Map of Arctic Peoples

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A joint project between CNR Polarnet and Istituto Geografico Polare “Silvio Zavatti”

The project named Map of Arctic Peoples (MAP) has been set up to study the culture and lifestyles of the peoples of the Arctic and subarctic regions and to help establish lasting relations based on reciprocal cultural exchanges. The purpose of the project is to draw up a map that can serve as reference for students and researchers, where the concept of Arctic is defined not only from the geographical viewpoint but especially in its essence as the cultural backbone of the peoples who inhabit those regions.

The project involves collecting data in the field for use in ethno historical comparisons, applying the methods of GIS cartography and visual anthropology. In a following stage, the information collected will be sorted, digitalized and used to create a database, a website, and one or more exhibitions.

The MAP project will demand intense cooperation and research for the production of reports illustrating the current conditions of the native people in the light of the information available from historical and archival sources and from the researchers’ own experiences.

Activities will be divided in two sectors – field work and archive work.

One important source of comparative information is the material collected by Silvio Zavatti during his expeditions, as well as all other archival sources in the Museo Polare in Fermo and in other polar institutes worldwide. Archive work, which will consist in gathering bibliographic information, archival sources, artistic handicrafts, documents on paper or otherwise, is already under way, thanks to the fruitful collaboration of the leaders of native communities and of Italian researchers.

In order to attain its objectives the project will produce reports, Internet projects, exhibitions and partnership programmes.

Field work will therefore include travelling to the Arctic regions identified as ethnohistorically interesting and, by applying methods of visual anthropology and direct experience, producing meaningful reports aimed at establishing forms of cultural exchange with the communities involved.

In particular, our efforts are aimed at:
- expanding the understanding of Arctic peoples in Italy,
- creating a database of the various ethnic populations,
- establishing cultural exchanges,
- promoting ecosustainable tourism,
- supporting small museums and collections,
- setting up a video and photo archive,
- developing cooperation programmes,
- carrying out scientific missions,
- producing video documentaries.