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## ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ КАК СПОСОБ СОХРАНЕНИЯ ТРАДИЦИОННОЙ ЭТНОКУЛЬТУРНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ КОРЕННЫХ МАЛОЧИСЛЕННЫХ НАРОДОВ СЕВЕРА, СИБИРИ И ДАЛЬНЕГО ВОСТОКА\*

М. А. Колесник, Н. М. Либакова, Е. А. Сертакова (Красноярск, Россия)

**Проблема и цель.** В статье представлен анализ возможностей современного художественного образования выступать в качестве эффективного инструмента сохранения этнокультурной идентичности коренных малочисленных народов Севера на материале Красноярского края. Цель статьи провести комплексное исследование существующих образовательных практик в сфере художественного образования на Севере Красноярского региона, выявить их роль в формировании этнокультурной идентичности обучающихся – представителей коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока.

**Методология.** Статья основана на анализе материалов полевых исследований, проводимых с 2010 года по настоящее время на северных территориях Красноярского края (Эвенкийский муниципальный район, Таймырский Долгано-Ненецкий муниципальный район). В качестве основного метода было выбрано полужурналированное экспертное интервью. В качестве респондентов выступили как специалисты, реализующие образовательные программы в сфере художественного образования, так и мастера, сформировавшиеся в ходе освоения этих программ.

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**Колесник Мария Александровна** – кандидат культурологии, кафедра культурологии, Сибирский федеральный университет, Красноярск, Россия.

E-mail: [masha\\_kolesnik@mail.ru](mailto:masha_kolesnik@mail.ru)

**Либакова Наталья Михайловна** – кандидат философских наук, кафедра культурологии, Сибирский федеральный университет, Красноярск, Россия.

E-mail: [trognonulia@gmail.com](mailto:trognonulia@gmail.com)

**Сертакова Екатерина Анатольевна** – кандидат философских наук, кафедра культурологии, Сибирский федеральный университет, Красноярск, Россия.

E-mail: [sertakova\\_e@mail.ru](mailto:sertakova_e@mail.ru)



**Результаты.** Проведено комплексное исследование художественного образования на Севере Красноярского региона, проанализированы современные практики работы с обучающимися – представителями коренных народов Севера в образовательных учреждениях разных уровней, собран ряд экспертных интервью. На основе анализа собранных в полевых исследованиях данных сделаны выводы о современных образовательных практиках в сфере художественного образования среди представителей коренных малочисленных народов Севера как о механизме, оказывающем влияние на формирование позитивной этнокультурной идентичности. Выявлены как проблемные моменты в области художественного образования, так и перспективы развития данной сферы.

**Заключение.** На основе результатов комплексного исследования художественного образования на Севере Красноярского края выявлены наиболее успешные практики, дающие возможность новым поколениям представителей коренных малочисленных народов Севера прибегать к традициям предков. Также были обнаружены недостатки. В интервью эксперты отмечают в качестве проблемы отсутствие четкой последовательной связи между разными уровнями художественного образования. Образовательные программы, как отмечают эксперты в сфере художественного образования и сами учащиеся, выступают мощным фактором, формирующим этнокультурную идентичность и на уровне дополнительного образования, и на уровне профессионального.

**Ключевые слова:** художественное образование; образовательные программы; Север Красноярского края; коренные малочисленные народы Севера; полужформализованное экспертное интервью; полевые исследования; этнокультурная идентичность.

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Maria Alexandrovna Kolesnik,  
Candidate of Cultural Studies,  
Department of Cultural Studies,  
Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation.  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8194-7869>  
E-mail: [masha\\_kolesnik@mail.ru](mailto:masha_kolesnik@mail.ru)

Natalia Mikhailovna Libakova,  
Candidate of Philosophical Sciences,  
Department of Cultural Studies,  
Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation.  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1694-9080>  
E-mail: [trognonulia@gmail.com](mailto:trognonulia@gmail.com)

Ekaterina Anatol'evna Sertakova,  
Candidate of Philosophical Sciences,  
Department of Cultural Studies,  
Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation.  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7153-9770>  
E-mail: [sertakova\\_e@mail.ru](mailto:sertakova_e@mail.ru)

## Art education as a way of preserving the traditional ethnocultural identity of indigenous minority peoples from the North, Siberia and the Far East

### Abstract

**Introduction.** *This paper presents analysis of the opportunities offered by a modern art education as an effective tool for the preservation of the cultural identity of indigenous peoples residing in the North, based on material from the Krasnoyarsk Territory. The objective of the paper is to conduct a comprehensive study of the existing educational practices in the field of art education in the north of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, clarify their role in formation of students' ethnocultural identity—representatives of the minority indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.*

**Materials and Methods.** *This article is based on analysis of field research completed within the period from 2010 onwards in the Northern areas of the Krasnoyarsk Territory (Evenk Municipal District, and Taymyr Dolgan-Nenets Municipal District). Semi-structured expert interviews were employed as the main method. The respondents were specialists engaged in implementing educational programs in the field of art education, as well as artists who emerged during the development of these programs.*

**Results.** *A comprehensive study on art education in the north of the Krasnoyarsk Territory has been carried out. The authors have conducted the analysis of contemporary practices in the academic process of working with representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North attending educational institutions of various levels, and a number of expert interviews have been conducted. Based on the analysis of the data collected during fieldwork, it has been concluded that modern educational practices in the area of art education among representatives of the minority indigenous peoples of the North serve as a tool which contributes to shaping a positive ethnocultural identity. Issues both in the area of art education and in its future development have been revealed.*

**Conclusions.** *The comprehensive study of art education in the north of the Krasnoyarsk Territory has led to the identification of the most successful practices for enabling new generations of the minority*





*indigenous peoples of the North to be familiarized with their ancestors' traditions. Drawbacks have also been found. In the interviews, experts cite the absence of consistent cohesion between different levels of art education as a problem. However, the educational program, as the experts in the area of art education and the students themselves note, serves as a powerful factor in the formation of an ethnocultural identity: at both the supplementary and professional levels of education.*

#### **Keywords**

*Art education; Educational programs; North of the Krasnoyarsk Territory; Minority indigenous peoples of the North; Semi-structured expert interview; Field studies; Ethnocultural identity.*

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#### **Introduction**

Modern life is inherently associated with a world dominated by globalization, so it is not surprising that a large value is especially attributed to all that is distinctive, traditional, unique today (M. McGinty and M. Bang [17], J. Sasakamoose, T. Bellegarde, W. Sutherland, S. Pete, K. McKay-McNabb [24]). For instance, the interest is generated in the daily lives and culture of indigenous peoples and small ethnic groups who have a unique view of the world, its origin and development. The traditional culture of indigenous peoples in different countries is reflected in art and folklore, which are still only being conceptualized by the scientific community. The knowledge preserved in the indigenous peoples' folk art continues to actively serve as an effective medium for the formation of ethnic identity. Hence, it is essential to focus on preserving traditional literature and art.

Moreover, not only the preservation but also the revival of artistic practices employed by indigenous peoples constitutes an important concern not only for the natives but also for the State as a whole. Their artistic practices are

significant resources for the social, economic, and political development of countries, help reduce the interethnic tension and strengthen the nation. And most importantly, they create a climate in the regions for their self-development. On the one hand, they contribute to developing tourism, and consequently strengthen the real infrastructure, and on the other hand they contribute to improving human assets by way of building on positive ideals and values. For example, the researcher R. Sansi [23] notes that works of folk art enable communication between an individual and the ethnic community, demonstrating the rudiments of the cultural identity.

In Russia, the situation with indigenous peoples is very similar to examples worldwide. Russian researchers point out that natives are not in the best situation, not so much in physical terms (infrastructure), but particularly mentally. "There is no self-understanding, people do not know who they are. How shall they know where they can go from here?" – say the representatives of tribal communities in Taymyr.

Tribal leaders of indigenous communities in the North, Siberia, and the Far East acknowledge

that the generation gap that grew over the period of the 20th Century has caused many of the ethnic groups' problems and the loss of the original meaning of many practices (M. S. Batashev, N. P. Makarov [1]). For example, the traditions of the native applied and decorative arts were lost in the North of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, one of Russia's largest and most multicultural regions. For example, the Northern decorative pattern which has been carrying the sacral text of the culture and reflecting the mythological perception of people is currently characterized by inconsistencies and the profanity of original meanings. The new technology implemented in art has made it clichéd and massive. Many indigenous representatives accept these remakes as a reflection of genuine traditions, unfamiliar with the authentic art (A. V. Kistova, N. N. Pimenova [10], Reznikova, N. N. Serechkina, Y. S. Zamaraeva [22]). Furthermore, the elders of ethnic groups and indigenous culture researchers attribute this phenomenon to the loss of ethnic identity. In the Krasnoyarsk region, a similar situation is observed among all the minority indigenous peoples of the North: the Evenks, Dolgans, Nenets, and Nganasans.

Educational technology can improve the situation. They are not only able to restore the original status of folk art, having shown the works as a means of communicating identity and ethnicity, personality and the world (N. P. Koptseva [9]). Especially when it comes to art education (S. D. Voroshin [27]).

The importance of the state and local ethnic community government's support, in particular in the field of artistic skills education in educational establishments, is widely supported by scientific community: B. Madden [167], C. K. Lemley, T. L. Lee [13], A. Pryor, P. Bowman [21], A. Day, V. Nakata, M. Nakata, G. Martin [4].

In order to know exactly how to best implement educational strategies, the researchers J. P. Preston, T. R. Claypool, W. [Rowluck](#), B. Green [20], E. Milne [18], V. Harwood, S. McMahon, S. O'Shea, G. Bodkin-Andrews, A. Priestly [7] recommends consulting the representatives of indigenous communities. They propose to use the reliable method of semi-structured individual interviews. Other methods include ethnographic (A. Parkes, E. McRae-Williams, D. Tedmanson [19]) or sociological ones (J. Sikora, N. Biddle [25], A. Lees [12]). Considering the appeal and suggestions of indigenous peoples themselves, it may be possible to obtain a positive educational experience.

Researchers A. Lees [12], E. Milne [18] report that educational support has a huge potential. G. A. Cajete [3] considers the education of indigenous peoples not only as a way of their acquiring new knowledge and skills, but also as a means of socialization in a cultural environment, a tool for acquiring ethnic identity. In the example of Native Americans he studied the presence of the community in the educational process and noted the students' positive momentum. The indispensable link with the community and the introduction of special disciplines on the tribe's culture into the curriculum affect the leadership qualities of the students. It is the art education which acts as a means of transferring knowledge from the masters to younger generations and influences ethnic self-identification and preservation of unique peoples. According to B. O. Stumpf [26]: spirituality, sensitivity, symbolism, life and art; these are some of the elements that must be implemented in school for indigenous peoples, because they are of fundamental importance in the education of these people. The following foreign scientists express their solidarity with this statement: T. Locke, L. Prentice [15], S. Gunara [6], who study the roll of ethnic music in the education of indigenous

peoples or J. Bessant, R. Watts [2], who believe that video art by young representatives of aboriginal population is a desire to reclaim the image of indigenous peoples, and Russian researchers: A. S. Gruzdeva [5], K. V. Reznikova, N. P. Koptseva, N. N. Seredkina, Y. S. Zamaraeva [11; 22].

N. M. Libakova, E. A. Sertakova [14] see the development of traditions in the art education of the indigenous peoples residing in the North of the Krasnoyarsk Territory to be an effective means of positive identification with ethnic culture in the context of multiculturalism and a way of shaping the positive identity of indigenous peoples.

Thus, an overview of the publications over the past three years has allowed us to identify the key ideas of the modern global scientific community on the topic of this research.

1. Firstly, an unequivocal position stands out when discussing the role of the minority indigenous peoples in the modern world and the attitude towards them. Researchers express solidarity with the idea that ecological culture, traditional forms of economy and folk art are of considerable importance in the context of a world experiencing globalization. However, the processes that are occurring worldwide are depressing since indigenous peoples are rapidly losing their language, traditions, and therefore ethnic identity.
2. Secondly, the study of specific indigenous peoples offers qualitative methods: in-depth interview is mainly selected since the opinions of the representatives of the indigenous peoples are of particular value;
3. Thirdly, emphasis is given to education, which becomes the guarantor that, on the one hand, the rights of community members to receive education on par with non-indigenous people are observed, and on the other hand, this education should account for the components

of ethnic culture so that the ethnic identity of the students is not dissolved in the large culture of the dominant community. To achieve this, it is important to support a unique way of thinking, which is made up of core cultural elements: literary language and folk art.

### Materials and Methods

The present study is based on analysis of the materials obtained during the field research conducted by the students and the faculty of the Department of Cultural Studies of the Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education, Siberian Federal University, during the period from 2010 onwards on the territory of the Evenk and Taymyr Dolgan-Nenets Municipal Districts in the Krasnoyarsk Territory. Semi-structured expert interview was employed as the key method. The experts were specialists in the field of art education as well as masters combining the creation of works in decorative and applied arts with teaching.

In addition, the study analyzed the educational programs in the artistic sphere aimed at the preservation and development of the traditional art of the indigenous minorities of the North in the Krasnoyarsk Territory.

### Results

Studying the possibilities of art education as a way to establish the process of formation and preservation of the ethnocultural identity for indigenous minorities of the North is primarily based on the analysis from steering documents implemented in educational institutions of different levels in the Krasnoyarsk Territory. Interviews with representatives of the minority indigenous peoples and specialists working in the sphere of education and science have also been completed for the same purpose, whose views on what challenges and opportunities for the





development of education in this area exist complement the overall picture.

In the area of supplementary education in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, particularly in the Evenk and Taymyr Dolgan-Nenets Municipal Districts, a number of programs are being implemented in the areas of supplementary education for children aimed at involving the younger generation in artistic creation with simultaneous immersion in the traditional cultures of the indigenous peoples of the North. Children have the opportunity to learn basic skills in dance, music and decorative and applied arts.

As a rule, such institutions providing educational services in the field of art are concentrated in large district centers. Thus, for example, the Children's School of Arts named after B. N. Molchanov (Dudinka) successfully implements the program "Choreography of the North". One of the aims of this program is "to identify and develop gifted children from the indigenous Taymyr minorities", which contributes to the development of children's interest in their folk culture, in particular the obligatory component of their education here is gaining theoretical knowledge of the materials on the national art of the indigenous population of the peninsula. Moreover, children and teenagers are active participants here in the preservation and development of traditional dance and folk song art.

In the field of fine arts, the artistic schools operating in the northern territories of the Krasnoyarsk Territory are characterized by the inclusion of subjects related to studying the traditional art of indigenous minorities of the North in the compulsory educational modules. In particular, in the Norilsk Children's Art School, students must study the features of decorative pattern on samples of northern peoples' decorative art within the framework of the "Decorative and applied arts" module.

The experience of those studios that carry out their work in remote villages are of particular interest, such as Khatanga, Khetta and Syndassko, where bone carving traditions are preserved in children's education. The students studying here have the possibility to master all the stages of dealing with the traditional material starting from its location and collection up to the final processing, with the obligatory study of exact traditional decorative patterns and topics. Thus, such an approach and the conditions created enable not only the craft itself to be preserved, but also the cultural links between the older and younger generations. This is what is specifically highlighted by S. Y. Palchin, the Ombudsman for the Indigenous Minorities in the Krasnoyarsk Territory: "The construction of schools, *the establishment of the educational process in residential areas* is of specific importance as for instance the reindeer-breeding culture disappears right before our eyes."

In the sphere of culture, many institutions are also working with a young audience and are aimed at including the maintenance of particular ethnocultural identity into the creativity. Here, the advantage is that many operating studios are working on a pro bono basis, which helps ensure that children from boarding schools and orphanages have the opportunity to participate in their folk culture through artistic and creative activity. Thus, the Director of the Taymyr Home of Folk Art in Dudinka, L. Y. Popova, says that the aim of the arts and crafts studios is creating an opportunity "to give children an understanding of the home, the notion of a raw-hide tent, since they are isolated from the family, tundra, land from childhood ... We perform more educational functions: education in the decorative and applied arts so that the children know their origins. For instance, the girls who are sewing now, sew the Nenets decorative pattern with a traditional stitch and talk with their mentor in the Nenets language.



Where can they apply it? Here they will learn about their roots and will not lose the connection with their ancestors." The following studios are currently operating in the Taymyr Home of Folk Art: "Mamontenok" (mammoth cub) (directed by the bone carving master N. M. Kirgizov), "Biserinka" (little bead) (children's studio of artistic needlework directed by M. F. Yaroslavtseva). The big advantage in the operation of such studios is that folk crafts training is supervised by craftsmen who are members of the indigenous population.

In the Evenk District of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, the educational work in the area of the creative arts is provided for the children through comprehensive schools in the settlements. Each school has its own museum where works by masters and school students can be exhibited. For example, in the Surinda Village, apart from the standard educational program a number of additional training programs are implemented, which among others include the sewing of Evenk national clothes and household items (kumalans (round rugs), high fur boots, bags). In Surinda, a special camp is organized for children enabling full immersion in the traditional Evenk culture, to try out the traditional roles for men and women in reindeer-breeding nomad encampments. All this undoubtedly enables children to learn the purpose of each subject in practice, to understand how works of decorative and applied art perform their functions in a traditional way of life.

In addition to tailoring and work related to the manufacture of furs in the Evenk District, a popular course in the field of art education for children is beadwork and bead weaving. Such programs are implemented in the Baykitskiy Center of Children's Creativity and the Home of Children's Creativity in the Tura village and are aimed at children from 7 to 17. Classes in the studios allow the younger generation to become acquainted with Evenk-specific cultural ideas

about the combination of colours, the meaning of flowers and decorative pattern elements. Children acquire a number of useful skills as a result of training in the studios, they can create products decorated with Evenk national decorative patterns, and so they participate in traditional folk art and develop new forms.

All these activities are very important for the younger generation of northern peoples to have a developed positive cultural identity. Specialists working in the field of culture who are practitioners in the art field, realize that addressing the problem of preserving national culture must be approached comprehensively from different angles. V. I. Batagay, a bone carver from the Dolgans tribe, says the following: "We understand that we must preserve our culture not only through the language, but also through some materials, items that surround us, that surrounded our ancestors and parents, and so they remembered these items, which in principle had some function, but now they no longer exist, as these items have been replaced".

The individual's identity is a complex of different aspects that can be adjusted and changed during the course of life. Accordingly, at each stage of life it is necessary to have certain factors enabling the preservation of an ethnocultural identity. The possibilities of educational practices as a mechanism influencing this process appear to be particularly important during youth education.

It is difficult to overestimate the role of professional educational institutions: Territorial State Budget-funded Professional Educational Institution "Norilsk College of Arts" and Territorial Budget-funded Professional Educational Institution "Taymyr College" in the preservation and development of national traditions in the artistic sphere.

The Taymyr College offers education with the major of "Decorative and applied arts and crafts" and trains professional embroiderers. An



important part of the educational process is the focus on traditional national crafts. For example, it is compulsory that students receiving an education in the "Embroiderer" course program are acquainted with the traditional decorative patterns of the Taymyr peoples, and are taught the skill of working with natural materials with special aspects of reindeer hide processing. One of the College's areas of work is to train master artists and teachers of decorative and applied arts, who further realize themselves in the educational and cultural institutions, as well as through traditional artistic works and become not only the bearers but also the translators of traditional cultural values.

The Norilsk College of Arts also prepares specialists in the field of decorative and applied arts of national crafts. The teaching staff includes talented masters: E. A. Sotnikova specializing in beadwork and leather and fur treatment; V. A. Popova who is a master of artistic bone carving. Many teachers at the college are representatives of indigenous peoples living on the territory of the Taymyr peninsula. Thus, the values of traditional cultures are transmitted and the skills of traditional crafts are transferred from the older generation of indigenous peoples to the younger generation on a professional level. In addition to the direct mastery of practical skills in creating traditional works of decorative and applied art, one of the aims of the educational programs at the Norilsk College also includes the preservation of national traditions and their development. In addition, inter alia, strong efforts are made to popularize the arts and culture of the indigenous minorities of the North in the Krasnoyarsk Territory not only within the Russian Federation, but also on an international level.

The Norilsk College prepares not only master artists and teachers of decorative and applied arts and folk crafts, but also the directors

of amateur creative teams working with an emphasis on ethnic artistic creative work that contributes to the development of the non-professional environment, supplementary education, the aim of which to a greater degree is familiarization with ethnocultural traditions rather than learning how to make professional items of decorative and applied art.

Overall, it can be concluded that the professional educational institutions choose not only tasks directly related to training specialists (bone carvers, embroiderers), but also form a kind of continuity between professional and amateur levels in mastering the skills of traditional decorative and applied arts. Moreover, it is important to emphasize ethnocultural continuity in particular and not only formal mastery of skills. Thus, L. Y. Popova notes in her interview: "Our masters are obsessed with this work. They love their work. All of our masters children always accompany us at all events, all dressed in clothes that their parents sewed for them. This has nothing to do with the theatre, they live it. We fight this and strive to be authentic".

Compared to what is offered today in the field of art education for children and at the level of secondary vocational arts education, the situation at the level of higher academic art education for representatives of indigenous minorities of the North in the Krasnoyarsk Territory is much more complicated and has numerous problems.

However, S. Y. Palchin emphasizes the significant role of education in the process of forming an ethnocultural identity: "Changing the attitude of indigenous people towards their own culture for the better is possible today, but there needs to be a breakthrough in the area of education, including the study of native languages. It is necessary to work with the settlements from which there shall be an influx of prospective students. The education should be



affordable for North people. There should be quotas for prospective students' enrollment, coming from Taymyr to the universities. It is necessary to change the standards in education, at least in order to attract specialists to the area of teaching indigenous peoples".

Art education at an academic level accessible to student representatives of indigenous peoples of the North in the Krasnoyarsk Territory is important since the role of artists in the formation, understanding, and preservation of national traditions can play a key role in the modern world. Thanks to the work of professional artists, traditional indigenous artistic creative work can be taken to the next level and achieve new forms of development. The creative collaborative work of young artists Evgeniy and Yulia Porotovs can serve as an example of this. The artists create scenic, graphic, and decorative pieces, most of them are devoted to the theme of Northern nature, Dolgans folklore and the culture of northern peoples. Evgeniy Porotov explains how he entered the institute: "All the prospective students from Taymyr are sent to the Saint Petersburg Herzen Institute, I was the only student from the indigenous inhabitants of Taymyr who studied at the Krasnoyarsk Art Institute. I just wanted to study precisely in Krasnoyarsk for some reason, and just saw "Graphics" in the majors list. They did not want to let me enter this institution because there were no places reserved for people from Taymyr. In Saint Petersburg they offer pedagogical education, not academic like in Krasnoyarsk. Although, there are representatives of the Taymyr peoples in the Union of Artists of course, but all of them specifically specialize in the decorative and applied arts. Painting is not unique to the northern peoples." However, the artists successfully present their works at international exhibitions, thus, raising the interest in the Dolgans culture on a global scale. In addition, a very important area in preserving the

Dolgans ethnocultural identity is their work in creating illustrations for collections of folk tales and epics, as well as for the New Testament in the Dolgans language, in which the peculiarities of national costume, life, and character of the Dolgans are carefully and meticulously conveyed. It is the problem of producing high quality children's book illustrations for publications in the national languages of indigenous peoples which is frequently discussed in the context of the activities of a different kind which aim to preserve the national language and culture. And for the Dolgans this problem was successfully resolved because artists emerged who know the culture of the peoples from the inside and had received an academic education.

### Conclusions

Direct examples of the impact of art education on the development of ethnocultural identity were described in the study, both at the level of supplementary and professional education.

The supplementary education and studios for children have the most consistently structured learning process and the professional educators implement various educational practices. The educational process in study groups is not only geared towards the mastery of practical skills, acquiring knowledge about the native culture, but also involves the process of children communication with these masters and professionals who act as a role model who can guide them, as well as communicating with speakers of native languages. Therefore, art education for children has great potential for further development at an already higher professional level for each child representative of the indigenous peoples of the North.

Most of the programs implemented in the field of art education are geared towards preserving and developing the decorative and



applied arts of indigenous minorities. Here, future professionals are trained in the following types of decorative and applied arts: artistic beadwork, creating national clothes, artistic processing of furs, bone carving.

The problematic element is that very often children and youth from indigenous peoples are educated in isolation from the context of the native culture. The experience of creating special grounds, summer camps for children, similar to places organized in the Surinda Village can be considered as a promising solution to the problem. In such a place, children and teenagers can be immersed in the atmosphere of traditional life, get closer to the original culture not only on a theoretical level, listening to stories about values and traditions, but also on the practical level of mastering the skills of creating and using traditional household items (mauts (belt arcanum), pots (bags), dishes, clothes).

Realizing creative potential becomes more difficult after graduating from school, since very few educational institutions that include the national component in their programs take the specificities of national creativity into account.

It is also problematic to transfer the prospective students from the Northern territories entering higher educational institutions since at this level of education, most of universities do not provide for national specificities in the structure of educational programs. Therefore, it is appropriate to create special educational programs aimed at the representatives of the indigenous peoples, which on the one hand gives them the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to an education, and on the other hand is the opportunity to realize oneself as a specialist on returning to the territory of traditional residence.

Preserving ethnocultural identity is one of the key points that determine the future of the indigenous minorities. Art culture is currently a key area enabling the full development of ethnic identity in the context of a world experiencing globalization which is creating standardized ways of life. Mastering traditional artistic skills without abandoning the achievements of civilization allows both children and adults to maintain a spiritual connection with the culture of their ancestors, to preserve their ethnic identity.

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