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## Nenets, Khanty and Selkup

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## **NENETS, KHANTY AND SELKUP**

**The Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language in education  
in the Yamal Region in Russia**

| Regional dossiers series |

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From February 2016 onwards, Rixt van Dongera and Richt Sterk have been responsible for the publication of the Mercator Regional dossiers series.

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## Glossary

<b>Krai</b>	“A major administrative territorial entity, it includes autonomous areas of ethnic minorities’ compact settlement” (Evgeny Kuzmin, “Multilingualism in Russia,” 2015).
<b>Okrug</b>	Often translated as area, district, or region. In the Russian Federation an okrug is a territorial division, which is designed for administrative purposes.
<b>Oblast</b>	An administrative territorial entity, where the majority of citizens are ethnic Russians.
<b>Raion</b>	A standardised administrative and municipal formation.
<b>YNAO</b>	Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug

## Foreword

**background** The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning aims at the acquisition, circulation, and application of knowledge in the field of regional and minority language education. Regional or minority languages are languages that differ from the official language of the state where they are spoken and that are traditionally used within a given territory by nationals of that state forming a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population. For several years an important means for the Mercator Research Centre to achieve the goal of knowledge acquisition and circulation has been the Regional dossiers series. The success of this series illustrates a need for documents stating briefly the most essential features of the education system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language.

**aim** Regional dossiers aim at providing a concise description of and basic statistics on minority language education in a specific region of Europe. Aspects that are addressed include features of the education system, recent educational policies, main actors, legal arrangements, and support structures, as well as quantitative aspects, such as the number of schools, teachers, pupils, and financial investments. This kind of information can serve several purposes and can be relevant for different target groups.

**target group** Policymakers, researchers, teachers, students, and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a Regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research or as a source of ideas for improving educational provisions in their own region.

**link with Eurydice** In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national education systems, the format of the regional dossiers follows the format used by Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe. Eurydice provides information on the

administration and structure of national education systems in the member states of the European Union.

**contents**

The remainder of this dossier consists of an introduction to the region concerned, followed by six sections each dealing with a specific level of the education system. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects, and summary statistics. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources with a list of publications.

## 1 Introduction

### language

Nenets, Khanty, and Selkup are the native languages of the indigenous population in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug (district, hereafter referred to as the YNAO). The district is situated in Western Siberia, on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains in the Russian Federation. The YNAO was established by a decision of the highest executive board in the Soviet Union Government on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1930. In 1977, the district's legal status was changed to autonomous and after the collapse of the Soviet Union the YNAO became a subject of the Russian Federation. The Nenets are officially recognised as the main ethnic group in the YNAO. Next to the Nenets, the Khanty and Selkups are also officially recognised as the indigenous inhabitants of the district under the 1998 *Ustav YNAO (Osnovnoi zakon) Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga* (Charter of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District).



Figure 1: The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug on the Map of Russia (Source: Wikimedia Commons: The Free Media Repository. By TUBS - Own work, 2010.)



The territory of the YNAO covers an area of 750,300 square kilometres and is administratively divided into seven raions (districts): Krasnoselkupski, Nadymskii, Priural'skii, Purovskii, Tazovskii, Shuryshkarskii, and Yamal'skii (see figure 2). The Russian Federation consists out of federal subjects; these can be divided into provinces, krajs (regions), republics, autonomous districts and federal cities.

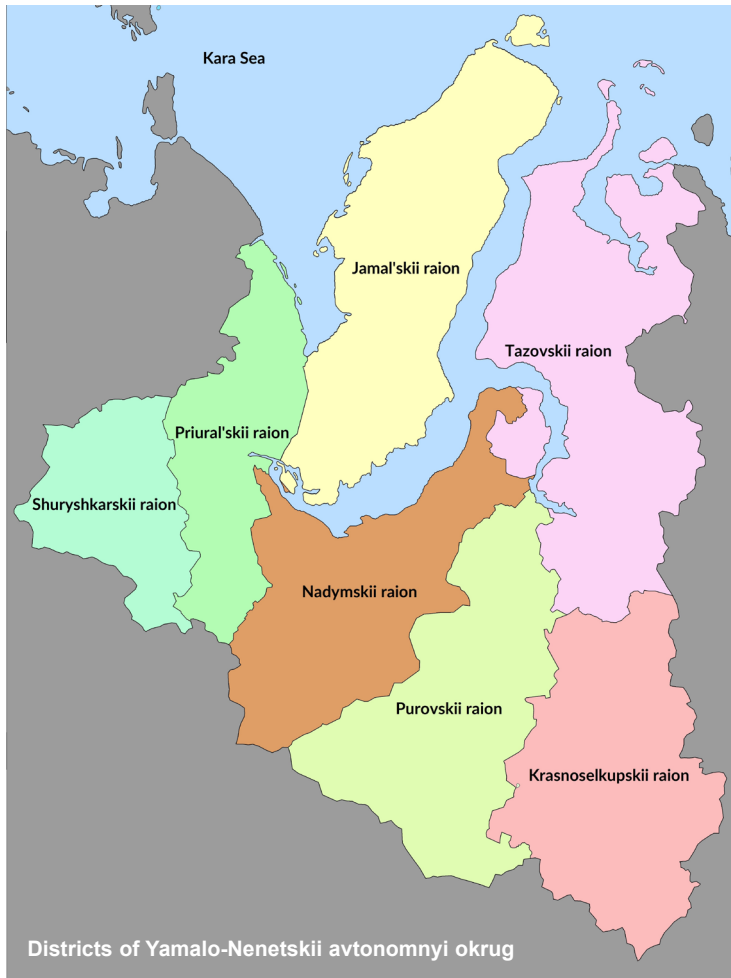


Figure 2: The different raions in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug (Source: Jacek Pawlowski, Fryske Akademy).

The Russian Federation is a large and multinational country in northern Eurasia and is home to over 160 different ethnic groups and indigenous peoples. In the Russian language there is a difference to be noted between the definition of 'ethnic Russians' and Russian citizens. As Evgeny Kuzmin explained during the Third International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace (2015), ethnic Russians are called *russkie* whilst the term *rossiiane* refers to all Russian nationals (the entire population of Russia). A large part of the population in the Russian Federation speaks Russian, but many also speak their respective native languages. The right to actively use one's native language is protected under Article 26 of the *Konstitutsia Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (the Constitution of the Russian Federation). Additionally, the constitution informs one that all Russians are free to choose their language of communication, upbringing, and education. The position of the Russian language as the State language of the Russian Federation is approved in *Federal'nyi zakon o gosudarstvennom iazyke Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (the Federal Law of the Russian Federation about the State language of the Russian Federation). The official position of the native languages is enforced by the *Zakon o iazykakh Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (the Russian Federal Law about Languages of People in the Russian Federation.)

### **Nenets**

About 41,300 Nenets speakers live in the Russian Federation (Evgeny Kuzmin, "Multilingualism in Russia," 2015). They call themselves *nenéca'*, or *n'enei nenéc'* which can be translated as 'real humans'. "Nenets live mainly in the tundra, forest tundra and Northern taiga belt of the European and Western Siberian part of the Russian Federation, from the Kanin Peninsula in the west, along the banks of the White Sea to the Gydan Peninsula of the Yenisey delta. They form the largest indigenous group of the Russian North" (Reindeer herding: A Virtual Guide to Reindeer and the People Who Herd Them, *Nenets*, 2016). The Nenets language belongs to the Samoyedic branch of the Uralic language family. It has two main dialects: Tundra Nenets and Forest Nenets, between which there is

limited mutual intelligibility. About 95% of Nenets speakers, the majority of them residing in the YNAO, speak Tundra Nenets, the remaining 5% speaks Forest Nenets. Nenets often maintain a nomadic lifestyle; they migrate around the tundra, and work within the reindeer breeding culture, and also fish and hunt.

The Nenets did not have a written language before the nineteenth century. Only a few texts have been published in the nineteenth century and these texts revolved around baptizing the Nenets population. The Nenets language was mainly standardised during the Soviet period. In 1931, the first standard Latin-based orthography was established in Leningrad. At the same time, the first ABC book for Nenets, *Jadəj wada* (New word or language), was published. Later, because of the strong political pressure by the communist party in 1937, the Nenets' Latin alphabet was changed to the Cyrillic alphabet, which is used for publishing books and school books until today (Lublinskaia and Laptander, 2015).

### **Khanty**

In 2015, 28,678 Khanty speakers lived in the Russian Federation (Evgeny Kuzmin, "Multilingualism in Russia," 2015). The native term for the Khanty language is *hanty jasanj*. The Khanty language was officially acknowledged at the beginning of the 1930s, around the same time when the Khanty people developed their first alphabet. This alphabet was based on the Latin script, but switched to the Cyrillic alphabet in 1937. The Khanty language belongs to the Ob-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family. Khanty literature is based on three Khanty dialects: *kazymskii*, *shuryshkarskii*, and *sredne-obskoi*. The main dialect used in newspapers, TV and radio is the kazymskii dialect. The Khanty people's traditional occupation is based on fishing and hunting, although some Northern Khantys also work with reindeer.

### **Selkup**

Approximately 4,250 Selkup speakers currently live in the Russian Federation (Evgeny Kuzmin, "Multilingualism in Russia," 2015).

The Selkups call themselves *söl'kup*. The Selkup language is a Samoyedic language and belongs to the Uralic languages family (Izayki narodov Sibiri, *Sel'kupskaa izayk*, (Languages of the people of Siberia, *Selkup language*), 2005). There are distinct varieties of Selkup, the main ones being the northern dialect (*tazovsko-eniseiskii*) and southern dialect (*tymsko-narymsko-ketsko-obskii*) (Kazakevich, et al., 2008). The official name sel'kupy (Selkups) has been used since 1930s. Before the 1930s, the Selkups were called ostiak-samoieds. Similar to the Khanty people, Selkups mostly live on the taiga. The Selkups' traditional way of life is mostly based on fishing and hunting, while in some places on the taiga they work within the field of forest reindeer breeding.

In the nineteenth century one book was written in the Selkup Southern dialect and only a few Selkups were able to read this text. In the 1930s, the standardised written Selkup language in Latin alphabet was developed; this alphabet was based on the Northern dialect. It was used in a few textbooks and other teaching materials. This dialect was also used as the medium of instruction in several primary schools. In 1937, a Cyrillic-based alphabet was devised for the Selkup language. The Latin version was abandoned and a number of textbooks were published in the new orthography. Another version of the Cyrillic alphabet for Selkup was introduced in the 1980s; this version was also based on the northern dialect. Today written Selkup is mainly used at schools, although it was replaced by Russian as the medium of instruction in the mid-1950s, and is mostly studied at the Institute of the Northern people in Saint-Petersburg.

The YNAO's state TV radio broadcasting company "Yamal-Region" in Salekhard has TV and radio programmes in Nenets, Khanty and Selkup. Two TV programmes: the Nenets programme "lalemdad numgi" (The Morning Star) and Khanty programme "Tut sul tam" (The Sparks of Fire) are broadcasted twice a week. Additionally, the company broadcasts radio news programmes such as "Onas" (Caravan), spoken in the Khanty language, "lamal' jun" (Yamal News) spoken in the Nenets language and

“Me chelomyn” (Our days) spoken in the Selkup language (Source: yamal-region, available at: yamal-region.tv Additionally, the company broadcasts one weekly radio programme of an hour. This programme mostly focuses on the folklore and traditions of the YNAO’s native peoples. Moreover, there are two district newspapers: “N’ar’ana ngerm” (The Red North) that publishes in the Nenets language and “Lukh avt” (The Angalskii Cape), which publishes in the Khanty language.

**population**

The most current Russian national census stems from 2010. In 2010, 503,036 people lived in the YNAO and Nenets, Khantys, and Selkups represented roughly 8.2% of this population (Laptander, 2010, p.182). According to the 2010 Russian Census 29,772 Nenets lived in the YNAO in 2010, they thus represented 5.9% of the YNAO’s entire population. The 9,489 Khantys then were 1.9% of the population and the 1,988 Selkup people 0.4%. The majority of the Russian speaking population in the YNAO are either people who have lived there for generations or citizens that moved to the YNAO during the mass population movement after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Although Nenets is the YNAO’s official language, Russian is the language that is spoken by most of its population. The state also uses Russian as its language of communication, documentation and education. People who live in cities mostly speak Russian, but on the countryside, where most indigenous people reside, people often speak Russian in addition to one of the district’s native languages. The 2002 National Census indicated that 80% of the indigenous people in Yamal were able to speak their native language (*Perepis’ naselenia 2002. Vladenie izaykami (krome russkogo) naseleniem ot del’nykh natsional’nostei po respublikam, avtonomnoi oblasti, avtonomnym okrugam Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Population census 2002, Languages (besides Russian), spoken by ethnic groups in republics, autonomous regions and districts of the Russian Federation). This number shows that Yamal has one of the highest amounts of minority language speakers of the Russian Federation, as according

to this census the average percentage of minority language speakers in other Russian regions was less than 70%.

Most of the Tundra Nenets live in the Yamal'skii, Priural'skii and Tazovskii raions in the northern part of the YNAO and the Gydan peninsulas. A small group of Forest Nenets lives in the Purovskii raion. Most Khanty live in the Shuryshkarskii and Priural'skii raion, although they live in many other raions of the YNAO as well. Selkup people live in the taiga area, mostly in the Krasnoselkupskii and Purovskii raions. There are only 1,020 Selkup speakers, who mostly live alongside the Taz River and between the Ob and Yenisei rivers in Siberia in Northern Russia (2002 Population Census).

Many native speakers live in Russian-speaking areas and cities instead of their traditional settlements. It appears that the position of native languages is relatively weaker in cities, because Russian is the predominant language that is used in urban areas. The older generation of native Nenets, Khantys and Selkups, above the age of 60, merely speak their native tongue. People between the ages of 30 to 60 are often bilingual, mostly because the majority of them have studied at Soviet boarding schools during the 1970s and 1980s. Native citizens that are under the age of 30 predominately speak Russian in their daily lives.

**language status** The official status of Nenets, Khanty and Selkup as native languages of the YNAO is recognised by the 2010 *Zakon o rodnnykh iazkakh korennykh malochislennykh narodov Severa na territorii Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga*, (the Regional Law about the native languages of indigenous people of YNAD) and *Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga ot 1 avgusta 2012 N 619-P: O por'adke predostavleniia i rassmotreniia predlozhenii ob ispol'zovanii rodnnykh iaykov korennykh malochislennykh narodov Severa v napisanii naimenovanii geograicheskikh ob'ektov, oformlenii dorozhnykh i inykh ukazatelei i nadpisei v mestakh traditsionnogo prozhivaniia korennykh narodov Severa na*

*territorii Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga* (the Decision by the Government of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous district from August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 N 619-P “On the procedure for submission and consideration of proposals for the use of the native languages of indigenous peoples in the writing of names of geographic objects, roads names and other signs and inscriptions in areas traditionally inhabited by indigenous peoples in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District”). Because Nenets, Khanty and Selkup are native languages of the YNAO, they can be used in the public domain in a similar manner as the Russian language is used.

**status of  
language  
education**

Local legal documents concerning the educational languages in the YNAO generally follow the Russian Federation’s legislation. The YNAO’s educational languages are regulated by *Zakon Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga ot 27 iunia 2013 N 55-ZAO “Ob obrazovanii v Yamalo-Nenetskom avtonomnom okruge” Glava 1. Stat’ia 4. “Izayk (izayki) obucheniiia”* (Law of the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug “About Education in Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug,” Chapter 1, Article 4 “Language (languages) of instruction”). According to this law, the district’s students are to be educated in the official language of the Russian Federation: Russian. For non-Russian speaking pupils that follow primary general, secondary basic or secondary general education, Russian classes are organised. The administrative procedures that assist in organising such individual Russian classes, as well as native language classes, are regulated independently by local educational institutions.

Most of the legislation that concerns the educational language at schools in the Russian Federation is documented in *Ministerstvo obrazovaniia i nauki Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Minobrнауки России) *Prikaz 3 avgusta 2006 g. N 201 O Kontseptsii natsional’noi obrazovatel’noi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Ministry of Education and Science ORDER August 3, 2006 N 201 “On the concept of the national educational policy of the Russian Federation”). Although the main educational language is Russian, the second educational language could be one of the national and

ethnic minorities' languages. *Federal'nyi zakon "Ob obrazovanii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii". Stat'ia 14. Izayk obrazovaniia ot 29 dekabria 2012 № 273-FZ.* (The Federal Act of the Russian Federation about "Language of Education in the Russian Federation", article 14, from 29 December 2012) states that each Russian citizen has the right to receive pre-school, primary and secondary school education in any official language of the Russian Federation, but within the possibilities offered by the local education systems and in the manners prescribed by the local law on education. The implementation of these rights is ensured by educational institutions, classes and groups, as well as by conditions that are set for educational institutions. Children who speak a minority language can sometimes be educated in their mother tongue, in a bilingual manner, or in Russian, this depends on the legal decisions made in the constitution of their respective republic or district.

According to the YNAO's Department of Education, the educational system in the YNAO has to adapt to its multi-ethnic population. Additionally, educational institutions in the region take into account that some of their indigenous students are nomads. The extreme climate and other natural conditions might influence the continuity and the duration of the educational year in the region. For example, during extremely low temperatures in the winter, school may be cancelled; sometimes this cancelling of classes can last for weeks. In the YNAO, primary school pupils do not go to school when the temperature is below minus 25-28°C; secondary school pupils do not attend school when it is minus 28-30°C and high school students do not go to class when it is minus 30-35°C outside.

**education  
system**

There are three educational stages to be noted in Russia's education system:

- The first stage is from grade one to four (age 6-10), these four grades can be defined as 'primary school';
- The second level consists of grades five to nine (age 11-15) and is called secondary basic education;
- There is an additional third level, which is called secondary



general education. This voluntary last level in which a student can pass grade ten and eleven (age 16-18), can be viewed as the final part of a child's education.

When the Soviet political regime came to power in the middle of the 1930s, education became mandatory for all children. The Soviet regime also established boarding schools in Yamal for students whose parents lived on the tundra or taiga and therefore did not live close to a school (Liarskaia and Laptander, 2005). In the 1950s, the most difficult task for teachers at boarding schools was to convince parents of the importance of educating their children, as parents were often reluctant to send their children to a boarding school. Pupils would start school around late November, and were often already picked up by their parents in April. Due to these short school years, only a small number of indigenous pupils completed their school education and most of them returned to live with their parents on the tundra. Most indigenous children in the fifties were monolingual before starting school; they only spoke their native language. A few of them managed to finish their education and continued their studies. The first indigenous teachers started to teach indigenous children in their mother tongue since the 1960s.

In 1967, 47.4% of all 13,719 pupils in the 58 schools in the YNAO had an indigenous background. 7 of these 58 schools were boarding schools (with full financial support from the state), where 5,369 children both studied and lived (Alekseev, 2010:195). Right after the founding of these boarding schools, there was a short period of time when it was strictly forbidden for pupils to speak their native languages in order for them to learn Russian more quickly. All native pupils were placed in a special introduction-year for indigenous children, which focused on teaching them Russian as soon as possible. Because of this unconditional demand, the Soviet boarding school system in YNAO became one of the main contributors to the loss of native language speakers amongst indigenous children in the 1970s. During this time there were some primary school classes for

Nenets children in which Nenets was used as a language of instruction. Khanty was only taught as a school subject and only a few Selkup classes were ever provided (Alekseev, 2010, p. 202).

Access to education in Russia is high, although some rural areas are far away from the urban centres. Currently, in 2015, Nenets, Khanty and Selkup are mostly taught in municipal schools in the YNAO. In total, there are 133 general schools and more than 330,000 pupils, of which about 10,000 are indigenous children. 23 boarding schools in the district provide indigenous languages classes in the Nenets, Khanty or Selkup language. These schools are located in small settlements and educate 9,000 indigenous children.

In 2011, a new educational project called *Kochevaia shkola* (Nomadic school) was implemented in the YNAO. This project focuses on pre-school education and primary education for children living on the tundra. In 2016, 22 nomadic educational institutions are active on the tundra. These are 17 kindergartens and 5 primary schools that serve roughly 200 indigenous children from nomadic families.

Native language education is generally provided in the YNAO's remote regions. Even in Salekhard, which lies in one of the indigenous areas of the district, the number of indigenous students is too low to be able to teach native languages. The small number of native language teachers complicates this even further. However, there is a special sanatorium school for indigenous children with tuberculosis in Salekhard, at this school a few special classes are being taught in indigenous languages.

Native languages are being taught in the following raions:

- Nenets is taught both as a subject and is used as the language of instruction at 20 schools in the YNAO: at 6 schools in the Yamal'skii raion, 6 schools in the Nadym'skii

raion, 4 schools in the Priural'skii raion, 4 schools in the Tazovskii raion, and 7 schools in the Purovskii raion (with classes in both Tundra and Forest Nenets dialects).

- Khanty is taught at 22 schools in the YNAO, 5 schools in the Priural'skii raion and 17 schools in the Schuryschraiskii raion.
- Selkup is taught at 3 schools in the YNAO, 2 schools in the Krasnosel'kupskii raion and at 1 school in the Purovskii raion (Source: the YNAO's Department of Education, personal interview with G. Lymar, 2015).

**private and public**

Education in Russia is compulsory and free of charge. All schools in the Yamal region are public schools and financed by the state.

**bilingual education forms**

Schools in YNAO have two types of Russian classes; there are Russian classes for students whose first language is Russian and Russian classes for indigenous students for whom Russian is their second language.

Before the late 1940s, native languages were not part of the school curriculum. Teachers often had little knowledge of the native languages and might have been afraid that teaching multiple languages would hinder students in learning the Russian language (Alekseev, 2010, p.198). In the 1970s, non-Russian speaking children were given the possibility to receive three years of primary school education. Within these three years, these children started their first school year with the native language as the language of instruction and the two consecutive years with both Russian and the native language as their language of instruction. This method showed immediate positive effects and improved the school results of indigenous children significantly. However, this also required hiring more indigenous teachers, because more parents were now willing to send their children to school, because teachers of their own nationality were now teaching the classes.

Education for minorities in the north of Russia has received a great deal of attention since it was decided to offer native children bilingual education. The discussion on bilingual education found place in pedagogical literature, conferences and seminars. Several years ago these issues were the focus of study at Institut natsional'nykh problem obrazovaniia (the Institute of National Problems in Education) in Moscow, where concepts of developing education and reforming schools in the north were elaborated upon.

Currently, Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language classes are offered in primary and general schools in the Nadym'skii, Priural'skii, Tazovskii, Purovskii, Krasnosel'kupskii and Shuryshkarskii raions of Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug (*Analiticheskaia informatsia ob ukomplektovannosti obrazovatel'nykh organizatsii Yamalo-Nenetskogo autonomnogo okruga uchitel'ami rodnognykh iazykov v 2014/2015 uchebnom godu*, Annual report of the Department of Education about the teaching staff on native languages at the YNAO's schools in the 2014/2015 school year.)

**administration** Education in the YNAO is predominantly organised by the Russian State and is regulated according to the *Constitution of the Russian Federation* (2012). According to the *Russian Federal Educational Act*, all educational conditions and procedures should be alike, but should also be flexible enough to be applicable to the respective regions.

It is compulsory for every Russian child to attend school for nine years, from the age of 7 to 16. This is enforced by *Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 23 marta 2001 N 224 O provedenii eksperimenta po sovershenstvovaniiu struktury i soderzhaniia obshchego obrazovaniia* (Decision 224 from the Government of the Russian Federation, March 23, 2001).

The YNAO's Department of Education is the highest authority on education in the region. It regulates the regional school

system as well as the local municipal educational departments that follow the Russian state and regional educational laws. The Department of Education regulates which school subjects are taught and what kind of competences the teachers must have. The municipal Departments of Education in their turn support the National Department of Education and carry out the national legislation in the municipalities.

Although the YNAO's Department of Education is officially responsible for educational programmes for minority languages, the main part of the work is carried out by Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language teaching methods specialists from Gosudarstvennoe avtonomnoe obrazovatel'noe uchrezhdenie dopolnitel'nogo professional'nogo obrazovaniia Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga "Regional'nyi institut razvitiia obrazovaniia (the Regional institute for teacher training in Salekhard).

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**inspection**

The educational inspection in the YNAO is carried out by the State's Educational Control of the YNAO's the Department of Education. The quality of the education provided is mostly measured on the basis of the achieved competences or educational achievements of the pupils. An inspector observes and evaluates native language classes, after the observation teachers receive remarks on how to improve their teaching methods. The inspector additionally gives teachers recommendations on new or different teaching methods, new schoolbooks and other didactic materials. In this manner, the district's schoolbooks are monitored and if needed, provided for as well. The YNAO's Department of Education has the right to inspect all schools when deemed necessary. The state's educational inspectors mostly inspect schools in the YNAO's big cities. The small schools that are situated in remote areas are inspected by the YNAO's Department of Education's local inspectors.

**support  
structure**

The Nenets, Khanty and Selkup educational systems are similar to each other, but differ in their features from the Russian educational system. The educational systems are

supported by YNAO's regulation that ensures the possibility to follow education in native languages. The main regulations on educating indigenous languages in the Yamal region are specified by the *Regional Educational Act*. Education on native languages is regulated by the same regional legal law that guarantees indigenous children full state support.

The Department of Indigenous People of the YNAO in Salekhard officially works with all cases connected to the district's indigenous people, including native traditional territories and languages. This department is supported by the District's targeted program "Culture, Language and the Traditional Way of Life of Indigenous peoples of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug" which revolves around the use of minority languages at school. The YNAO's Department of Indigenous Peoples also finances the publishing of schoolbooks on Nenets, Khanty and Selkup. It additionally offers grants for (research) projects that are focused on documenting the district's minority languages and folklore (Department of Indigenous People, 2015).

There are several indigenous public associations in the YNAO, for example: Okruzhnoe obshchestvennoe dvizhenie Assotsiatsiia korennykh malochislennykh narodov Severa Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga Yamal potomkam! (the District's Public Association of the Indigenous People of the North of the YNAO "Yamal for the Next Generation!"), Obshchestvennaia regional'naja organizatsia Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga "Selkupy" (the Public Association of the YNAO "Selkups"), and Salekhardskaia gorodskaiia natsional'no-kul'turnaia avtonomia khantov "Pulnovat" (the Salekhard National Cultural Public Group of Khanty "Pulnovat"). These organisations represent the district's indigenous people, and try to defend these people's rights to live on their traditional land, to maintain a traditional way of life on the tundra and the taiga and to actively use their native languages.

## 2 Pre-school education

### target group

All Russian kindergartens offer both day-care arrangements and pre-school education. Additionally, 6 or 7 year old children have the opportunity to follow one year of pre-primary school. This is usually during the last year of kindergarten. In the YNAO, children have the possibility to attend this pre-primary school year in kindergartens in settlements and cities.

There are 195 pre-school educational institutions (kindergartens) in the Yamal region, 182 of these schools are funded by the municipality and 13 of them are private kindergartens. Children are also able to follow pre-school education in one of the 30 boarding schools. The main language of communication and instruction in these kindergartens is Russian. However, in a few kindergartens in remote national settlements and in some boarding schools, children can speak and study in their native languages.

For most native children from nomadic families, the pre-primary school program at boarding schools is compulsory because they will be able to become more proficient in the Russian language during that year. Children are around 6 or 7 years old when they start boarding school. During the pre-primary school grade children are required to learn the Russian language, adapt to the school environment and live without their families for the entire year. They live with other pupils in boarding school houses where they receive boarding and lodging, clothes, schoolbooks and stationery.

In 2014, the boarding schools' pre-primary grade was officially renamed as 'kindergarten'. Most of the tundra children are bilingual and speak Russian fluently. Teachers therefore have the possibility to increase their focus on preparation for primary school and decrease their focus on the Russian language.

Children also have the possibility to attend so-called "nomadic kindergartens", which are part of the "Nomadic school" project.

Since the start of this project, there has been less need to separate children from their families in order for them to follow a pre-primary school preparation program at boarding schools. Nomadic teachers namely travel and live with the children and their families on the tundra. Such teachers do not only prepare children for primary school, they also assist children in learning Russian. During this year, children have the possibility to speak their native language with their teacher. However this is only possible when that teacher is proficient in the pupils' language.

Currently, there are nomadic kindergartens to be found in a few of the YNAO's raions. Most nomadic kindergartens are in the Priuralskii and the Yamalskii raions, and in other remote areas in Yamal where indigenous people live. These nomadic kindergartens generally only have a small number of students between the ages of 3 and 7. There is no strict planning that these nomadic schools need to adhere to, teachers teach their classes when there is time for the classes in between the migration on the tundra or taiga.

**structure**

Russian kindergartens provide early childhood education to children between the ages of 3 and 6-7. The last year of the kindergarten is year that prepares 6-7 year olds for primary school. All kindergartens start at 7:30 and finish at 18:30, similar to the timetable of a work day. Kindergarten teachers usually have a teachers college or pedagogical university kindergarten teacher diploma. At site, there are always additional kindergarten personnel and kindergarten teaching assistants present, who assist in taking care of the children. All kindergartens are financed by local Departments of Education; however they are not free of charge. Parents have to pay a monthly fee for their child's placement in a kindergarten; this fee is based on their income. Single mothers or fathers are refunded for their kindergarten payment and additionally receive a monthly childcare benefit.

Educational aims in early childhood education and care are defined by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and



the Ministry of Justice. According to the *prikaz ot 17 okt'abria 2013 g. N 1155: Ob utverzhdenii Federal'nogo gosudarstvennogo obrazovatel'nogo standarta doshkol'nogo obrazovaniya* (The order from October 17, 2013 N 1155: About the Approval of the Federal State's Educational Standards of Pre-school Education), all kindergartens must offer adequate pre-school education to children aged from 3 to 7, based on the Federal state's educational standards of pre-school education. This Federal State standard of pre-school education is the main policy all pre-schools need to implement. According to the standard, the main aim of kindergartens is to teach children to be stress resilient and to develop their ability and desire to study at school (*Minobrnauki (Ministerstvo obrazovaniia i nauki) "Ob utverzhdenii federal'nogo gosudarstvennogo obrazovatel'nogo standarta doshkol'nogo obrazovaniia"* (Ministry of Education and Science "On approval of the Federal State Educational Standards for Pre-school Education") (2013), Prikaz N 1155 ot 17.10.2013.)

## legislation

There are several national regulations and policy documents on pre-school education in Russia and the YNAO. The main one is the *Federal law of the Russian Federation* in the article on "About Education in the Russian Federation", this article states: "Day care institutions are to be regulated by the *Federal law on Children's Pre-school education*. The law obliges local authorities to arrange day care for pre-school age children in their local municipalities. Pre-school education in Russia is organised within the frame of primary education and the last year of the pre-school education is oriented to prepare children for primary school".

In order to recognise the official status of Nomadic schools in the YNAO, a specific article about the status was added to *Zakon YNAO ob obrazovanii* (the YNAO Regional Educational Law Article 13, 2013). This article made it possible to organise pre-school and primary school education on the tundra and taiga. According to the law, every municipal department of education can set up Nomadic kindergartens and send special pedagogical workers to rural places of the district to provide education indigenous children.

**language use** The main language of instruction at kindergartens in the YNAO is Russian. In boarding schools there is a pre-school (preparatory) class for native children. In this class, teachers speak one of the native languages: Nenets, Khanty or Selkup, but simultaneously, these teachers also teach their pupils Russian. In Nomadic kindergartens teachers often speak with the children in one of the native languages.

**teaching material** Most kindergartens in Russia follow the general educational program and most of the teaching material is orientated towards Russian speaking children. Kindergartens in the YNAO are not an exception in this regard; they work according to the state's kindergarten teaching programmes for pre-school education in Russia. For the pre-primary school classes at boarding school, special ABC school books in Nenets, Khanty and Selkup are available. The specificity of nomadic kindergartens requires the implementation of additional special educational programmes for nomadic teachers. Next to schoolbooks, these nomadic kindergarten teachers use didactic materials connected to the traditional way of life of indigenous people. In 2012, a collection of books in the Nenets language, specifically produced for nomadic kindergartens, was published in Saint Petersburg (Vanuito, 2012).

**statistics** The YNAO's Department of Education has conducted research on boarding and nomadic schools in the district. However, they do not have any specific statistics on the number of indigenous children at pre-school level; they only provide general statistics about the language situation in the district. According to these statistics, in 2014/2015 there were 5 kindergartens and a few pre-school boarding school classes where children were able to learn the Nenets or Khanty language. In 2014/2015, there were 14 nomadic and semi-nomadic schools for indigenous children in the YNAO (The YNAO's Department of Education, personal interview with G. Lymar). In 2015/2016 this number increased to 22 schools and 5 of these nomadic schools migrate continually on the Yarsalinskaia tundra (Vesti-iamal, 2016).

### 3 Primary education

**target group** Primary general education is compulsory and generally accessible for all children in the Russian Federation. Primary education lasts four years and children start going to primary school when they are 6-7 years old. Ideally pupils are taught by one teacher during all of the four years of primary school.

**structure** In Russia, all primary schools are public schools and free of charge. Some parents are even exempt for a part of the costs for schoolbooks and other school materials. Every local educational department has a special budget for children from indigenous families, as well as for children from dysfunctional families and orphans.

According to *Russian Public Education Law* every child has the right to go to primary school. Pupils take a test in pre-school in order to determine at what difficulty level they will be placed in primary school. Mentally or physically handicapped children, as well as children with learning disabilities may be placed in a separate school. However, in areas where there are only a few small schools, these students often follow classes with their peers, but might follow a lower level of education or are helped by a teaching assistant

After finishing primary school, at the age of 10-11, pupils receive a certificate that proves they have successfully completed the primary level of their general education. After receiving this document, students can continue their education at secondary school.

**legislation** There is a variety of official documentation on primary school education in the YNAO. These are mainly based on the legislation of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science on primary school education. The main official body which governs the basic education in the YNAO is the Department of Education. All regulations concerning primary education in indigenous languages of the YNAO are written in the *Orodnykh*

*izyakkh korenykh malochislennykh narodov Severa na territorii Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga* (the Regional Educational Act and in the Language Act on Native Languages of Indigenous peoples in the North of the YNAO).

**language use**

The official language of education in the YNAO is Russian. In 1968 however, research on schools in the YNAO concluded that the absence of native languages at school programs could be the cause of poor exam results amongst indigenous pupils. Therefore, all native languages were recognised as separate school subjects in the YNAO's system of education and were included into pre-primary school classes of the obligatory school program for indigenous children from that year onwards. This decision has improved indigenous pupils' school results and more teachers that were fluent in one of the native languages were employed in order to sustain this development (Alekseev, 2010, p.198).

Indigenous children who follow primary school at a boarding school learn the basic elements of the Russian language in their first semester. However, native children are also required to learn how to read and write in their respective native languages. Students have two to three classes a week that are devoted to their native languages. These classes provide students with the possibility to speak their native language with both their classmates and their teacher. However, it appears that the focus in these classes on native pupils' languages is not substantial enough in order for students to actively use their native language; children often soon start conversing in Russian with each other.

**teaching  
material**

The provision of pupils' schoolbooks is regulated by *Ob obrazovanii v Yamalo-Nenetskom avtonomnom okruge Statia 14: Obespechenie obuchaiushchkh sia uchebnikami i uchebnymi posobiiami* (the District's Educational Law, Article 14 "About Providing pupils with schoolbooks and teaching materials"). The YNAO's Department of Education is the executive decision maker in this process. The department has selected a variety of

organisations that publish literature on the district's indigenous languages. Additionally, these organisations have been qualified by the state to work on educational programs for primary and secondary education in Russia. The majority of schoolbooks on indigenous languages are published by Prosveshchenie, a publisher in Saint Petersburg. This publisher has a long history of preparing and publishing school literature on the indigenous languages of the Russian Federation.

**statistics**

In the school year 2014/2015, 5305 pupils studied Nenets, Khanty or Selkup at primary schools in YNAO.

	Total number of pupils	Number of pupils taught		
		Nenets	Khanty	Selkup
Muravlenkovo	47	0	47	0
Krasnoselkupskii raion	99	0	0	99
Nadymskii raion	741	318	0	0
Piuralskii raion	1699	283	385	0
Purovskii raion	1459	694	0	44
Tazovskii raion	2391	1371	0	0
Shuryshkarskii raion	1463	0	687	0
Yamalskii raion	3025	2139	0	0
<b>Total number of pupils who are taught native languages</b>	<b>5305</b>	4198	964	143
Total number of pupils	10924	4805	1119	143

*Table 1: Number of pupils who learn Nenets, Khanty and Selkup languages at the district's schools (The rating of the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district's municipal formations about teaching native languages at schools, Department of Education YNAO, G. Lymar provided these numbers in an interview with the author, 2015).*

## 4 Secondary education

- target group** Secondary education in the Russian Federation is provided for children from the ages of 10-11 to 17-18. Secondary education is often defined as the second level of a child's general education, whereas primary school is defined as the first level of general education. The compulsory part of secondary school lasts five years. The last and third part of a child's education in Russia is called the secondary complete general education and lasts two years. Usually, pupils finish these two optional school years at the age of 17-18.
- structure** The first level of secondary education lasts from grade five until nine and is called basic general education. After finishing the ninth grade, pupils take exams and receive a final mark for all the subjects they have studied during the previous five years. All grades, including final exam results, are put on the diploma that students receive after passing the ninth grade. Secondary complete general education lasts from grade ten until grade eleven. At the end of this period, pupils have to pass the final exams after which they receive a certificate of secondary complete general education, which notes all the final marks pupils received in their secondary school career.
- legislation** The YNAO's Department of Education is responsible for the secondary schools in the district. However, the Yamalo-Nenets' educational organisations can independently decide on how native language classes should be organised. Whether a native language class is taught individually or in a group is often dependent on the number of native speakers present at the schools. In 2013, the YNAO's Department of Education included Nenets, Khanty and Selkup as optional final exam subjects at the district's schools. (*Punkt 2 chastj 13 statia 59 Federal'nogo zakona ot 29 dekabria 2012 goda N 273-FZ* (Russian Federal Law, Paragraph 2, Chapter 13, Article 59: "About Education in the Russian Federation, 2012").

**language use** All Russian secondary schools have Russian as their main language of instruction. The regulations on the medium of instruction for native language classes differ per secondary school and mostly depend on local policies on (indigenous) languages.

Although the official language of education is Russian, native teachers in some of the district's schools can use Nenets, Khanty or Selkup as their language of instruction. At these particular schools, indigenous students are obliged to follow two hours of native language classes a week. One of these two hours focuses on the indigenous language and the other on indigenous literature. From 2013 onwards, native languages have been optional final exam subjects in secondary education. The native language and native literature exam is a 120 minute test. However, the final result of this exam does not count when a student applies for a vocational or higher educational institution.

Some native language teachers also give extra classes on the history of Yamal, the culture of native people and Northern literature. These classes are taught in Russian and they are orientated towards native as well as to Russian speaking children. By offering these classes, schools recognise the importance of the YNAO's regional component in secondary school education.

**teaching material** Schoolbooks for secondary education on Nenets have been written and published since the end of the 1980s. Teachers and students in the YNAO have access to schoolbooks as well as to additional literature on Nenets, Khanty and Selkup. Most of these books are published by Prosveshchenie, the aforementioned publisher in Saint-Petersburg.

There are quite a lot of schoolbooks that Nenets teachers can use for their courses. Khanty teachers do not only have access to textbooks, but also to a variety of supporting methodological and didactic literature. Sometimes Khanty teachers also

use schoolbooks focused on the Khanty language from the neighbouring Khanty-Mansiiskii avtonomnyi district. Selkup teachers have the most limited access to school books, as only a small amount of teaching material has been published on the Selkup language.

#### statistics

region	number of schools
Gubkinskii	7
Labytnangy	5
Muravlenkovo	7
Novyi Urengoi	18
Noiabr'sk	14
Krasnoselkupskii	7
Nadymskii	20
Priural'skii	6
Tazovskii	6
Yamal'skii	8 (of which 6 are boarding schools)
Purovskii	16
Shuryshkarskii	8
Salekhard	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>

*Table 2: Number of schools in the regions of the YNAO (source: Yamal's Department of Education, available at: [www.yamaledu.org](http://www.yamaledu.org)).*

Students who take their final exams in grade nine are registered in the YNAO's administrative files. In 2015, 30 pupils from the Nadymskii, the Tazovskii and the Yamal'skii raions were registered to take the final exam on Nenets language and Nenets literature. On the basis of the results of this examination, one can state that only nine of these students eventually passed the exam (the YNAO's Department of Education, 2015).



## 5 Vocational Education

**target group** Students often follow vocational education from the age of 15-16. Students must have a secondary (basic) school diploma in order to be able to get admitted to a vocational education programme. Vocational education students usually have a working class background and are children from for example reindeer herder and fishermen families.

**structure** There are two types of vocational schools in the YNAO. The first type of school that is discussed in this chapter is called *tekhnikum* (vocational technical school). The second type of vocational education is one that is provided by colleges and is called vocational secondary education. Vocational technical schools provide basic vocational education in one year of classes. This year can be compared to grade ten and eleven of the general secondary education school programme. When a student passes this first year of vocational technical school, this can be regarded as the equivalent of passing the secondary complete general education. Vocational technical schools train students to be able to go to vocational secondary education.

Vocational schools aim at training people to become qualified industrial workers and technicians. Vocational technical schools often provide free accommodation at hostels, as well as free meals at the vocational school's canteen to students from indigenous families and orphans. After getting a vocational primary education diploma, which encompasses the first year of classes, students are able to apply at for example a university as a first-year student.

The programmes at vocational secondary education schools are longer than those at vocational technical schools. Students that have a secondary basic education certificate have the opportunity to then take a four-year programme at a college. Students that have finished the complete secondary general education programme often only need to do a three-year programme at

college. In vocational secondary education programmes, students are trained to for example become low- and middle-level industrial managers, foremen, coordinators, technical supervisors etc. However, in some vocational secondary education programmes, students are trained for positions that require specialised skills, for example competences in high-tech fields such as electronics. In order to gain such competences, students are required to do an apprenticeship. A vocational school apprenticeship lasts two or three years. The length of such an apprenticeship depends on the type of diploma a student has. Students who have completed secondary basic education (until grade nine) will take a 3-year long apprenticeship, whereas students who have followed the complete secondary general education programme only need to take a two-year apprenticeship.

The biggest educational institution for secondary vocational training in the YNAO is the Yamal'skii mnogoprofil'nii kolledzh (the Yamal'skii multi-discipline college). When students graduate, they receive a vocational secondary education diploma. With this diploma, students are able to continue their studies at various universities. Students then start their studies at such an institute as a third-year student.

#### **legislation**

Vocational education in Russia is regulated by the *Federal'nyi zakon Rossiiskoi Federatsii "Ob obrazovanii v Rossiyskoi Federatsii"* (Novyi), N 273-FZ ot 29.12.2012. Glava 8 "Professional education", Stat'ia 68. *Srednee professional'noe obrazovanie* (the Federal Law of the Russian Federation, Chapter 8 "Professional Education," Article 68 "Vocational Education". Education in the State-financed and Local-financed vocational schools is public). Whether a student is admitted to a vocational school programme depends on the student's results on the school's entrance exams. All vocational schools are controlled by the YNAO's Department of Education. The Department of State Educational Control, which falls under the Department of Education, inspects schools and provides all educational institutions in the region with recommendations (*Federal'nyi zakon Rossiiskoi Federatsii "Ob obrazovanii v*

*Rossiyskoi Federatsii*" (Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation,") 2012.

**language use** Generally, the main language of instruction in the YNAO's vocational training schools is Russian. However, students can choose to study one of the district's native languages as an optional subject. For example, at the Yamal'skii multidisciplinary college, second-year students of the Pedagogical Branch for Preparing Kindergarten, Nomadic school and Primary school teachers, are able to choose Nenets, Khanty or Selkup as a facultative class. However, the language of instruction in these classes is Russian.

**teaching material** There are a few books that focus on teaching native languages at vocational schools. These are tutorial books that teachers can use in order to teach classes in Nenets, Khanty and Selkup to vocational school students.

For Nenets language classes there is a book called *Nenets Language Exercises*, a tutorial book for pedagogical schools written by M. Barmich and Z. Kuprijanova. Maria Barmich also wrote a few other books for teaching Nenets such as *Exercises for Nenets' Lexicon* and *Nenets language in Tables*, a tutorial book for Nenets schools, pedagogical colleges and higher educational institutions. All of these books were published in Saint Petersburg (Barmich and Kupri'anova, 1979; Barmich and Taleeva, 2002; Barmich, 2002).

For Khanty language classes there is a tutorial book called: *Tutorial Book for Pedagogical Schools* by Y. Nemysova (Nemysova, 1988) and for Selkup classes the *Tutorial Book for Pedagogical Colleges and Higher Educational Institutions*, by A. Kuznetsova et al. (Kuznetsova et al., 2002).

**statistics** There are nine vocational schools in Yamal, four technical schools and five colleges. The respective schools are the following:

*Gubkinskoe professionalnoe uchilishche* (the Vocational secondary school in Gubninskoe), *Labytnangskoe professionalnoe uchilishche* (the Vocational school in Labytnangy); *Muravlenkovskii mnogoprofil'nyi kolledzh* (the Muravlenkovskii multidisciplinary college) in Muravlenkovo. There are two vocational schools in Novii Urengoi: *Novourengoiskii mnogoprofil'nyi kolledzh* (the Noviiurengoiskii multidisciplinary college) and *Novourengoiskii tekhnikum gazovoi promyshlennosti OAO «Gazprom»* (the Novourengoiskii vocational school for preparing gas industry workers).

In Noiaborsk one finds the *Noiabr'skii kolledzh professional'nykh i informatsionnykh tekhnologii the YNAO* (the Noiabrskii vocational college of professional and informational technologies the YNAO). In Tarko-Sale there is *Tarko-Salinskoe professionalnoe uchilishche* (the Tarko-Salinskoe vocational school). In Nadym *Nadymskii professional'nyi kolledzh* (the Nadymskii professional college.) In Salekhard two vocational schools can be found: *Yamal'skii mnogoprofil'nyi kolledzh* (the Yamal'skii multidisciplinary college) and *Yamal'skii poliarnyi agroekonomicheskii tekhnikum* (the Yamalskii polar agro-economic vocational school) (the YNAO's Department of Education, 2015, <http://www.yamaledu.org/>).

## 6 Higher education

### structure

Higher education in the Russian Federation is provided by educational institutions called either institut (Institute), akademiia (Academy) or universitet (University). Graduates from these higher educational institutes receive a diploma based on the programme they followed. This can be a Bachelor's degree (a four-year programme), a Specialist diploma (a five-year programme) or a Master's degree (which is an additional two-year programme that students can follow after they have obtained their Bachelor's degree or Specialist diploma). At the majority of Russian higher educational institutes, there are limited numbers of state-funded full ride scholarships. Therefore, the competition is very high for these scholarships and only students that have excellent entrance exam results can receive such a scholarship.

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There are only a few institutions in the Russian Federation where it is possible to study the northern minority languages. One of them is the Institut narodov Severa Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta (the Institute of the Northern people at the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in Saint-Petersburg). There are three different specialisations one can pursue at this university: ethnography and cultural studies, linguistics, and educational theory/pedagogics.

### legislation

All higher educational institutions are under the supervision of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. Higher education in Russia is regulated by *O vysshem obrazovanii*, (2015) (the Federal Law of the Russian Federation about Education in the Russian Federation Chapter 8, Article 69 «About higher education» (Kodeksy i zakony RF, 2015).

### language

Generally, the main language of instruction in the YNAO's higher educational institutes is Russian. In the YNAO there is no higher educational institute that offers a programme which is solely focused on one of the indigenous languages. However there is a special regional law which enables students to follow

such a programme outside of the district. In order to enable students to follow a native language programme outside of the district, the YNAO has special scholarships for students from indigenous families. The monetary means for these scholarships come from the Institute of the Northern people in Saint Petersburg. The YNAO's Department on Indigenous Peoples also compensates indigenous students from low-income families twice a year for their travel expenses to an educational institution. The district also supports indigenous students by awarding students scholarships for their entire studies, including compensation for accommodation, at for example the Institute of the Northern People in Saint Petersburg.

**teacher training** The Institute of the Northern People in Saint Petersburg is the only higher educational institution in the Russian Federation which offers courses in Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language and literature. The Department of Uralic languages at this institute has a long history of teaching Uralic languages and literature. Students can be both native and non-native speakers. At the Institute of the Northern People, students can get a Bachelor's, Master's or specialist's degree with qualifications in teaching Nenets, Khanty or Selkup language and literature at primary or secondary school. Until 2008, the Salekhard Pedagogical College offered courses that were specifically designed to educate primary and secondary school teachers in Nenets, Khanty and Selkup language and literature. These courses were designed to educate indigenous teachers, who were studying to become a teacher at a local school in the Yamal region. This college had an agreement with the Russian State Pedagogical University in Saint-Petersburg in which they stated that after graduating from the Salekhard Pedagogical College, students would have the possibility to continue their education at the Russian State Pedagogical University. In 2008, Salekhard Pedagogical College merged with Yamal'skii multidisciplinary college; courses on native language teaching were no longer offered after this merger.

As aforementioned, there is no other educational institution in the Russian Federation that is specialised in teaching Nenets, Khanty or Selkup, with the exception of the Institute of the Northern people in Saint Petersburg. However, Yugorskii gosudarstvennyi universitet (Yugra State University) in the Khanty-Mansi autonomous district offers a Finno-Ugric research programme and provides Khanty classes as well as classes on Khanty folklore, literature, history and ethnography.

#### **Pre-school training**

In the academic year 2014/2015, there were 25 teacher training students who were teaching at a Nomadic pre-school as an additional specialisation. This specialisation is offered at the regional level at the Yamal'skii multidisciplinary college in Salekhard. In 2014/2015 students had the opportunity to take an optional one-hour Khanty course per week. The majority of the students that take these courses are from indigenous families.

Every year fewer students sign up for the Nenets language course. For example, in 2013/2014, there were 7 students from the Pruiralskii raion taking the Nenets pre-school teaching course. However, in the school year 2014/2015 only 3 people from that same area studied Nenets.

#### **primary training**

The pedagogical faculty at the Yamal'skii multidisciplinary college offers courses for aspiring primary school teachers. However, this college does not offer a specific course on native languages.

#### **secondary training**

Students at the Institute of the Northern People in Saint-Petersburg, who follow the five-year teacher training programme with qualifications for Nenets, Khanty or Selkup courses, have the opportunity to visit the YNAO and receive practical training in teaching Nenets, Khanty or Selkup at the district's primary and secondary schools.

**in-service training**

At the YNAO's Regional'nyi institut razvitiia obrazovaniia (Regional institute for teacher training) extra courses are organised for Nenets, Khanty and Selkup teachers. In these courses, teachers receive an introduction to new methods of teaching in the field of minority languages; they additionally receive information about new schoolbooks and other teaching materials on Nenets, Khanty and Selkup.

**statistics**

In the academic year 2014/2015 there were 16 students studying Nenets, 10 students studying Khanty and 5 students studying Selkup at the Institute for Northern People in Saint Petersburg. Unfortunately, not all graduates are able to find a job at one of the schools in the YNAO. Only a few of them have a job that matches their diploma, for example a job at a school, municipality, the Ministry of Education or as an inspector. Others often end up working in local museums or in cultural centres of the YNAO



## 7 adult education

**structure and  
language  
courses**

In Russia, adult education mainly concerns additional professional education. Most of the courses do not have an official status.

The means of education that are available to adults in Russia are additional professional education or vocational training courses. For example, native language teachers can follow additional vocational training courses at the Regional institute for Teacher Training in Salekhard, where they organise educational courses, training seminars and conferences.

**language use**

There are no governmental organisations that provide adult education on indigenous languages nor are there any Nenets, Khanty or Selkup courses offered in the YNAO.

**statistics**

Unfortunately there are no statistics on adult education available.

## 8 educational research

Research on bilingual education in the YNAO is a very recent subject of study and it has not yet been extensively explored. In the early 2000s, Russian researchers started to pay attention to the problems that come with native language loss, as well as to the opportunities that the revitalisation of languages offers (Vakhtin, 2001). It appears that bilingual education has not been considered to be a serious subject to conduct research on in the YNAO.

Linguists from Novosibirsk, Moscow, Saint-Petersburg and Salekhard researched the documentation of Nenets, Khanty and Selkup in YNAO. Among them are Dr Natalia Koshkareva and Dr Svetlana Burkova from the Novosibirskii State University, Dr Maria Barmich from the Institute of Northern people in Saint-Petersburg and Dr Olga Kazakevich from the Laboratory of Computational Lexicography at the Moscow State University. As a result of their work a series of Nenets, Khanty and Selkup dictionaries were published (Kazakevich, et al., 2008; Kazakevich, et al., 2010; Burkova, et al., 2010; Vol'gamova, et al., 2011, Barmich, 2015).

### language proficiency

Every year, experts on teaching methods from the Regional Institute for Teacher Training in Salekhard prepare language tests on Nenets, Khanty and Selkup for the district's schools. These language tests are distributed by the YNAO's Department of Education amongst the district's primary and secondary schools in order for them to be able to assess the language skills of Nenets, Khanty and Selkup pupils.

The YNAO has a lot of contact with other regional departments of education that focus on teaching minority languages at schools. There are many regions in the Russian Federation where the situation regarding indigenous languages is similar to Yamal (Kasten, et al., 2010).

## 9 Prospects

In the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, Tundra Nenets and Northern Khanty languages are categorised as being definitely endangered; Forest Nenets is defined as a severely endangered language, and Selkup as a critically endangered language (Source: UNESCO World Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger). However, according to Evgeny Kuzmin, Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, "Consistent efforts are made throughout Russia to reserve cultural and linguistic diversity," especially minority regions such as YNAO, Kuzmin claims, are very active in promoting multilingualism and improving the position of the minority populations' languages (Evgeny Kuzmin, "Multilingualism in Russia," 2015).

The present language situation in the YNAO shows that although the status of the native languages is officially recognised in the district, there is still an alarming amount of language loss among young Nenets, Khanty and Selkup speakers. This decline can be explained by the low amount of native language classes at the district's schools and by the fact that children are actively stimulated to learn Russian from the very beginning of their school career. In the majority of schools in the YNAO, students have little opportunity to follow native language classes, with the exception of the pre-school and primary school classes at boarding schools. Currently, there is only a small group of indigenous children from the tundra and the taiga who do not speak Russian but solely speak Nenets, Khanty or Selkup. The children that do only speak their native language are obliged to attend the earlier mentioned pre-primary school grade for indigenous children. However, the majority of the district's indigenous children already speak Russian very well before they go to school.

After the reorganisation of the teacher training college in Salekhard, the number of native language teachers in the YNAO has been decreasing. The remote possibility to find

a job as indigenous language teacher could be a factor that contributes to this decline. Even Nenets, Khanty or Selkup language teachers that have a university degree in one of the languages have little opportunity to find a job at the district's schools. The position of native languages in the YNAO would therefore benefit from the creation of more teaching possibilities for native language teachers.

## 10 Summary statistics

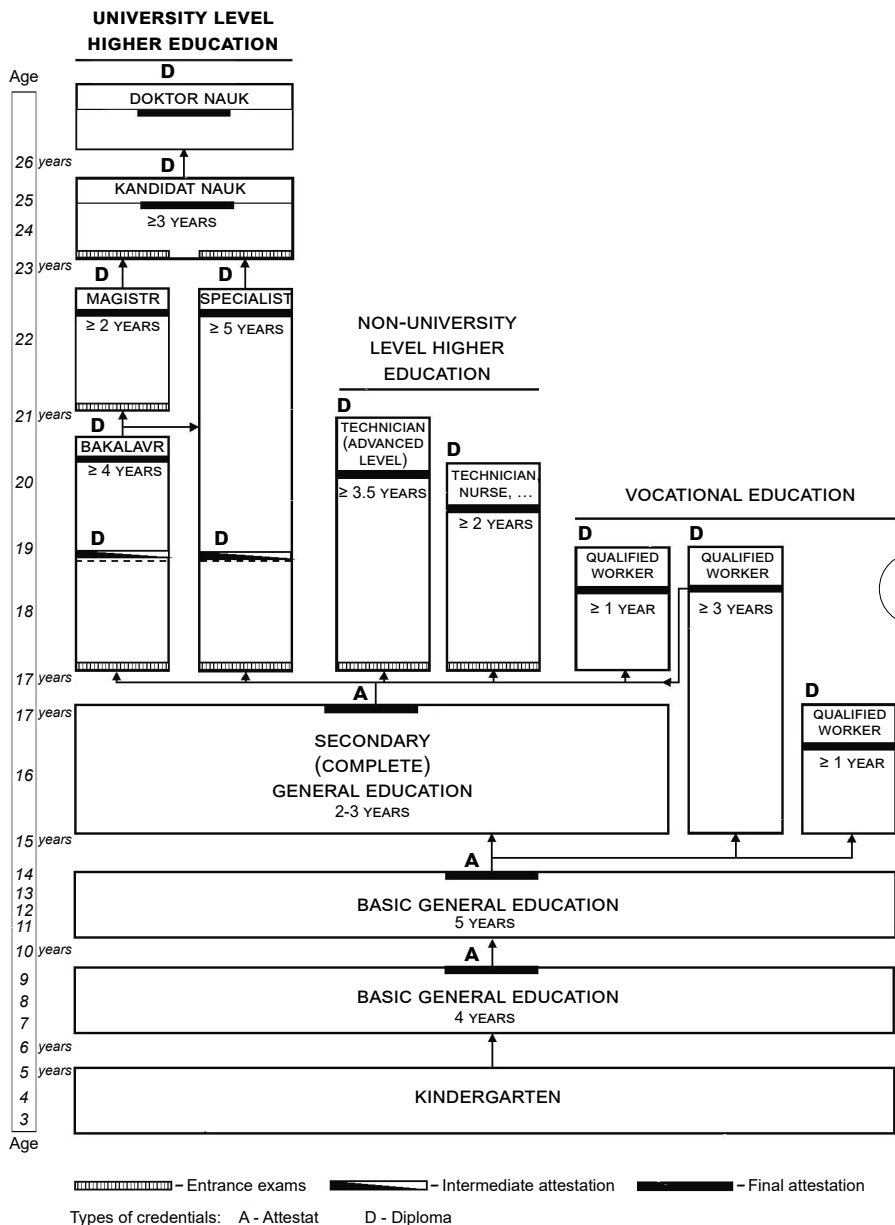
Ethnic group	Census of the Russian population 1989		Census of the Russian population 2002		Census of the Russian population 2010	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	number	% of total
Russian	292.808	59,2%	298.359	58,8%	312.019	61,7%
Ukrainian	85.022	17,2%	66.080	13,0%	48.985	9,7%
Tatars	26.431	5,3%	27.734	5,5%	28.509	5,6%
Nenets	20.917	4,2%	26.435	5,2%	29.772	5,9%
Khanty	7.247	1,5%	8.760	1,7%	9.489	1,9%
Komi (Izma)	6.000	1,2%	6.177	1,2%	5.141	1,0%
Selkup	1.530	0,3%	1.797	0,4%	1.988	0,4%
Other	54.889	11,1%	71.664	14,1%	74.625	14,3%

Table 3: Ethnic groups in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrug. (Source: National 2010 Census on the Ethnic Groups of the Population of the Russian Federation)

Language	Number of students
Nenets language	739 (77% of total)
Khanty language	160 (17% of total)
Selkup Language	55 (6% of total)
<b>Total</b>	<b>954 (100%)</b>

Table 4: Number of pupils learning native languages at schools in the YNAO. (Reiting munitsipal'nykh obrazovaniy Yamalo-Nenetskogo avtonomnogo okruga po okhvatu obucheniia rodnomu iazyku (Source: The rating of the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district municipal formations about teaching native languages at schools, The YNAO's Department of Education, personal interview with G. Lymar, 2015).

The structure of the education system in Russia



Source: Education in Russia for Foreigners, "Overview of the Educational System" (available at: [www.en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/sysobr/902/](http://www.en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/sysobr/902/), [accessed July 2016]).



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**other websites  
on Nenets,  
Khanty, or  
Selkup**

[www.yamal-region.tv/onas](http://www.yamal-region.tv/onas)

[www.yamal-region.tv/yamal-yun/](http://www.yamal-region.tv/yamal-yun/)

[www.yamal-region.tv/me-chelomyn/](http://www.yamal-region.tv/me-chelomyn/)

[www.yamal-region.tv/nedarma/](http://www.yamal-region.tv/nedarma/)

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[www.yamal-region.tv/kentyya/](http://www.yamal-region.tv/kentyya/)

## Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator Research Centre** [www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)  
Homepage of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The website contains the series of Regional dossiers, a database with organisations, a bibliography, information on current activities, and many links to relevant websites.
- Mercator Network** [www.mercator-network.eu](http://www.mercator-network.eu)  
General site of the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres. It gives information about the network and leads you to the homepages of the network partners.
- European Commission** <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>  
The website of the European Commission gives information about the EU's support for language diversity.
- Council of Europe** <http://conventions.coe.int>  
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). European Treaty Series 148 and 157, Strasbourg.
- Eurydice** <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>  
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.



## What can the Mercator Research Centre offer you?

**mission & goals** The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning addresses the growing interest in multilingualism and the increasing need of language communities to exchange experiences and to cooperate in a European context. The centre is based in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, the capital of Fryslân – the bilingual province of the Netherlands – and hosted at the Fryske Akademy (Frisian Academy). The Mercator Research Centre focuses on research, policy, and practice in the field of multilingualism and language learning. The centre aims to be an independent and recognised organisation for researchers, policymakers, and professionals in education. The centre endeavours to promote linguistic diversity within Europe. The starting point lies in the field of regional and minority languages. Yet, immigrant languages and smaller state languages are also a topic of study. The centre's main focus is the creation, circulation, and application of knowledge in the field of language learning at school, at home, and through cultural participation.

**partners** In 1987 Mercator Education started cooperation with two partners in a network structure: Mercator Media hosted at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth and Mercator Legislation hosted at the Ciemen Foundation in Barcelona. This network has developed into the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres, which consists of the three aforementioned partners as well as Stockholm University in Sweden and the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Hungary. Besides, the Mercator Research Centre, the successor of Mercator Education, expands its network in close cooperation with a number of other partner organisations working in the same field. This cooperation includes partners in Fryslân, as well as partners in the Netherlands and in Europe. The provincial government of Fryslân is the main funding body of the Mercator Research Centre. Projects and activities are funded by the EU as well as by the authorities of other regions in Europe with an active policy to support their regional or minority language and its culture.

**research**

The Mercator Research Centre develops a research programme on the basis of the data collections available. Research activities focus on various aspects of bilingual and trilingual education, such as interaction in multilingual classrooms, language proficiency in different languages, and teachers' qualifications for the multilingual classroom. Whenever possible, research will be carried out in a comparative European perspective. Research results are disseminated through publications and conferences in collaboration with European partners.

**conferences**

The Mercator Research Centre organises conferences and seminars on a regular basis. Themes for the conferences include: measurement & good practice, educational models, development of minimum standards, teacher training, and the application of the Common European Framework of Reference. The main target groups for the Mercator Research Centre are professionals, researchers, and policymakers from all member states of the Council of Europe and beyond.

**q&a**

Through the Question and Answer service available on our website ([www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)) we can inform you about any subject related to education in minority or regional languages in Europe. The specialists in our extensive database of experts can also provide relevant information.



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THE NENETS, KHANTY AND SELKUP LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION  
IN THE YAMAL REGION IN RUSSIA



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