' were baptised in the thirteenth century strengthening their connection with Russians.⁷³ Now, the majority of Karelians and Veps have orthodoxy in common with Russians.
2. *Geographical factor.* Areas of indigenous peoples' residence in the southern part of Karelia are not isolated, and are in close proximity to Petrozavodsk. Being in the European part of Russia, sharing a border with Finland and just a few hours from the second largest city in Russia, St. Petersburg, possibilities for assimilation are that much greater. IP of the southern part of Karelia do not live in severe climate conditions, like other IP of Russia and there are no mountains to seclude themselves in and maintain an isolated life.
3. *Mixed marriages.* In the Republic of Karelia, there is one of the highest rates of mixed marriages in Russia. In 1998, 76 per cent of parturient Karelians had a husband of another ethnicity, and 87 per cent of parturient Veps had a husband of another ethnicity.⁷⁴ In addition, high levels of labour migrants make the chances of interethnic marriages even more likely.
4. *IP are outnumbered by Russians.* While there are 507,700 Russians, there are only 45.6 thousands of Karelians, and 3,400 Veps in the Republic of Karelia.⁷⁵ Compared to the all-Russia census of 2002, in 2010, the number of Karelians declined by 31 per cent, the number of Finns by 40 per cent, and the number of Veps by 30 per cent.⁷⁶ This shows that the indigenous population is still dwarfed by the number of Russians in the region, and this is what ultimately enables the process of assimilation.

8 Conclusions

Russia is not a party to the main international acts on indigenous peoples' rights and its IP are among the most excluded socioeconomic groups of population in the country. There is currently no efficient system of legal support and protection for indigenous peoples' interests in Russia and bringing the domestic legislation into compliance with international norms is considered

73 Pivoev, *supra* note 68, p. 9.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

75 Kareliastat, *supra* note 19.

76 World Bank Report, *supra* note 4.

as an essential effort today.⁷⁷ Social inclusion and especially labour market integration of indigenous youth are very urgent and important in Russia as IP frequently face hostile atmosphere, assimilation and cultural erosion, which often lead to the loss of their unique cultural-national identity and ability to preserve it for the future generations.

Based on the study, the general economic situation and employment market for indigenous youth is not greatly different from the environments non-indigenous youth in Karelia face. And there are no particular issues of social integration that indigenous youth face which non-indigenous youth do not also face. There are the same difficulties that other youth in remote places of Russia face: unemployment, low income and alcoholism. Many of them work in quarries because they can make more money compared to other occupations. Ethno-cultural and ecotourism are not well developed in the region because of absence of good infrastructure and facilities, and as a result, tourism constitutes an informal sector of the local economy. Moreover, indigenous youth do not associate traditional occupations with profitable economic activity and consider them as more risky and unstable types of employment. Decline in traditional occupations among indigenous youth also correlates with higher levels of alcohol consumption.

Because of their cultural differences and distinct appearance IP often become targets for racial jokes and discrimination across the country, including traditional regions of their residence. The Republic of Karelia is different, where IP are mostly identical to the dominant Russian population and their unemployment is a part of the overall problem with Karelian youth linked to the insufficient education, experience and limited labour market, both in public and private sectors in the places of their residence. There is also a shortage of local and regional programs and protection measures to support youth employment and self-employment in the Republic of Karelia. As for indigenous youth support it is primarily intended to maintain culture and language rather than social, economic and legal programs, and largely designed for preservation, rather than promotion.

Many indigenous youth in Karelia are ready to abandon their way of living and move to other places in search of better living standards. Those who are fluent in Karelian or Vepsian often migrate to Finland, and many indigenous women marry non-indigenous men. They usually face social discomfort

77 P.Ш. Гарипов, 'Законодательство РФ о защите прав коренных малочисленных народов России и его соответствие международным стандартам' 3 *Государство и право* (2011) с. 105 [R. Garipov, 'Russian Legislation on Indigenous Minorities Rights Protection and its Accordance to International Law', 3 *State and Law Journal* (2011) p. 105].

moving from remote settlements to the cities, as rural youth feel less comfortable in the individualism-based urban environments. As a result, rural areas are depopulating and more indigenous youth are integrating into mainstream Russian society.

Both governmental actions of forced assimilation of IP into dominant society and their voluntary cultural integration played an important role in the Republic of Karelia's 'melting pot'. The Republic of Karelia witnessed an almost complete assimilation of its IP, many of whom identified themselves as Russians as it was shameful for people to identify themselves as Veps or Karelians. This is mostly because they do not know the language, which they consider to be the primary grounds for identifying as IP. Today this situation has been changing, and IP become proud to identify themselves more as Veps or Karelians, belong to Finno-Ugrian world with increased feelings of cultural unity.

It is crucial to pay attention not only to the economic and legal issues, but also to the anthropological and cultural problems within the study of what occurs when different cultures encounter one another, and of the history of migration and population in the region, which can give rise to disputes about primacy and ownership of the land and resources. It is important to understand the confrontation between IP and modern societies, including political, social, economic, and cultural aspects to buttress the study of the ability of human beings through collective action to create, realise, and increase the value and meaning of their lives together.

The prosperity among IP mostly depends on how the government embrace and protect their rights and freedoms. IP prosper if they have institutions that protect their property and profits, and the government does not interfere in their incentives, institutions, traditions and innovations. IP have to have more freedom to pursue their dreams, receive better healthcare, education, and eventually have more autonomy over the direction of their lives and economic development. It is important to provide IP in the Republic of Karelia with the opportunities to affect their problems, and participate in the creation and enforcement of the programs aimed at their needs.