

## NATIONAL HOLIDAY “YSSYAKH OF TUYMAADA” (SUMMER FESTIVAL)



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### 1. Context

Yakutsk is an administrative and political, economic, cultural and scientific center, the capital of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Most populous city in the northeast of Russia, a major cultural and scientific center. The third city of the Far Eastern Federal District of Russia in terms of population (after Vladivostok and Khabarovsk).

Revival of national traditions in Yakutsk began with the 90s of the last century, at a time when in Russia were great changes in the political, social, economic and cultural development. First time Yssyakh was held on the Yakutsk City racetrack (hippodrome).

Yssyakh is a celebration of the meeting of the summer, unity with nature, the joy of the onset of warm summer days after the long, cold, harsh winter. That is why in 1998 former mayor of Yakutsk Ilya Mikhalchuk with the head of the Department of Culture Antonida Koryakina developed the main concept of the project. After much discussion decided and chose the venue of City National Holiday “Yssyakh of Tyumaada” area named “Yus Khatyn”(“Three birch”). Since June 1998 festival “Yssyakh of Tuymaada” is annually holding and uniting all the urban population, the whole republic, all the nations and nationalities inhabiting the city of Yakutsk.

## 2. Yakutsk and culture

2014 was declared the Year of Culture in the Russian Federation, the Year of the Arctic in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and the Year of the People's Initiatives in Yakutsk.

Efforts of municipal authorities aim at supporting civil initiatives to preserve the unique ethnic and cultural heritage. Those are cultural institutions, art groups, non-governmental organizations, which support local, interregional and international cultural contacts.

In the city there are non-governmental organizations and associations, aimed at reviving creativity and cultural values: company "Osuokhay", cultural center "Kamelyok", and creative communities. Different kinds of folk art involve more than 63 thousand yakutians that show high creativity and extensive dedication to the implementation of programs of cultural development at the regional and local level.

One of effective ways of people's diplomacy is establishing friendly relations with the cities of different countries. To date, the city of Yakutsk has friendly relations treaties with Ancient Olympia (Greece), Yellowknife (Canada), Murayama (Japan), Fairbanks North Star Borough (USA), Harbin (China), Heihe (China) and Changwon (South Korea). Yakutsk has become the subject of international agreements and treaties on cultural cooperation: organization tours of creative collectives, cultural and educational programs and courses, creation cultural and information centers and national communities, which create a positive image of the country, the openness of Yakutia to the world culture.

Foreign cultural policy in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) is carried out in several interrelated areas: establishment of direct international relations in the sphere of culture, organization of international cultural events in the country and abroad, creation of favourable infrastructure of cultural institutions and government agencies aimed at improving the cultural image of the country, improving language competence of citizens for international communication; preparation of experts abroad. The example of Sakha Republic (Yakutia) has become a forecast scenario of cultural security strategy for ethnic minorities. During the implementation of the cultural policy in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) the national visions of the world of ethnic cultures were revived. The culture of Yakutia, established in permafrost conditions and extending to the Arctic, sub-Arctic land areas, has converted into a single concept of "Culture of Arctic peoples".

YSSYAKH AMPLY DEMONSTRATES NATIONAL TRADITIONS AND FOLKLORE OF ALL PEOPLE LIVING IN THE COUNTRY. THE PROJECT REALLY BECAME A BRIGHT AND SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN THE CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE OF YAKUTSK.

Yssyakh amply demonstrates national traditions and folklore of all peoples living in the country and really became a bright and significant event in the cultural and spiritual life of Yakutsk. Therefore, the program of Yssyakh is aimed at different demographic groups and takes into account various interests of the elderly, youth and children. Yssyakh became a real celebration of unity, harmony, friendship of peoples, which corresponds to the world vision of the Sakha people. It is attended by people of different nationalities living in the capital, in the republic and abroad. Year by year Yssyakh attracts more people: number of participants is growing (on Yssyakh 2013 was attended by about 180 000 people). Wide celebration gives a positive vector to social and spiritual development of society, strengthens the sense of historical continuity and responsibility of people for a prosperous future of their homeland. The project is not commercial, it is aimed at restoration of the unique culture of the peoples of the North and strengthen the image of Yakutsk. "Yssyakh of Tuymaada" became a major center of tourism event of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Each year number of visitors from the regions of the Russian Federation and foreign countries is increasing. Achievements:

- Diploma III of the International contest of urban practices "Best City in CIS and EurAsEC", 2010;
- Laureate of the All-Russian Award "Verges of Mass Theater," 2010;



- In 2011 during the celebration of “Yssyakh of Tuymaada” the International Guinness Record was set for the simultaneous playing of the national instrument khomus (jaw harp) with the participation of 3,400 people;
- Another Guinness record was established on June 23 2012, "The largest osuokhay in the world'. The Guinness World Records judge Jack Brokbank recorded the achievement attended by 15 293 people. It was necessary to meet a number of mandatory requirements. Participants of record had to be dressed in national costumes, repeat words after the leading singer, move clockwise, they also did not have to stop and break the round dance. By command of the judge all 36 laps of osuokhay began to move. The largest osuokhay in the world lasted about twenty minutes.

### **3. Aim, goals and implementation of the project**

#### **3.1. Aim and specific goals**

Revival, preservation and development of traditional culture, folk crafts and national sports. Promotion of the ideas of peace and kindness, respect for mother Earth and nature, spiritual strengthening of community and togetherness.

Structure of celebration of modern Yssyakh consists of three parts:

- First, the most important part - holding bowls (*choroons*) with mare's milk – “Ayakh Tutuu” and praising the supreme deity of the Lord White Creator – “Yuryung Aiyy Toion”, identified with the sun and all the heavenly deities “aiyy” living in the upper world. Sprinkling deities and spirits by kumis is the centerpiece of the holiday, which is why Yssyakh got its name from the word "ys" - sprinkle, spray.
- The second part consists of a ritual drinking kumys sanctified by all the inhabitants of the upper pantheon of gods and their messengers.
- In the third part of Yssyakh ritual contests is held: choral dance - *osuokhay*, competitions among wrestler athletes and runners, and horse racing.

With a festival Yssyakh that was held with the beginning of summer, during the rebirth of nature, offspring of livestock, abundance of milk and dairy products in the life of the Yakut people began a new calendar cycle, that was associated with the New Year. Interaction of the South and the North, intercultural communication formed an atmosphere of festive space. Festive heritage of the Sakha people is a unique resource that dates back to antiquity, but in the creative concept of modernity is seen as a means of modernization. Appealing to the ritual folklore is one of the ways to preserve the stability of society in a changing world.

Holiday budget consists of several sections: the cost of improvement and construction (reconstruction and restoration ritual territories), the cost of a cultural program (director costs, technical support, transportation costs, etc.). Annual costs of the holiday are increasing every year.

YSSYAKH BECAME A REAL CELEBRATION OF UNITY, HARMONY, FRIENDSHIP OF PEOPLE, WHICH CORRESPONDS TO THE WORLDVIEW OF THE SAKHA PEOPLE.

### 3.2. People involved and beneficiaries

Yakutsk City Administration carries the main costs of the holiday, and sponsors carries costs of prizes at major competitions and contests. Every year, the composition of the official sponsors is changing.

Yssyakh amply demonstrates national traditions and folklore of all peoples living in the country and really became a bright and significant event in the cultural and spiritual life of Yakutsk. Therefore, the program of Yssyakh is aimed at different demographic groups and takes into account various interests of the elderly, youth and children. Yssyakh became a real celebration of unity, harmony, friendship of peoples, which corresponds to the worldview of the Sakha people. It is attended by people of different nationalities living in the capital, in the republic and abroad. Year by year Yssyakh attracts more people: number of participants is growing (on Yssyakh 2013 was attended by about 180 000 people). Wide celebration gives a positive vector to social and spiritual development of society, strengthens the sense of historical continuity and responsibility of people for a prosperous future of their homeland.

AT THE PRESENT STAGE, THERE IS A NEED TO PROMOTE THE IMAGE OF PURPOSEFUL ACTIVE REGIONS IN THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POPULATION. IMPLEMENTATION OF IMAGE POLICY WILL ENHANCE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, PROTECTING THE RIGHTS AND LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF CITIZENS.

## 4. Impacts

### 4.1. Impact on the local government

In deciding to hold "Yssyakh of Tuymaada" all structures of Yakutsk City Administration began preparatory organizational work. In the area "Yus Khatyn" began installation of ritual ceremonial structures, construction site, construction of roads and bridges. Each structure of the city has its mission, its work plan for the organization of the festival. In the organization of festival "Yssyakh of Tuymaada" participate social organizations, creative unions, enterprises and institutions of Yakutsk. Creative teams of Yakutsk annually take part in the ceremony of opening and closing festival and in concert programs.



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#### 4.2. Impact on culture and its local workers

Since the beginning of the "Yssyakh of Tuymaada" in Yakutsk townspeople began to wear the national dresses. There are many masters making national costumes. National utensils, traditional attributes of Yssyakh, clothing in national style went on sale. The production of the national drink of fermented mare's milk (kumys), culinary skills for traditional national dishes develops.

#### 4.3. Impact on the territory and on population

In the capital of the republic began to develop amateur art groups - dance, song, folklore. With the development of the project "Yssyakh of Tuymaada" in Yakutsk revived traditional national arts. In the architectural image of the city appeared a new form of buildings in national style - "Archy Djete", "House of the North", numerous "Yakut traditional house" with traditional utensils and mode of life.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT "YESSYAKH OF TUYMAADA"  
IN YAKUTSK HAS REVIVED TRADITIONAL NATIONAL ARTS.

#### 4.4. Cross-sectorial impacts

Development of national holidays promoting image of the region, complementing it, offering it new and strong characteristics. There is a need to promote the image of purposeful active regions in the public consciousness of the population. Implementation of image policy will enhance public confidence to the public authorities, protecting the rights and legitimate interests of citizens. Most importantly, they radically change the structure of the economy, infrastructure and social status of the republic. The country that will have a positive impact on everyone's life.

### 5. Other Information

The City of Yakutsk was a candidate to the first edition of the "International Award UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" (January – May 2014).

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