

Update To The Siberian Solar Panel Project, Spring 2014



**Photo 1: Nomadic reindeer camp 4, on the Halartsa tundra.
Photo: Tero Mustonen, Snowchange Co-op**

Authors:

1. Chris Madine, Arkleton Trust, UK
2. Tero Mustonen, Snowchange Cooperative, Finland

Dedicated to the memory of Vilen Vladimirovich Nognorutov, Chief Coordinator of the Chaigurginoo Fishing Base Solar Electrification Process 2010-2014

Funders:

1. Snowchange Cooperative
2. ELOKA Project (www.eloka-arctic.org)
3. Arkleton Trust, UK
4. Turvaugin Nomadic Community, Sakha
5. Northern Forum Academy

1. Introduction

The year 2013 was the break-through year in terms of implementing the pilot project on solar electrification of the Turvaugin nomadic community. It was also a year of heavy losses and changes. In early 2014 project partners decided to organise a monitoring and community trip in March-April, 2014 to review the situation and make new plans for the further advancement of the project.

2. Trip in March-April 2014

A return expedition to the Lower Kolyma region of Sakha-Yakutia was undertaken in the March and April of 2014. The expedition proceeded with the aim of updating all partner organisations on matters regarding the pilot solar panel project of the nomadic community (obschina) Turvaugin. The Kolyma

expedition was also used to attend a seminar held at the Lower Kolyma College for Northern Peoples.

The seminar was organised to herald the reintroduction of reindeer herding into the college curriculum, where a ten-year hiatus has been experienced. The seminar was used as a focus for discussions of the opportunities presented by the integration of new technologies into the traditional methods of reindeer husbandry.

The Turvaargin / Barefoot College solar project was presented as the main case study and model of success for international cooperation in integration of new technology into nomadic reindeer herding. The solar panel project and its small but concrete successes were disseminated to the seminar participants by Tero Mustonen, of Snowchange, and Yelena Antipina, the director of the Lower Kolyma College. The Turvaargin / Barefoot College collaboration was paramount to the seminar with images of solar panels featuring on the main emblem of the college workshop.



Photo 2: Emblem of the seminar. Photo: Tero Mustonen

News was gathered at the time in Kolyma regarding the three pilot solar panel units now operating with Obshina Turvaargin. The panels have been up and successfully running in their current positions since June 2012.



Photo 3: Lightning provided by the “Barefoot” lamp inside the yaranga traditional tent, March 2014.

Photo: Vyacheslav Shadrin, used with permission.

Brigade 4, Portable Solar Panel Unit:

Brigade 4, headed by Brigadier Igor Kaurgin, is the brigade selected to test the durability and suitability of the portable solar panel unit for nomadic life on the Arctic Tundra. Brigade 4 was visited in March/April 2014. As reported in the 2012 visit the solar panels had been successfully assimilated into nomadic life, with their use in charging electronic devices and solar lamp units being expressed by Brigadier Igor Kaurgin. Brigadier 4 was also reported to have a marked reduction in diesel use when compared to pre-solar panel implementation. The panels were also noted by those at Brigade 4 to be useful in charging small portable computer units, used for educational purposes by children when accompanying the brigade on its nomadic cycle.



Photo 4: Best of the both worlds. Children using laptops in the yaranga tent of the Brigade 4, March 2014.

Photo: Vyacheslav Shadrin, used with permission.

Permanent Fishing Station on The Kolyma River:

The solar panel unit located at the permanent fishing camp on the Kolyma River were reported to have been functioning as hoped, and have aided in the reduction of diesel use at the fishing station.

Permanent Fishing Station Chaigurginoo, Bolshaya Chukotskaya River:

Dramatic and sad news were been reported regarding the Chaigurginoo fishing station. A fire in the summer of 2013 had engulfed the wooden building of the fishing station, destroying all of the buildings and associated equipment of the site.

The only equipment to have been completely saved by the late Mr Vilen Vladimirovich Nognorutov, expert fisherman of Chaigurginoo, was the solar panel unit. The panels are currently up and running in a replacement fishing station located close to the old site. The panels were reported to be working as before, significantly reducing diesel usage at the fishing station.



Photo 5: From left, Chief Vyacheslav Shadrin, Maria Krivashapkina (solar panel expert) and monitoring coordinator Chris Madine in the village of Kolymskaya, March 2014. Photo: Tero Mustonen

3. Conclusions

A. Tero Mustonen: Presentation of the 2007-2014 project was given to members of the Government of Sakha-Yakutia in April 2014 at the seminar. Additionally the nomadic communities of Turvaargin and Nutendli are signing a cooperation agreement with Snowchange to further all aspects of the project this decade, so things are moving into good directions. Additionally the English and Russian project webpages are open at the www.eloka-arctic.org where the reports and updates of the work will continue to be updated. Both domestic and international support is needed to expand the panel work into other camps and communities.

B. Chris Madine: Sad news of the death of Mr Vilen Vladimirovich Nognorutov in the late autumn of 2013 were received. I feel that it is of the utmost significance that the only piece of kit to be saved from the fire at the fishing station was the solar panel unit and associated equipment. This pays extreme testimony to the importance and significance of the solar panels to the members of the community of Turvaargin. All members of this nomadic community interviewed in 2012 and 2014 wish for the continued cooperation between all international partner groups within the solar panel project, with the hope of expansion from a pilot scheme to a more comprehensive implementation of solar light technology within Turvaargin.



Photo 6: Members of the cultural group “Nerevden” on the Kolyma ice, April 2014. Photo: Tero Mustonen.