

Education difficulties the Sami minority faces in Tromso

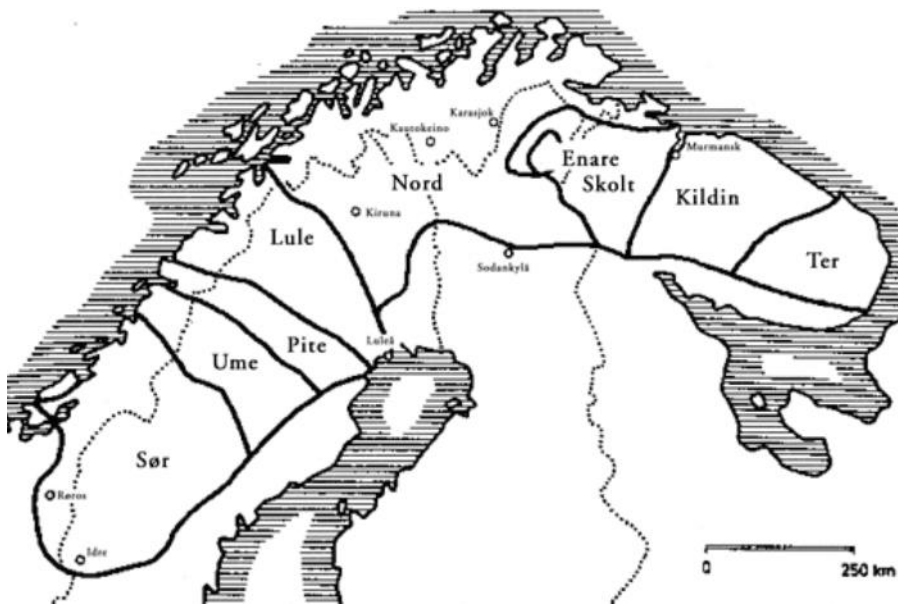
Introduction

For our final group project, we chose the Sami minority living in the Norwegian city of Tromso and we focused on the education difficulties that this specific group of people may face in their everyday life. But first of all, it is necessary to elaborate some terms.

The Sami are an Indigenous people living on the northern territories of four modern countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (on the Kola Peninsula in the North-West of the country). This area is traditionally called Sápmi. The Norwegian translation of this Sami word is 'Sameland' – Sami land, that means the land where Sami have been living since prehistoric times. The Sami people have their own language, the Sami language, that belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of languages and has common features with Finnish, Hungarian, Estonian, Mordvinian, Zyrian and Karelian. Although there are nine – alive - dialect groups within the Sami language – Northern Sami, Lule Sami, Southern Sami, Kildin Sami, Skolt Sami, Inari Sami, Pite Sami, Ume Sami, and Ter Sami - "the Sami linguistic area undoubtedly constitutes a unit, as the immediate neighboring dialects are mutually understandable". The four biggest Sami dialect groups are Northern Sami (about 85 % of all the Sami speakers, 16,000 – 18,000 people), Southern Sami, Lule Sami and Kildin Sami (about 600 – 800 speakers each).



The given number of the Sami population in Norway is the largest: from 40,000 people to 60,000 –70,000 people. They are usually divided into three groups: "the Northern Sami, the Lule Sami, and the Southern Sami.



A little about the history of the Sami of Norway

During the period of Norwegianization “all things “Sami” were regarded as beggarly, old fashioned, reactionary and – in many circles – heathen”. The Sami people were strongly ashamed by many state and public organizations for being unlike the “civilized” majority of the population. Furthermore, the Norwegians’ attitude towards the Sami people manifested itself as purely negative discrimination. This created a situation where “the only way to save the ‘Lapps’ [another name for the Sami people] was for them to merge into the Norwegian People”. Most of the Sami people, being afraid of discrimination, tried to become “good Norwegian citizens”. The result was a Sami ethnic cleansing: according to the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of Sami in the municipality of Kvænangen, Troms county, reduced from 44% to 0% in the period of 1930–1950. The Norwegian state and the majority of the population did their best to make the Sami people refuse the public use of their language and culture and, as a consequence, hide their indigenous identity, in other words, make it invisible to others. During the period of assimilation such aspects of the Sami identity as language and culture were considered to be a stigma: “Norwegian politics made the people believe that Sami-ness was something inferior, something connected with old days and poor days.”. It was a realization of the Socio-Darwinistic idea that meant: the more civilized the Sami got, the more Norwegian they got. So “being modern meant being Norwegian; being old-fashioned, dirty and poor meant being Sami”. Therefore, the Sami had to hide their identity. However, during this period, the Sami identity was only expressed “in closed monoethnic Sami spheres” and their indigenous identities did not disappear.

The period of revitalization of the Sami language, culture, and identity started within the time period of the assimilation process: directly after the end of World War II. What is more, the revitalization started within the international movement for indigenous rights which was an integral part of the international movement for human rights. Gradually, the ideas about indigenous human rights appeared in Norway. “A new generation of Sami politicians were inspired by the ideas of equality and the right of self-determination. The young Sami generation initiated the establishment of a number of Sami organizations headed by the Nordic Sami Council founded in 1956. During the period of revitalization when the authorities’ and (partly) society’s attitude towards the Sami people

started changing, favorable circumstances appeared which allowed identity to “wake up” and be expressed openly.

In the 1960s-1970s the change of attitude towards Sami as an indigenous people gave rise to the re-evaluation of their culture and the re-emergence of their language. At the 1971 Sami Conference it was stated that the Sami were “one people with their own area of residence, one common language and their own structure of culture and society”. However, while being recognized as an indigenous people internationally, the Sami were not recognized as such in their own country. Moreover, in the society the attitude towards the Sami people continued as it had during the period of Norwegianization.

In 1981 in connection with the Alta case the Norwegian government recognized the Sami as an indigenous people and gave them corresponding rights as such in 1989, the Sami Parliament of Norway was established. In 1992 when the Sami Language Act was passed in the country is to make it possible for the Sami people in Norway to safeguard and develop their language, culture and way of life. Moreover, the Sami Language Act states that Sami and Norwegian are equal languages and have equal status. It means that Sami people have a right to services in their native language. In this Act the state takes on the responsibility to “impose corresponding obligations on public bodies to communicate in Sami both orally and in writing and to provide information to the Sami population in Sami”. The Sami Language Act was followed by the Education Act that was passed in Norway in 1998. It concerns primary and secondary education and training in the country.

The Act is based on basic human rights and is aimed “to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking”. It states that Sami pupils have “the right to receive their education both in Sami and through the medium of Sami” (The Education Act 2013 [internet based document]). Concerning the content of the education, schools are required to provide education concerning the Sami people, their language, culture and civic life in conjunction with other subjects.

The Norwegian authorities have really done a lot to rehabilitate the Sami people in their human and indigenous rights, safeguard their interests by law, and to create an appropriate atmosphere in the country for them to stand firmly on their feet and to feel equal with the majority of population.

A direct result of the political and cultural revitalization of the Sami identity is the establishment of the Sami National Day, a holiday that unites all Sami people. The decision to establish and celebrate the Sami National Day was made at the 15th Nordic Sami Conference in Helsinki in 1992.



The Sami are often called “the people of the sun and wind”, and the flag symbolizes this: “the circle on the flag is a sun-and-moon symbol. The solar ring is red, the lunar ring blue. The flag is in the Sami colors: red, green, yellow and blue”.

Tromsø is situated in the North of Norway, North of the Arctic Circle. It is quite a big city, the 8th biggest city of the country. The number of Tromsø population on January 1, 2012, was 69,116. It consists of Norwegians, including Sami people, and immigrants that came to Norway to live there. There is no exact data about the number of Sami in Tromsø: the given number of the people varies from 50,000 to 80,000. There is one more big group of people living in Tromsø – students, both Norwegian and international. The international students make up around 10-15 % of the university’s students. The Sami dialect spoken in Tromsø is supposed to be Northern Sami. Taking into consideration that fact that a lot of Sami have been coming to the city from other parts of Norway and other countries where the Sami language is spoken (nowadays, mainly, in order to obtain higher education at the University of Tromsø), other Sami dialects are spoken in Tromsø.

The Sami National Day was celebrated for the first time on February 6, 1993. Since the time it started being celebrated in the city, Tromsø Sami identity has become much more visible in the society. More and more Sami people have become proud of being Sami, stopped being afraid of revealing their indigenous identity openly, and joined Tromsø Sami community.

At the end of 1960s – beginning of the 1970s, there was the first wave of Tromsø Sami revitalization. At the beginning of the 1970s, the Sami students entering the just opened University of Tromsø were inspired by the international indigenous movement to find out more about their Sami background, Sami history, and Sami language. As the interviewees of Valentina Kharina’s thesis: “The Sami National Day as a Prism to Tromsø Sami Identity: The Past and the Present” say, the Sami language was spoken at home but the people couldn’t write it properly. So the Sami identity has never been lost: it was invisible in the Norwegian society during the period of Norwegianization, but thoroughly kept within the closed Sami society. The Sami students of the 1970s were so active that they started negotiating with the university demanding more Sami language professors. If the university agreed to do more for Sami language, education, then it will also affect the school further down, primary and secondary, high schools. The young Sami generation was very serious about the revitalization of the Sami language and culture, and the promotion of the Sami education. They thought several decades ahead, taking care of the next Sami generations.

So a crucial organization regarding the education on Sami issues is the University of Tromsø that was established in 1968 (Kharina 2013: 48). In 1990, a center dedicated to Sami issues was founded at this university (Kharina 2013: 48). Currently, Sami components in study programs are present at all faculties at the University of Tromsø, and there are a number of research projects on Sami issues being conducted (Kharina 2013: 48). According to Kharina, the university campus serves as a living reflection of the Sami language and culture, both traditional and modern. Any written texts visible in the area of the university are written not only in Norwegian but also in Sami (Kharina 2013: 48). What is more, the university has a building named Ardna, which is a Sami cultural building, where the old Sami traditions are represented in a modern way, as well as a spectacular collection of contemporary Sami arts, which is open to the public (Kharina 2013: 49). Another facility engaged in the promotion of Sami issues is the Tromsø Museum, which is currently a part of the university and where the public can observe visualized effects of research projects conducted at the Tromsø university (Kharina 2013: 51). Thus, the University of Tromsø puts a lot of effort into the promotion of education about the Sami people.

Despite the efforts that are being made to promote Sami culture, the Sami are frequently discriminated against by Norwegian society (Kharina 2013: 60). One of Kharina's interviewees witnessed instances of discriminatory behaviour targeted at Sami people by Norwegians (Kharina 2013: 60). The informant told a story about a girl who was a new student at Tromsø university and had an accent that is specific to members of the Sami community (Kharina 2013: 60). Having heard the accent, Norwegian students laughed at her and imitated her manner of speaking (Kharina 2013: 60). Such treatment of the student made her avoid appearing in public places in fear of being harassed (Kharina 2013: 60). Therefore, discrimination might deprive Sami students of a sense of security and interfere with their education.

According to another person interviewed by Kharina (2013: 62), Sami people are frequently stigmatized as a troublesome group. Such an opinion of the Sami community is, according to Kharina, related to reindeer herding. Norwegians insist that Sami reduce the number of animals they have, while the Sami themselves are reluctant to do so because it would be connected with losing a job the whole family is involved in (Kharina 2013: 62). The Sami are also considered problematic because of environmental issues, including the extraction of natural resources in traditional Sami areas (Kharina 2013: 62). The informant stated that Norwegians frequently associate the word "Sami" with problems (Kharina 2013: 62). Hence, the prejudice against the Sami people that Norwegians have developed results from the problems that, according to them, Sami people pose.

Another essential issue that has deepened the antagonism against the Sami people is the conflict over the Sami administrative language area (Kharina 2013: 62-64). One of Kharina's interviewees said: "what happened in Tromsø [in 2011] was that the left side, the socialist party and the social democrats, said: 'Let us make Tromsø a part of the Sami Administrative Area because then we will get money to make Sami signs, and to improve the education. Then the right wing took the opportunity of battling against this suggestion as a central part of their election campaign. That

opened a flow of aggression towards the Sami". Another informant stated that Norwegians from Tromsø thought that incorporating Tromsø into the Sami Administrative Language Area would privilege the Sami living in this city (Kharina 2013: 62-63). According to a number of informants, this is a faulty line of reasoning. Nevertheless, the negative attitudes toward the Sami prevail in the Norwegian society of Tromsø (Kharina 2013: 62-64).

Although the overall attitude toward Sami in Tromsø tends to be rather negative, there is also a positive element that is connected to this community - the Sami National Day (Kharina 2013: 65). Since the first celebration of this event in the 1990s, it has been open to the public (Kharina 2013: 65). In the first years of the Sami National Day, most participants were the Sami people (Kharina 2013: 65). This situation has, nevertheless, changed, and the number of people from outside the community who attend the Sami National Day has increased, which has been due to the fact that the municipality of Tromsø has got involved in preparing and celebrating the event (Kharina 2013: 58-59). Several nursery and primary schools are also engaged in the celebration of the event (Kharina 2013: 59). Hence, the Sami National Day, which largely contributes to the promotion of education about the Sami community, has gained popularity over the recent years.

In brief, the interviews conducted by Kharina (2013) show that despite the efforts that are being made at the Tromsø university, the Sami are not entirely accepted by the society of Tromsø. This is indicative of the fact that there is still some work to be done in terms of education about Sami issues. Nevertheless, as Kharina (2013: 68) concludes, the identity of the community of Sami people has got stronger over the past 20 years and is still getting stronger.

Regarding the legal aspects of Sami education in Norway today:

Research questions

1. How legal acts affected and affect the educational situation of the Sami minority in Norway?
2. What results do those legal acts bring?
3. What are the approaches of the Sami minority towards current regulations regarding their situation?

Collection of the data

The data required to answer these questions has its source in the theoretical part of the Zsuzsanna SZILVÁSI's paper named "The Learning of and in Sami in the Norwegian School Education" as well as in its empirical part where the author presents a study on the educational situation of Sami minority and its results.

Tokens

"Norwegian nationalism intensified and it led to a hostile atmosphere towards the Sami and other ethnic minorities in the country. This attitude also manifested itself in the policy concerning minorities."

"In addition, a new teaching programme, instructions and law about the public schools were introduced, which stated that the main language of instruction should be Norwegian. Hence, Sami and other minority languages could only be used as a supporting language to help with explanations at school (M. Jávorszky 1991: 36, O.M. Hætta 2002: 58)"

"Indeed, the use of Sami was strictly prohibited, not only during lessons, but during break time, too."

"One of the results [...] is that the number of Sami able to read and write in their mother tongue is nowadays considerably low."

"42% of the respondents could read in Sami quite well or very well, while only 27% could write well in Sami; 21% can understand and speak Sami, but they cannot read it nor write it (SEG 2000: 19, 22)."

"With the change in the nationalistic character of the Norwegian minority (language) policy, the nationalistic language sociology was replaced by vernacularism, which supports the minority languages and motivates the revitalization of the language (I. Lanstyák 2009: 32).

The Sami Act- "states that every child of primary school age has the right to learn Sami and to be educated in Sami, in the administrative area for the Sami language –irrespective of the number of pupils"

Analysis and interpretation

The educational situation of the Sami minority during the 18th and 19th centuries was very harsh due to the rise of nationalism in Norway in this period. The Sami minority had not created any regulations that could help their

linguistic and educational situation during that time. Sami teachers were fired from schools and replaced with Norwegian teachers as a means of achieving linguistic unity with the Sami minority in Norway. Many bilingual course books were also banned from schools, so the children representing the Sami minority could focus solely on learning the Norwegian language. All of these nationalistic regulations have led to a situation where the use of Sami was limited to be used as a supportive language to make students understand concepts that were considered incoherent by them in Norwegian. Students couldn't speak Saami in classrooms. Moreover, the use of Saami was also prohibited during breaks, therefore Sami students had limited linguistic opportunities to use and develop their mother tongue. All of this has led to a situation where less than 50% of the Saami minority could read well in their mother tongue and only around ¼ could write well in Sami.

Fortunately for the Sami minority, in the first half of the 20th century, the nationalism approach in Norway was in decline. This resulted in many legal acts that positively affected the educational and linguistic situation of the Saami minority. As stated by Minnerup and Solberg the second half of the 20th century has brought a great deal of appreciation towards the cultural, traditional, and linguistic identity of the Saami people. The Sami minority started to preserve their identity by introducing new Sami organizations and cooperating with the Norwegian Cultural Board. All of this has led to the passing of the Sami Act in 1987. The main change provided by the act is that "that every child of primary school age has the right to learn Sami and to be educated in Sami".

Some other examples of regulations provided by the Sami Act 1987:

§ 1-1. The purpose of the Act.

The purpose of the Act is to enable the Sami people in Norway to safeguard and develop their language, culture, and way of life.

§ 1-5. Sami languages.

Sami and Norwegian are languages of equal worth.

§ 3-4. Extended right to use Sami in the judicial system.

1. Any person has a right to submit written pleadings with appendices, written evidence, or other written applications in Sami. If the court is to transmit the application to an opposite party, it shall ensure that the document is translated into Norwegian. The translation may be omitted with the consent of the opposite party.

2. Any person has a right to make an oral application to the court in Sami if statutory legal procedure allows oral instead of written applications. If the court is under an obligation to record the application in writing, the person making the application may demand that it be written in Sami. Such a demand does not interrupt any time limit. Subsection 1, second and third sentences, apply correspondingly.

3. Any person has a right to speak Sami at court sittings. If a person who does not speak Sami participates in the proceedings, an interpreter appointed or approved by the court shall be used.

4. At the request of one of the parties, the president of the court may decide that the language used in the proceedings shall be Sami. Subsection 3, second sentence, shall apply correspondingly.

Overall, the Sami Act 1987 has significantly shifted the situation of the Sami minority in Norway. They were given multiple rights regarding education, jurisdiction, healthcare, and many administrative benefits. The educational situation was starting to slowly change from a point when using Sami was strictly prohibited to introducing Sami as a second language taught in schools in Norway. More and more Sami course books are being introduced to the general public. However, it is important to state that the Sami minority still strives to increase the importance of the Sami language in their societies. As presented by Szilvasi (2016: 89) the younger generations have a great urge to develop complex competencies in their native Sami language. While the educational situation of the Sami minority in Norway has definitely improved over centuries, the representatives of the Saami people highlight that there is still a lot to be done in this matter.

Conclusion

The Sami minority has experienced a lot of discrimination in Norway throughout the years regarding their cultural and linguistic heritage. After the years of Norwegian nationalism, the time for a more inclusive approach towards Sami and other minorities has come. Actions undertaken by the Sami minority as well as the crucial Sami Act 1987 have dramatically changed the situation of the Sami minority for the positive. It is important to highlight the help provided by the Norwegian administration and government and their willingness to support the process of reviving the Sami heritage.

When it comes down to where the education of the Sami language takes place for the Sami minority in Tromsø, we can distinguish four domains: at home, at Sami associations, at school and through social life in public spaces. These four domains are the ones in which educational difficulties for the Sami minority may arise.

1. Education at home

One form of transfer of the language is when the Sami minority language is being handed down informally at home between generations. This form of education is not formally regulated and thus someone would assume that the appearance of difficulties in this domain would not be significant. However, due to the status of the Sami language as a minority language and the discrimination that Sami people have faced in Tromsø, this educational process may encounter obstacles as well.



Figure 1: Kine Mathilde and Ul-Juhán with their bilingual daughter. The photo has been published with the parents' consent.

This was the case for some parents in Tromsø that were asked to cut down on the use of the Sami language at home by health professionals when they visited the hospital for their child's health check-up. The father of a one-year-old, Ul-Juhán Partapuoli (31) says that it is always sad to get the message that Sami must be avoided when they talk to their child, while the mother, Kine Mathilde Andreassen (29) felt guilty for wanting to revive the Sami language by speaking Sami with her daughter as this was not recommended according to healthcare professionals. They also said that speaking the Sami language makes them feel that being Sami is a natural part of everyday life. On the other hand, the health nurses that asked the parents to only speak Norwegian with their daughter believe that the daughter's language will be hampered if they mix Sami and Norwegian. At the contrary, the National Center for Sami in Education says that previously there was a theory that the same person should not speak both Sami and Norwegian with the child, but this theory was abandoned as it seems that the fact that the child gets to hear the minority language most at home helps to strengthen that language.

Also, in a similar case, Ingá Máijá Sara's 2-year-old children did poorly during the language survey at Sentrum health station in Tromsø since the surveys are only conducted in Norwegian in Tromsø. This was the reason why they were told by the health nurse and the doctor that Sami had to be restricted and that they had to start speaking Norwegian at home. Sara describes that she felt that this was just the personal opinion of the nurse and the doctor. As a pediatrician herself, she has her children enrolled in a Sami kindergarten and at home they speak Sami, which is

also the mother tongue of both children. In relation to this case, the section leader for children and families in Tromsø municipality, Anne Lium Berger said that they will improve the offer of Sami language for the completion of these surveys.



Figure 2: Teacher and parent Marit Berit Eira / Photo: Samuel Frode

Lastly, Marit Berit Eira who is the mother of two children and on a daily basis works as a teacher at Prestvannet School, says that the situation for Sami is very different in Kautokeino, where she previously lived, and Tromsø. In Tromsø, Sami people are a minority, while when she lived in Kautokeino, which is part of the Sami Administrative Area, Sami was the main language and you could hear it everywhere. The children had family and friends around them, as well as grandparents who were good language resources. But in Tromsø this is missing and it is up to the parents to create meeting places and find people with whom the children can speak Sami.

2. Education at Sami associations

When it comes to the education that is offered by the Sami associations in Tromsø, first and foremost, Noereh is a politically independent Sami youth organization that aims to provide Sami youth with safe meeting places, including the national meeting which is arranged every year. Noereh was founded in the autumn of 2009 in Tromsø and has since become involved in several actions. Among other things, they have helped organize the Sami Pride, they have been involved in land encroachment, participated in Márkomeannu and Riddu Riddu festivals, and promoted the international Gáktebeaivi / Koftedagen (Sami cardigan day). All of these activities help the Sami youth get accustomed with Sami traditions.

The organization also points out that there are large knowledge gaps when it comes to education about Sami, Sami history and Sami cultural expressions in the Norwegian school. They believe that lack of knowledge is a problem for the society of Tromsø and it creates stereotypes and conflict. Regarding the new curricula that was implemented in Norwegian schools in 2020, Noereh views it as something positive, but emphasizes that teachers must develop their competence in line with what is expected of them. Also, Noereh believes that what is seen as the right knowledge in academia needs to be reconsidered so as to include history and cultural topics about the Sami population as well. Moreover, it pinpoints that inadequate language instruction is a problem for Sami youth and that primary and secondary schools throughout the country must facilitate the possibility of teaching Sami. In addition to this, Sami

people should be entitled to quality education in the Sami language in higher education as well, a development that will be also positive for teachers of Sami.

On another note, the city's Sami associations have joined forces in order to legally establish the Tromsø Sami House. This group consists of representatives from the Sami Student Association in Northern Norway (SSDN), the Noereh, the Sami Parents' Network and the Tromsø Sami Association. The establishment of this house would give the opportunity to Sami people to get to know more about Sami traditions.



Figure 3: Nora Kristine Grytøyr Nansmork / Photo: Maren Benedicte Nystad Magnificent

Nora Kristine Grytøyr Nansmork from the SSDN says that it is clearly necessary to have a Sami house in Tromsø and it is especially important for increased cohesion in the Sami population, but also because it would be a meeting place for Sami students who will hopefully enter the Sami labor market.

Risten Birje Steinfjell from the Sami Parents' Network in Tromsø also sees the benefit of such a house. She thinks it is important that Sami children and young people know that there is a Sami house in the city, where there is room for all Sami, a place where you can meet and use your language. As it is, the Sami meeting points in Tromsø are very few, something that hinders the educational process of the Sami language.

Lastly, Gáisi giellaguovddáš (language center) is a local language center that was officially opened in April 2004 in Tromsø and is owned and operated by Tromsø municipality. Its activities have as main focus the revitalization and maintenance of the Sami language and identity. More specifically, the language center's activities include Sami language courses, courses in traditional Sami crafts, preparing and developing of tools and teaching aids for use in the center's Sami teaching and other activities that promote Sami language and culture. For example, Gáisi Language Center in collaboration with the University of Tromsø proposes a beginner's course in Northern Sami in 2021. Also, Gáisi Language center is hoping to create Sami-language meeting points where children and young people in Tromsø can enjoy themselves and develop their language skills. Among other activities for children, Sami language camps are held by the Gáisi Language Center six times per year.

3. Education at school

When it comes to formal education, schools are important institutions regarding the language development and the efforts to give a language prestige. Therefore, it is an important step for most minority languages when their use

is promoted in schools. The choice of language at school is a key indicator of the position of the Sami language in society. As we can discover from the following table, the number of pupils receiving education in Sami language in Norway has progressively increased through the years. This is true for both Sami as a First Language and Sami as a Second Language. This steady increase and subsequent stability in the number of pupils studying Sami could also be due to the informal Sami language transfer at home that has been increased over the last twenty-five years.

The number of pupils receiving tuition in Sámi language in compulsory education in Norway 1990/91–2011/2012

Academic year	First language	Second language	Total number of pupils receiving Sámi tuition	Total number of pupils in Norway
1990/91	593	621	1,214	473,078
1991/92	626	736	1,362	467,501
1992/93	695	800	1,495	462,360
1993/94	743	937	1,680	468,061
1994/95	789	909	1,698	471,846
1995/96	791	964	1,755	478,540
1997/98	897	1,218	2,115	560,849*
1999/00	971	1,376	2,347	570,803
2005/06	998	2,057	3,055	622,031
2006/07	1,020	1,652	2,672	621,013
2007/08	1,027	1,515	2,542	618,589
2008/09	1,043	1,474	2,517	616,139
2009/10	1,010	1,336	2,346	615,927
2010/11	971	1,274	2,245	615,973
2011/12	940	1,213	2,153	614,413

*The 1997 education reform increased compulsory education from nine years to ten years. This means that the figures from after 1997 include one cohort more than the figures from before 1997.

In Tromsø, education in Sami is offered both in kindergarten and later in school. All Sami students have the right to education in Sami. Sami pupils can choose whether they want education in Northern Sami, Lule Sami or South Sami. They also choose whether they want Sami as their first language or second language, or possibly if they want to have both Sami and Norwegian as their first language.

Due to the lack of Sami kindergarten places in 2016, the municipality established a separate Sami kindergarten department in Sjømannsbyen kindergarten. In Sjømannsbyen kindergarten there is a Sami kindergarten and a Sami base. This kindergarten offers Sami education in a very early age and is composed of two Sami bases that aim to educate children on the Sami language, culture and way of life. At the Sami bases, the Sami language is the everyday language for children, parents and employees. These Sami bases include a lavvu (traditional Sami tent) and a toboggan (traditional Sami sled) for the winter, so children can learn about the Sami way of life.

Also, Guovssahas Mánáidgárdi is a Sami kindergarten that is located in Tromsø near Prestvannet School. Outside the kindergarten, there is a lavvu and duodji (traditional Sami handicraft) shop. Moreover, to experience and learn about traditional Sami practices, regular visits at the reindeer fence, at farms and fishing spots are scheduled.



Figure 4: Students at Prestvannet School in Tromsø / Photo: Dan Robert Larsen / NRK

Later in school, Sami education in Tromsø is provided by the Prestvannet School. In 1998, this school became the school in the municipality that students who chose Sami as their first language attended. However, today, Prestvannet School has the academic, organizational and personnel responsibility for all Sami language teaching taking place in the municipality, while most of these pupils go to their home schools as well.

The school currently has 359 students in 1st-7th grade, of which 321 are Norwegian-speaking and 50 Sami-speaking. From the autumn of 2020, there are 236 pupils who have Sami in the primary schools in Tromsø municipality. Of the 236 students, 79 students have Sami as their first language, 25 students Sami 2 and a total of 132 students has Sami 3. All schools in Tromsø municipality offer Sami teaching at all levels: Sami 1, Sami 2 and Sami 3. Those who want Sami education must fill in the registration form and send it to Prestvannet School.

**SAMI TEACHING
SUBMISSION AND UNAUTHORATION FORM
AT THE CHILDHOOD**

- We / I hereby want my / our child to have Sami education in primary school:
Tick!
- Sami class - steps: _____
- North Sámi Lule Sámi South Sámi
- Sami 1 - Sami as a first language
- Sami 2 - Sami as a second language
- Sami 3 - Sami as a second language with no prior knowledge of Sami
- We / I hereby announce that our / my child will quit Sami instruction.

Moreover, a separate class that follows the Sami Knowledge Promotion Reform only takes place at Prestvannet School. This means that the students receive all instruction in Sami. In the school year 2020-2021, 50 students will receive all instruction in Sami and are divided into the following groups:
1st-2nd grade: 19 students, 2nd-4th grade: 19 students, 5th-7th grade: 12 students.



Figure 5: Risten / Photo: Dan Robert Larsen / NRK

12-year-old Risten who is in the 6th grade at Prestvannet school thinks that it is very good to be a student there and it is nice to be able to speak Sami at school and not just at home. Risten also thinks that it is very nice that many pupils want to learn the language and thus she will have more people to speak Sami with, while she says that it is very good that they also have many books in Sami so they can learn.

However, nowadays, the Sami population of Tromsø has increased and thus many Sami inhabitants are expressing the need for the increase of kindergartens and schools offering education in Sami. This is an opinion shared with the mayor of Tromsø, Kristin Røymo who thinks that there should be more Sami kindergarten places and development of Sami meeting places. Also, Ann Kristine Hætta who is a



Figure 6: Ann Kristine Hætta with her children at the Sami kindergarten / Photo: Mariela Idivuoma / NRK



Figure 7: Kila Anti, Daniel Eriksen and their son Iver / Photo: Mariela Idivuoma / NRK

Sami teacher and has her two daughters enrolled in Sami class and Sami kindergarten in Tromsø, where all teaching takes place in Sami, thinks that there should be Sami meeting places and language arenas in the city. Moreover, Kila Anti has moved from Karasjok to Tromsø with his son Iver and his partner Daniel Eriksen and the family has already been waiting for a kindergarten place for over a year.



Figure 8: Johan Vasara, member of Tromsø Labor Party

Another option that Johan Vasara, member of Tromsø Labor Party, has proposed is the establishing of a Sami school in the municipality of Tromsø, Tromsø Sami School. The existence of a school like that would offer a solution to the current educational difficulties that Sami students and teachers are facing.

Firstly, Sami students are currently taught Sami in their local schools and are thus secluded, while in the Tromsø Sami School a strong language environment could be created, like the ones that exist in the Sami kindergartens. Also, Sami teachers wouldn't be obliged to move from one school to the other, but it will be possible to build larger interdisciplinary Sami teaching environments. Lastly, in a Tromsø Sami School it would be easier to regulate issues concerning teachers' absences and the curricula and therefore it would be possible to provide a more quality education in Sami.

On another note, teaching aids are important tools that ensure that students develop basic skills and attain the competence goals relevant to their study program. So, in 2010 and 2014, the Sami Parliament gathered information about the state of instructional material and teaching aids for Sami. The Sami Parliament's overview is divided by language and explains the situation for each subject and grade level distinguishing the following categories: 1. Needs as outlined in the curriculum for Kunnskapsløftet samisk (Sami Knowledge Promotion Reform) are covered - textbooks and digital resources are available, the majority of competence objectives are covered 2. Part of the required qualifications as outlined in the Kunnskapsløftet samisk are covered – textbooks/booklets/digital resources are available 3. Textbooks are available covering almost all of the previous curriculum 4. Very little coverage of the competence aims or no teaching aids at all. The results showed that an improvement took place, but many of the needs were still uncovered and thus this certainly constitutes an educational difficulty that Sami students face.

The State of Teaching Aids for North Sami at the Primary and Lower Secondary Level in 2010 and 2014 – Coverage by Subject and Grade

	Covered	Partly Covered	Almost Covered (old curriculum)	Very Little/Almost No coverage	Total:
Primary 2010	13	26	31	21	91
Primary 2014	36	22	7	26	91
Lower Secondary 2010	3	13	11	15	42
Lower Secondary 2014	21	3	9	9	42

The State of Teaching Aids for Lule Sami at the Primary and Lower Secondary Level in 2010 and 2014 – Coverage by Subject and Grade

	Covered	Partly Covered	Almost Covered (old curriculum)	Very Little/Almost No coverage	Total:
Primary 2010	4	41	3	43	91
Primary 2014	21	9	6	55	91
Lower Secondary 2010	0	3	5	34	42
Lower Secondary 2014	3	3	0	36	42

The State of Teaching Aids for South Sami at the Primary and Lower Secondary Level in 2010 and 2014 – Coverage by Subject and Grade

	Covered	Partly Covered	Almost Covered (old curriculum)	Very Little/Almost No coverage	Total:
Primary 2010	4	23	3	61	91
Primary 2014	24	4	0	63	91
Lower Secondary 2010	0	0	0	42	42
Lower Secondary 2014	0	3	0	39	42

Another example of the educational difficulties in regard of the textbooks is the fact that some textbooks provide misleading information about the Sami people. In particular, reindeer herder and father Henrik Gaup was asked to assist his fifth-grader daughter Eli Maret with a question about reindeer husbandry. She has to talk about her own reindeer grazing district which is close to Tromsø. The question is as follows: “Find out if you have a reindeer grazing district near where you live. What is the name of the area? How many reindeer are associated with it? Does it create a problem for the place where you live? If so, which ones?” (excerpt from the textbook “Yggdrasil 5”).



Figure 9: Henrik Gaup and the question from the textbook / Photo: Mariela Idivuoma / NRK

Henrik Gaup says that the question is asked in a way that encourages students to find problems with reindeer husbandry, where the same book does not ask the same type of question in relation to, for example, another animal

husbandry. There are many examples of formulations similar to the one in Yggdrasil that are problematic and the Sami theme in school textbooks is a major challenge.

4. Social life



Figure 10: Alessia Reina / Photo: Simon Piera Paulsen / NRK

When it comes to social life, the educational difficulties that may arise are due to the image that the Sami minority has in Tromsø. According to politician Alessia Reina as a student, you have to fight every year to get Sami as a language at school, because the system works against you. Alessia Reina believes that fewer people will take Sami as a subject when they face so much opposition. The main problem for her, lies in the facilitation of teaching, because the Sami language is not adapted in the normal Norwegian school. She says that there must be better facilitation so that it does not become a burden for the school and the students, which may think of abandoning the Sami learning courses. She herself has had Sami teaching since the sixth grade in primary school, and throughout high school. She says that if you are going to have Sami at school you will be the special kid in the class. You will miss hours, or you will get too many hours. These facts may lead to students losing motivation and thus to not pursuing a Sami education.

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