

Report on Project Session
Northern Research Forum
Veliky Novgorod, Russia
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Health and Well-Being

- 9 participants + media
- continents: Australia, Eurasia, Northern America
- fields of professional expertise: medical research and health protection, ecological home construction, SW, genetics, applied sociology, gender studies
- 6 presentations based on in-depth regional researches
- dissemination of the printed works authored by the presenters
- wide discussions after each presentation
- final/closing discussion to work out recommendation to the NRF

1. Mobile complexes in the monitoring of health of the population in the far north (Alexey Buganov, Nadym, RF)

- Massive technogenical expansion dealt with the gas and oil extraction causes deep changes in life conditions of aboriginal populations: their concentration in ethnic settlements, doubling sickness rates, spread of social deviations, un-willingness of a part of the youth population to return to their original areas and ways of life;
- mobile complexes utilizing most advanced telecommunication functions are designed by the Institute of Medical Problems of the Far North (Russian Academy of Medical sciences) and will allow smaller groups of physicians to live in during longer missions and to carry out both diagnostics and treatment of clients out of stationary conditions;
- introduction of mobile complexes can cut down the costs in health protection by 4 times compared to its traditional organization;
- hi-tech off-road mobile complexes are most relevant to provide high quality medical services to remote and low populated ethnic settlements in tundra.

2. The preservation of the geno-fund of small native populations in the far north: ecological and social aspects (Ludmila Osipova, Novosibirsk, RF)

- the northern territories and their population including small native populations are vitally important for the country and its ecological sustainability;
- the negative trends in health conditions of small native population are determined by a complex of social-ecological and biological factors: cross-ethnic marriages, shifts in genetic structures dealt with the residual radiation traces in the food chains (moose Á reindeer meat Á Áa man), alcoholism;
- the elaboration of adequate public health protection approaches requires fundamental interdisciplinary researches in genetic, medical and social conditions and appropriate funding which is unlikely to find in the country;

- practical recommendations concerning the preservation of the geno-fund and health protection in the small native populations refer to the re-establishment of the prophylactic medical examinations system, stronger support to family and children, economical protection of original crafts, investments in keeping up and improvements of infrastructure in the north, low-cost innovations in the ration of the population.

3. Youth of the Novgorod region: social aspects (Matveev Vyacheslav, Veliky Novgorod, RF)

- the youth population presents objectively the potential of the regional community, its future threats and hopes, and thus deserves prior attention;
- the youth population is generally underestimated in many aspects of social governance: in medical and law-enforcement statistics, demographic prognosis, delivering social services to the population, institutional strategies and barriers in social policy;
- a particular aspect of preserving the potential of youth deals with the value of health as one of weakest points in the attitudes and most spread social strategies of young people. This value deserves to become one of real focal points of social governance and institutions of the regional community.

4. The social construction of health: cross-cultural gender aspects (Elena Lukovitskaya, Veliky Novgorod, RF) · women are generally characterized with a much more critical and anxious perception of their health conditions, compared to males which is determined by 2 groups of factors:

(1) the traditional inter-gender relations (attitudes) victimizing a woman in many aspects of social life - the gender content of public education, gender inequalities in decision-making procedures in public life, employment chances, real attitudes practiced by male leaders, etc.,

(2) inappropriate actual quality of specific female-focused medical services and social information; · improvements of the content of educational programs; · gender monitoring and stronger gender evaluation of the legislature and current decision-making at the federal/national and regional levels.

5. The social costs of "transition" in Magadan oblast (John Round, UK) · elderly forced to live on pensions below 50% of state minimum;

- they survive by growing their own food;
- from this production develop social networks which provide support during the winter;
- it is a clear example of a survival strategy which many in the west argue do not exist.

6. A scenario of regional development and priorities of youth-focused policy (Alexander Osipov, Veliky Novgorod, RF)

- observation of objective long-going trends and social indicators in the development of the Novgorod oblast as a basis for a medium-term "critical scenario" in major spheres of the regional community;
- irrelevance of economical determinism for federal / national and regional governance strategies as destroying the social potential of the community;
- the need for a scientifically based prognosis for the regional governance;

- the priority of human and social indicators (average life expectancy, exho-genic populational losses, the down-going dynamics of health of every new generation in the regional community, etc.) as a long-term criterion for evaluation of regional development and political responsibility of leaders;
- working out particular priorities of youth-focused policy in the region arising from the research results;
- the need for a comparative research in social indicators of youth and developing efficient approaches in social policy in our countries and regions.

General conclusions and recommendations to the NRF

"... Open discussion at the session was interesting";

"... the NRF should take to consideration a concept of small groups of experts to share / discuss research projects on a specific topic";

"... Social development of all people in the North must be at the forefront of discussions on the North. There should be a realization that ethnic Russians in the North are facing similar problems to other ethnic groups, yet they do not have similar levels of representation in the research discourse";

"... to possibly concentrate further research efforts of the Northern community on the issues of health, social development and those of specific populations - female, youth, ethnic minorities".