

## **Peoples of the White Crane – Investigation of Impacts of Climate Change in the Indigenous and Local Societies of the Eurasian North**

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Peoples of the White Crane – Investigation of Impacts of Climate Change in the Indigenous and Local Societies of the Eurasian North investigates the impact of Arctic climate change and weather-related events in the lives and cultures of the Indigenous and local communities along the Eurasian North in the Arctic Russian Federation – more specifically in the Northeastern Republic of Sakha-Yakutia – the lower Kolyma region. This is the home region of the two nomadic Chukchi communities – Turvaargin and Nutendli.

Very little is still known regarding both the contemporary lives of these peoples and climate change impacts in the region. The Indigenous societies of Eurasian include the Chukchi, Even, Evenk and Yukaghir peoples among many others.

The non-profit pan-Arctic Snowchange Cooperative based in Finland has been cooperating with the Nutendli and Turvaargin communities since 2004 on questions of nomadic schooling, sustainable energy solutions, oral histories, traditional knowledge revitalisation, Indigenous land use and rights just to name a few topics.

These societies consider the endangered Siberian white crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) to be a sacred bird – it has been mentioned that these are peoples of the white crane. Therefore our project is named after this Red Book-listed animal as a symbol of the fragile survival and knowledge of these Indigenous societies of the region.

At the same time this region is experiencing the melting of the continuous permafrost which will further accelerate global climate change as the billions of tons of carbon dioxide will be released to the atmosphere in the current melting process.

The paper will address rebuilding healthy ecosystems through a model of re-traditionalization - rebuilding of core subsistence and cultural activities in the face of rapid weather and cultural changes in the Eurasian North. Special attention will be paid to the community of Turvaargin that has in the past two years engaged in a rigorous and ambitious attempt to revitalize Chukchi nomadic reindeer herding, implemented Maori-style language nests, and in January 2011 received land use rights to their home region. The community is in cooperation with the Barefoot College in India in the process of solar electrifying the nomadic camps. In the current context in the Arctic Turvaargin is a shining beacon of model development for the northern Indigenous communities.

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