

Institution-building for Northern Russian Indigenous Peoples Project

The Institution-building for Northern Russian Indigenous Peoples Project (INRIPP-2) focuses on ensuring the direct involvement of indigenous peoples in economic development and their participation in the decision-making processes at national, regional and local levels.

One of the fundamental objectives of INRIPP-2 is to support the sustainable political, economic and cultural development of Russia's northern indigenous peoples by establishing, through the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, a Russian Indigenous Training and Economic Development Centre (RITC). In addition, financial assistance will be made available to support three community economic development pilot projects. RITC will also play a pivotal role in accomplishing another fundamental objective of INRIPP-2, which is to build Russian governmental capacity to promote local economic development. This approach will help to foster the capacity of selected indigenous community enterprises and to transfer Canadian northern experiences of community economic development corporations to encourage local employment and self-reliance. For further information, visit:

<http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com>

RUSSIAN NORTHERN AND ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING PROGRAM

The Russian Northern and Aboriginal Women's Entrepreneur Training Program is being conducted under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Concerning Co-operation on Aboriginal and Northern Development between the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and its Russian counterpart. The MOU is an interministerial mechanism for co-operation and consultation between responsible Canadian and Russian federal government departments on areas of common interest with respect to northern policy and aboriginal issues.

The key objectives of the Training Program are as follows:

- to establish sustainable business and cultural linkages between Russian and Canadian northern and aboriginal businesswomen;
- to expose northern and aboriginal women to international business opportunities; and
- to ease unemployment for women in the targeted regions by enabling them to establish their own businesses and market their products effectively.

There have been several discrete activities in the Program thus far, beginning with an intensive internship in November 1999, which provided entrepreneurship training for several northern and aboriginal women from three regions of the Russian North: Chukotka; Yamal-Nenets; and Khanty-Manyisk Autonomous Okrugs. The group also included a representative of the Social and Economic Development Division of the former Goskomsever. Training materials were translated into Russian for participants to use as resource materials for imparting the knowledge that they learned to other women in their communities.

Building on the success of the training conducted during the internship, linkages were forged between the NWT Chamber of Commerce and the Norilsk Women Industrial Association. The two associations together agreed to lead the second phase of the initiative, which aims to establish sustainable business and cultural linkages between Russian and Canadian Northern and aboriginal businesswomen through the creation of an ongoing networking mechanism—the **Canada-Russia Forum for Northern and Aboriginal Women in Business**. The Forum will foster the creation of a community of women entrepreneurs, enabling women from isolated northern communities to expand and maintain business contacts from other regions of the Circumpolar Arctic.

A conference was organized recently in Taimyr Autonomous Okrug to discuss future collaboration. The conference, which took place in July, had more than 200 participants from a number of northern countries. A number of varied themes were addressed, including management skills, marketing and cultural tourism. The goals of the conference were fully met. Specifically, the conference succeeded in:

- mapping out directions and a Plan of Action for the promotion of future co-operation among northern communities in the area of business development;
- determining next steps; and
- identifying specific steps for future co-operation.

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