

## CAUCASIAN STUDIES

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Original article

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**STRENGTHENING RUSSIAN IDENTITY THROUGH  
YOUTH SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES  
IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS FEDERAL DISTRICT**

*This article examines the perceptions of young people in the North Caucasus Federal District regarding their role in strengthening Russian national identity within the region, the significance of interethnic relations and contemporary methods of optimizing them, and the importance of ethnic traditions and their promotion in this process. The views of the younger generation are an important indicator of socio-political and cultural processes, as young people today are leading various social and cultural initiatives. Given their involvement in the global media landscape, which is exploited by hostile forces to disseminate destructive ideas of “decolonization,” the focus of these initiatives should be the subject of scholarly attention. This study draws primarily on the materials submitted by youth organizations for grants from the Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives for the period 2017–2025, aimed at strengthening Russian identity in the region. An analysis of the applications identified projects based on ethnic traditions, their popularization, and using them in optimizing interethnic relations; projects that foster friendly contacts within various youth communities; and projects aimed at identifying and enhancing unifying meanings and symbols. It should be noted that the applications reviewed correct the unifying notions identified by scholars: a shared state, the Russian language, native land, responsibility for the fate of Russia, a shared historical past, and common symbols.*

**Keywords:** North Caucasus, youth, cultural initiatives, Russian identity

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