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## **SÁMI**

**The Sámi language in education in Sweden**

| 2nd Edition |

| Regional dossiers series |



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Helga Kuipers-Zandberg and Anna Fardau Schukking have been responsible for the publication of this Mercator Regional Dossier.

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## Glossary

Places names are spelled or called different in all Sámi varieties. The list of the Sámi Language Centre (2020) with versions in North, Lule, South or Ume Sámi is mainly used in this dossier:

<b>Sámi language</b>	<b>Swedish</b>	<b>Sámi language</b>	<b>Swedish</b>
Ååre	Åre	Láttevárri	Lannavaara
Aarborte	Hattfjellidal	Liksjoe	Lycksele
Ålvdaelie	Ålvdalen	Lujávri	Lovozero
Árjepluovve	Arjeplog	Lusspie	Storuman
Árviesjávvríe	Arvidsjaur	Máláge	Malå
Bádáaddjo	Bodö	Orrestaare	Örnsköldsvik
Bierje	Berg	Roavvenjárga	Rovaniemi
Dearna	Tärnaby	Romsa	Tromsö
Gárasavvon	Karesuando	Sjådtavaellie	Sundsvall
Gávtavvríe	Ammarnäs	Sjeltie	Åsele
Giron	Kiruna	Staare	Östersund
Guovdageaidnu	Kautokeino	Straejmie	Strömsund
Herjedaelie	Härjedalen	Stuehkie / Stockhoalbma	Stockholm
Jáhkámáhkke / Dálvvadis	Jokkmokk	Suorssá	Sorsele
Julevu	Luleå	Ubmeje	Umeå
Kárášjohka	Karasjok	Váhtjer / Jiellivárre	Gällivare
Kraapohke	Dorotea	Vualtjere	Vilhelmina
Kráavan Luspíe	Krokom	Vyöddale	Vindeln

## Foreword

**background** Regional and minority languages are languages that differ from the official state language. The Mercator Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning uses the definition for these languages defined by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML):

“Regional and minority languages are languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants”. The Mercator Research Centre aims at the acquisition, application and circulation of knowledge about these regional and minority languages in education. An important means to achieve this goal is the Regional dossiers series: documents that provide the most essential features of the education system of regions with a lesser used regional or minority language.

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**aim** The aim of the Regional dossiers series is to provide a concise description of minority languages in education, mainly in Europe but also in other parts of the world. Aspects that are addressed include features of the education system, recent educational policies, main actors, legal arrangements and support structures, as well as quantitative aspects such as the number of schools, teachers, pupils, and financial investments. Because of this fixed structure the dossiers in the series are easy to compare.

**target group** The dossiers serve several purposes and are relevant for policymakers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists who wish to explore developments in minority language schooling in Europe. They can also serve as a first orientation towards further research, or function as a source of ideas for improving educational provisions.

**link with Eurydice** The format of the Regional dossiers follows the format of Eurydice - the information network on education in Europe – in

order to link the regional descriptions with those of national education systems. Eurydice provides information on the administration and structure of national education systems in the member states of the European Union.

**contents**

Every Regional dossier begins with an introduction about the region concerned, followed by six sections that each deal with a specific level of the education system (e.g. primary education). Sections eight and nine cover the main lines of research into education of the concerned minority language, the prospects for the minority language in general and for education in particular. The tenth section (optional) gives a summary of statistics. Lists of regulations, publications and useful addresses concerning the minority language, are given at the end of the dossier.

## 1 Introduction

### language

Sámi/Sami/Saami languages (North Sámi: *sámegiella*) are a group of Finno-Ugric languages spoken mainly in Sápmi, the land of the Sámi people in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia (see Figure 1). Due to demographic flows to urban areas and elsewhere, Sámi languages are today also spoken outside Sápmi. Untrained speakers of the South, Central and Eastern Sámi varieties cannot understand one another, although all languages share parts of a common vocabulary. The Sámi were regarded as inferior people and had to deal until the 1970s with strong pressure of authorities and church to assimilate into majority society. Sámi people still face discrimination from majority society (Poggats, 2018), which was for example visible in hate speech on social media and the torture of reindeer after herding community Girjas won a court case against the state regarding the management of hunting and fishing rights in 2020. The long period of forced language shift made all languages endangered, especially South and Eastern Sámi. The course of history made Central Sámi variety North (or Northern) Sámi the dominant Sámi variety, also among the five varieties spoken in Sweden. The orthography of Central Sámi varieties North and Lule Sámi and South Sámi variety South(ern) Sámi are by the Nordic states recognized in 1979, 1983 and 1978. The orthographies of South Sámi variety Ume Sámi and Central Sámi variety Pite Sámi were officially recognized in 2016 and 2019.

### population

Only Finland records official numbers of Sámi residents, while numbers from the other states are positive estimations based on incomplete historic ethnic registrations. The most positive estimations count the population up to 100.000 people of which 50.000 – 65.000 live in Norway, 20.000 to 40.000 in Sweden, 10.000 in Finland and 2.000 in Russia. The only official numbers in Sweden and Norway are provided by the Sámi Parliaments, which include the number of people with the right to vote in the Sámi Parliament elections and that actively made the choice to join the electoral register. Since many Sámi are not active in Sámi politics and the Swedish and Norwegian numbers exclude

EDUCATION AND LESSER USED LANGUAGES

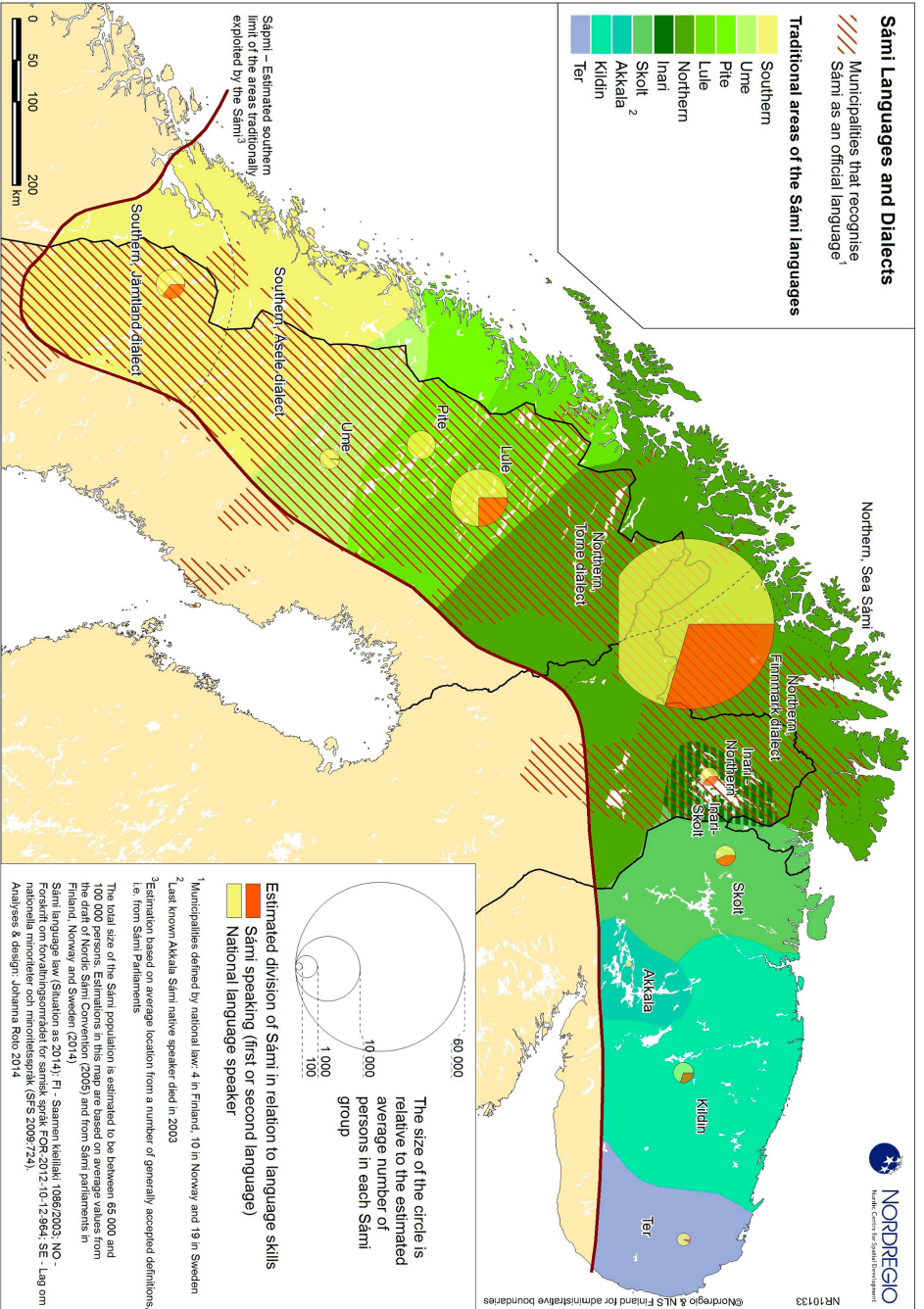


Figure 1. Sámi languages and varieties in Sápmi (Nordregio, 2014).



minors under 18, it is hard to base the population estimations on the electoral register. However, the numbers do give an understanding of how many Sámi in these two countries are openly active in political issues concerning the Sámi people. In 2017, the electoral registers for the Sámi Parliament of Sweden included 8.766 people (Sámi Parliament of Sweden, 2020) and for the Sámi Parliament of Norway 11.757 people (Johansen et al. 2019, p. 102). The official voting list for the Sámi Parliament of Finland-elections in 2019 included 10.759 people; the list counts all who stated in the national register their Sámi identity and/or language (less than a third stated Sámi as their mother tongue), including children with the right to vote when turning 18 (Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2020). The number of active Sámi speakers is estimated to be less than a third of the total population. It is difficult to know what the concept of speakers may include and it might be more correct to say that a third of the Sámi population has a linguistic connection to the ancestral language, which varies from being an active first language speaker to having a passive knowledge of phrases and words.

Sámi languages are the majority language in some municipalities in Northern Norway, mainly in Guovdageaidnu and Kárásjohka, where 80 – 90% of the ±5.500 residents have a linguistic connection to at least one Sámi language. Sámi also live in more concentrated numbers in some northern municipalities in Finland and Sweden, such as Giron, Jåhkâmáhkke and Váhtjer (see Figure 2). Although the Sámi may be in majority in some linguistic pockets, most live in places where they are in clear minority. It is estimated that 500 to 1.000 people use South Sámi and 650 people Lule Sámi actively in Norway and Sweden. Pite and Ume Sámi are spoken by 30 – 50 and 10 – 20 people in Sweden. North Sámi is spoken by 20.000 to 25.000 people: mainly in Norway, 6.000 in Sweden and 2.000 in Finland. Speakers of Eastern Sámi varieties Inari (300 – 400), Skolt (300), Kildin (100 – 200), Ter and Akkala (0-10) live in Finland and on the Russian Kola Peninsula (Nordic Resource Centre for Sámi Languages, 2020).

**language status** The Sámi were recognized as an Indigenous People by the Swedish government in 1977 and included as a people in the constitution in 2011, stating their cultural and social life shall be promoted. A Swedish Sámi Parliament was established in Giron in 1993. Politicians and office officials of this popularly elected government body and state agency examine issues dealing with Sámi culture in Sweden. They promote, in accordance with the Sámi Parliament Act, a living and dynamic Sámi culture by initiating activities and proposing actions. Sweden ratified the Framework Convention for the Rights of National Minorities and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2000, including the Sámi and their languages in both instruments. Sweden has not ratified ILO 169: in Sápmi, only Norway ratified this convention of UN agency ILO concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, with Part VI including educational rights. The public sector is, according to the Language Act of 2009, responsible to protect and promote Sámi language. The Discrimination Act of 2008 complements the general obligation to protect the Sámi culture and language, as guaranteed in the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages of 2010. This act combined and strengthened rights of previous acts, such as the right to use Sámi in written communication with authorities, to have influence on Sámi cultural issues, to have elderly care in Sámi and for youth to learn and develop their language and cultural identity. State, regional and local authorities must include and inform Sámi people about their rights. People have the right for interpreters and translated documents in court and Sámi can be used orally and written in courts of Árjepluovve, Giron, Jáhkámáhkke and Váhhtjer.

Due to the same act, municipalities and regions must create goals and guidelines for policies on minority languages and cultures. They can, if the need is addressed by the population, be an administrative area for Sámi language, which should empower its use and development. Currently, 25 of the 290 municipalities (see Figure 2) and 15 of the 20 regions have this status. As such, state subsidy is made available for needs mapped and prioritized together with Sámi people, for example

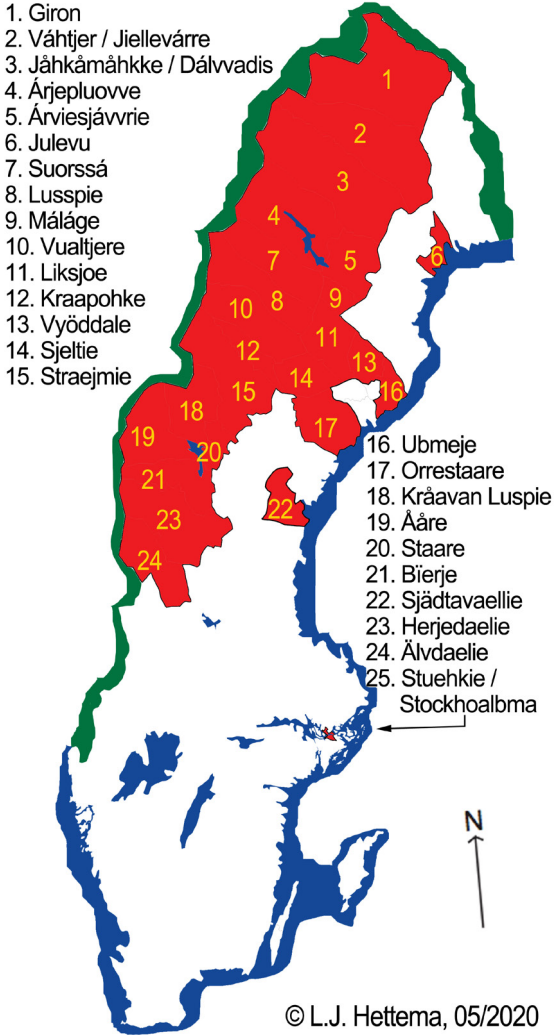


Figure 2. Administrative areas for Sámi language in Sweden. Data adapted from Minoritet.se (2020) and applied to a general map provided by Statistics Sweden (SCB).

needs among elderly and children, healthcare and cultural initiatives. One living in an administrative area has the right to communicate orally and written in Sámi with local authorities and should have access to pre-school and elderly care in their Sámi language.

Although several acts have the ambition to strengthen the status of Sámi languages in Sweden, one important area of language development is not included, namely schools and the educational sector. This can be compared to, for example, Norway, where all national teacher education programs include Indigenous knowledge as obligatory part of the education.

**status of  
language  
education**

The Nomad school was created for children of nomadic mountain reindeer herders in the early 1900s (Svonni, 2007). The herders were, from a social Darwinist perspective, regarded less advanced than Sámi people with other livelihoods and majority society. Their children had to follow a special track in schooling to assimilate in majority society, with instruction in Swedish and where using Sámi language was discouraged and penalized. Sámi became a language subject in the 1950s. In 1962, a reorganisation made the school voluntary, for all Sámi children and equivalent to municipal schools. However, it is suggested that its history as a school for 'lesser advanced people' is a reason why children of non-reindeer herding families were more likely enrolled at municipal schools, which could still be the case for the current Sámi school.

Sámi language was a mandatory subject that could be taught 2 hours per week at Sámi school, but it was seldom the language of literacy and pupils learned to write and read in the majority language. The number of instruction hours increased due to the mother tongue reform. At its height, Sámi was taught 6 – 8 hours a week in grade 1 – 3 and 4 hours a week in grade 4 – 6. Mother tongue teaching had opposing interest: from assimilating Sámi pupils in the education system until 1966, to supporting a child's Sámi linguistic and cultural identity (Bajqinca, 2019). Mother tongue tuition lacks attention in the education system since 1989 and Swedish is again seen as a crucial unifying value. Teaching of Sámi as a language subject

(1 – 2 hours a week) at compulsory and upper-secondary schools started as part of home language tuition in 1977.

Sámi schools are mainly for pupils whose parents self-identify as Sámi and are located in Dearná (Lusspie municipality), Gárasavvon (Giron municipality), Giron, Jáhkâmáhkke and Váhtjer. The instruction is in Sámi and Swedish. Sámi language, for first and for second language speakers, and subjects from a Sámi perspective are taught in all grades: from pre-school class to grade 6. The educated variety differs: Dearná has a South and North Sámi language teacher, Lule and North Sámi can be taught in Jáhkâmáhkke and Váhtjer, and North Sámi in Gárasavvon and Giron. A pupil in Giron with South Sámi as home language, for example, has the right to learn South Sámi and can 1 – 2 times a week receive distance-education in this language by a Sámi School Board teacher. If North and South Sámi are the pupil's home language, 2 hours on-site teaching in North Sámi and 2 hours of distance-education in South Sámi can be given a week.

Sámi school is equivalent to municipal school and regulated in the Education Act of 2010. Sámi can at municipal school be offered as mother tongue tuition from grade 1 to upper-secondary school and as language subject in grade 6 – 9 and upper-secondary school. Integrated Sámi education can be arranged from pre-school class to grade 9. Sámi pupils could go to a school with grade 7 – 9 in Váhtjer from the mid-1960s until the introduction of integrated education in the mid-1980s. Research revealed disadvantages between curricula for Sámi school and for majority pupils, and an imbalance between Sámi and Swedish literacy skills (see chapter 9).

**education  
system**

The former uniform and centrally planned education system changed radically since the 1990s, now combining neo-liberal values as performance and competition with traditional values as social inclusion and equality. Municipalities became responsible for state-run schools, parents received the right to decide which school their child attends and market elements were added to create competition between schools. The act, reformed assessments and national curricula of 2011, should

increase effectiveness, lift academic performance and improve employability.

Children aged 1 – 5 years can attend pre-school (förskola). Education is compulsory for the ages 6 – 16: from pre-school class (förskoleklass) to compulsory school (grundskola) grade 1 - 9. Most municipal schools and quasi-private free-schools offer all compulsory years, while a Sámi school (sameskola) can only offer up to grade 6. After grade 9, pupils can attend three years of non-compulsory (but tuition free) upper-secondary education (gymnasieskola), wherein they can choose from six national programs to prepare for higher education at a university (universitet) or university college (högskola), or twelve education programs to prepare for employment or higher vocational education (yrkeshögskola). Adult education (vuxenutbildning) is offered by municipalities or institutions such as the Folk High School (folkhögskola).

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**private and public**

State-run schools and free-schools are financed by the state. Free-schools attract 15% of the compulsory school pupils and less than 30% of the upper-secondary pupils. Those schools can, unlike municipal schools, receive donations but must accept all pupils due to the tax-funding. They are not linked with Sámi language education but are subject of discussions due to the increased segregation in urban areas, where the right to equal education is especially for children and youth with non-EU backgrounds not guaranteed (Grönqvist & Niknami, 2017).

**bilingual education forms**

The Compulsory School Ordinance leaves a Sámi school free in the amount of Sámi used as medium of instruction, but its use is often in parallel with Swedish or marginalized due to pupils' varying language skills and a lack of Sámi speaking teachers for all subjects. It has proven to be confusing for the Sámi School Board to interpret the ordinances. It has, in several periods, instructed schools to only use Sámi up to 50% of the teaching in the first grades and gradually decrease the use in the higher grades in favour of Swedish. Although the Compulsory School Ordinance includes this general principle, it does not need to apply to Sámi and Sámi schools, since Ordinance 2003:306

allows experiments with bilingual teaching. For short periods, pilots with a full immersion strategy of Sámi took place, but a very successful pilot in Jáhkâmáhkke in the 1990s was, however, abandoned when the board misinterpreted the ordinances again. The Sámi School Board provided after-school activities with a Sámi perspective and language-use to 103 pupils in 2019, and 48 pupils participated in the board and Sámi Language Centre's language-bath-weeks, wherein they are encouraged to speak Sámi in different contexts (Sámi Language Centre, 2020). The board may agree with a municipality to provide pre-school and leisure activities with Sámi perspectives, wherein a child might hear, speak and learn Sámi. Pre-schools in administrative areas for Sámi language should offer this possibility to children whose parents demand it, but this obligation is not always followed. At other schools, an extra teacher could be in class to use Sámi and it can be the medium of instruction for mother tongue tuition from grade 1 to upper-secondary education. Schools should arrange this tuition, even when one pupil applies for it, but the right is not guaranteed since not all schools find a teacher.

Municipal and free-schools can use Sámi half of the school hours in lower grades, but Swedish must be the main language in higher grades. In practice, only Sámi schools are potential sites for teaching in Sámi (but not only in Sámi). Municipal and free-schools can get a permit and state-funding to offer by the Sámi School Board supported integrated Sámi education from pre-school class to grade 9. This education can include several subjects, is taught in Sámi language and was provided for 3.961 hours in the autumn of 2019 (Sámi School Board, 2020). Sámi language teaching is done on-site and/or as distance-education from pre-school class to upper-secondary school. Sámi School Board's distance-education (10 teachers) was by 68 schools arranged for North (77 pupils), South (41 pupils) and Lule Sámi (31 pupils) in autumn 2019. In spring 2020, Liksjoe municipality (7 Sámi teachers) provided distance-education to 51 pupils in 14 municipalities. The South Sámi Science Park (based in Norway, but 8 teachers live in Sweden) arranged distance-education for South (6 pupils) and North Sámi (1 pupil) at 2 schools. Distance-education has had a main role in

the increasing number of full-time teaching positions and pupils being taught Sámi. However, in school year 2019/20, still 303 pupils (41%) with the right for Sámi mother tongue tuition did not receive this (Sámi Language Centre, 2020).

**administration** The National Agency for Education is a central administrative authority with the task to ensure that government and parliament guidelines and objectives are adhered to and achieved. It supervises schools and childcare and created national curricula for all levels. Municipalities hold main responsibility for pre-schools, compulsory and upper-secondary education, while institutions or organisations are primary responsible for free-schools. The Sámi School Board, appointed by the Sámi Parliament of Sweden, is responsible for the operation of Sámi schools, Sámi teaching material and supports schools with distance- and integrated Sámi education.

**inspection** The Swedish Schools Inspectorate carries out supervisory and quality auditing activities, gives advice and guides schools to conform to the requirements of legislation. If not all requirements are met, it can give penalties and put fines or measures on a school, while a free-school can lose its licence. Sámi languages are assessed locally and the assessment depend on teachers, who are provided by an assessment chart of the authorities. The lack of a national test makes it impossible to compare results and the relevance or adequacy of tests cannot be assessed. This matter is one of the subjects included in the dissertation of Kristina Belančić (2020).

**support structure** The Sámi School Board promotes and develops Sámi education through pronouncements and proposals. It promotes the development and production of teaching material, but in practice most used material comes from Norway or Finland due to the lack of a support structure in Sweden. In the state's assignment, only the production of material in North, South and Lule Sámi is mentioned, despite the recognition of varieties Ume and Pite Sámi. In 2019, the Sámi School Board (2020) employed two part-time pedagogues to develop, complete and



digitalize material for Sámi language, a work started by the National Agency for Education. Subsidy has every year been distributed to various projects for i.a. teaching materials and grammar books.

Schools, organisations and libraries are served by a Sámi library consultant, employed by the Sámi Parliament of Sweden to ensure Sámi literature and culture finds a larger audience. The parliament is responsible for allotting government grants and funding for Sámi cultural events and activities, as well as for dealing with Sámi language issues. It created a Sámi Language Centre to promote and stimulate the use of Sámi language, to strengthen its speakers, develop methods for language revitalization and to increase the language visibility and status in society.

The Sámi Parliaments of Sweden, Norway and Finland finance the Nordic Resource Centre for Sámi Languages, an information centre and decision body for South, Lule, North, Inari and Skolt Sámi issues. One project of the centre is to develop more meaningful pre-school education for Sámi children. It operates under the Sámi Parliamentary Council, a cooperation of Sámi politicians and observers from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Main priorities are supporting Sámi research, youth work, and Sámi-speaking infrastructure and language development. The council represents the Sámi people politically on an EU, Arctic and UN level.

NGO's or foundations can apply at government agency Institute for Language and Folklore for funds for projects promoting multilingualism or grants for programmes to enhance literacy skills for languages of Sweden's national minorities: Sámi, Meänkieli, Finnish, Yiddish and Romani.

## 2 Pre-school education

**target group** Pre-school is for children aged 1 – 5 years and pre-school class for children aged 6 – 7 years.

**structure** Municipalities, Sámi School Board and free-school organisers provide and are responsible for non-compulsory pre-school and compulsory pre-school class. The non-obligatory pre-school is funded by parental fees and central government and municipal tax revenues. No parental fees have to be paid for pre-school class, since it is obligatory. Administrative areas for Sámi language should offer pre-school activities with attention to Sámi language to Sámi children, also when it concerns one child, but the management of a school decides how to meet the obligations. The National Agency for Education created with working groups curricula – containing the school's values and assignment, general goals, guidelines and syllabi – for the pre-school (2019b), the Sámi school and pre-school class (2019c) and the compulsory school and pre-school class (2019a). Pre-schools (not pre-school class) do not work with syllabi.

According to the curriculum for the pre-school, activities must have a holistic view and stimulate children's development and learning, prepare for further education and create understanding for different languages and cultures. Educators should help to protect and promote minority languages and cultures and the development of a child's Sámi mother tongue and identity. Pre-schools of the Sámi School Board use the Reggio Emilia approach with Sámi perspective to strengthen a child's Sámi identity and self-esteem. At their pre-school class, the Bornholm model is used to train Sámi language skills and create linguistic awareness in a playful way.

The Sámi school and pre-school class curriculum states the ability to develop a Sámi identity should be strengthened. Children must learn about the Sámi way of life, their norms, values, traditions and cultural heritage. Children's understanding of time, place and culture should be challenged. The compulsory school and pre-school class curriculum includes aims to create possibilities for pupils to use their mother tongue and gain

understanding of different languages and ways of thinking. Both curricula include the goal (differently formulated) to develop the ability to explore and describe phenomena and connections in nature, society and technology.

Integrated Sámi education can in agreement with the Sámi School Board be provided to Sámi children at municipal pre-school class, by teachers on-site and/or via distance-education.

**legislation**

The Ministry of Education and Research regulates and holds responsibility. Chapter 8 of the Education Act applies to pre-school education: §12a concerns Sámi children and §5 of chapter 25 concerns pre-school and Sámi children in administrative areas for Sámi language. Chapter 7 of the Compulsory School Ordinance applies to pre-school and chapter 8 applies to pre-school class. Ordinance 2011:131 includes instructions for the Sámi School Board.

**language use**

The use of Swedish and Sámi as medium of instruction depends per Sámi school and year, but it is the intention to use as much Sámi as possible. In Giron, pre-school rector Gustaf Sixten Inga estimates North Sámi was used for about 70% of the teaching hours in school year 2019/20, while the main Sámi language teacher of the Sámi School Board and Giron's Sámi school, Marit Sikku-Trägårdh, assumes only North Sámi was used in pre-school class. Chapter 1: status of language education, provides an explanation on the educated Sámi varieties.

The management of a municipal pre-school decides how to meet the legal requirements and demands of parents. Some municipal pre-schools have 2 hours a week wherein children hear, speak and learn their Sámi language, while children in other municipalities have more than 10 hours a week or, as in Älvdal, Sámi language is only visualized in the classroom, with the use of posters, for example (Sámi Language Centre, 2020). It is the aim to have Sámi as instruction language for integrated Sámi education.

**teaching materials**

The Sámi School Board promotes the development and production of Sámi teaching material, but Sámi language teachers

often make own material, or use material from Norway or Finland, due to the lack of a support structure for the production of Sámi material in Sweden. Teachers of all grades and subjects can use material and instructions made by the National Agency for Education to implement a Sámi and national minorities' perspective into their teaching. Language books, literature, music, apps, crafts ideas, programs of the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, are some examples of the material in North, South and Lule Sámi on online portal [ovttas.no](http://ovttas.no), created by the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu, Norway. Titles of material mentioned in chapter 3 can also be used in pre-school education.

**statistics**

According to the National Agency for Education (2020a, 2020b), 512.885 children attended pre-school in 2019 and 121.956 pupils attended pre-school class in school year 2019/20. In this school year, 129 children and 15 licensed teachers were part of 5 Sámi pre-schools, while 28 pupils were taught by 2 licensed pre-school class teachers at 4 Sámi schools (Sámi School Board, 2020). Table 2 of chapter 10 provides an overview of the number of pupils per Sámi school. No official or summarizing data is available on Sámi activities at municipal pre-schools in school year 2019/20, but a Sámi Language Centre (2020) inquiry shows Sámi activities were provided in 9 out of 10 consulted municipalities. Table 3 of chapter 10 gives an overview of the 6 pupils receiving integrated Sámi education at municipal pre-school class at 4 municipalities.

### 3 Primary education

**target group** Compulsory school (grade 1 – 9) is for pupils aged 7 – 16 years. Sámi school is for pupils aged 7 – 13 years (grade 1 – 6) and mainly intended for pupils whose parents self-identify as Sámi.

**structure** The education is free of parental fees and provided by and responsibility of the municipality, Sámi School Board and free-school organisers. At municipal school, mother tongue tuition and integrated Sámi education can be offered in all grades and Sámi as a language subject in grade 6 – 9. Mother tongue tuition should be taught if the school finds a teacher. Pupils have general teachers in grade 1 – 3 and a teacher per subject in grade 4 – 9. Pupils should learn about the rights, history, culture, language and religion of the recognized national minorities. Municipal schools use the curriculum for the compulsory school and pre-school class (National Agency for Education, 2019a); Sámi schools use the Sámi school curriculum (National Agency for Education, 2019c). All curricula are created by the education agency and working groups and include the school's values and assignment, general goals, guidelines and syllabi.

Sámi schools teach Sámi as mother tongue and second language with the goal to make pupils functionally bilingual (chapter 1: status of language education). The language education is part of the subject Samiska, which should give pupils a Sámi cultural understanding and concerns Sámi society, environment, history, music, traditional knowledge and crafts (duodji in North Sámi). It is criticized that all Sámi culture areas and Sámi language are addressed in one subject sharing the same number of teaching hours, while Swedish language is taught separately from, e.g., history to offer sufficient teaching hours for both contents. Although Sámi pupils are expected to have the same language skills in Sámi and Swedish, pupils receive most likely less teaching hours for Sámi language and may receive minimum literacy training.

**legislation** The Ministry of Education and Research regulates and holds responsibility. Of the Education Act, chapter 10 concerns compulsory education (§7 mother tongue tuition), chapter 13 Sámi schools and integrated Sámi education, and §3 – 4 of chapter 23 apply to distance-education. Chapter 9 of the Compulsory School Ordinance applies to compulsory education (§7 – 13 mother tongue tuition), chapter 5 to distance-education and chapter 12 to Sámi schools and integrated Sámi education. Ordinance 2003:306 is about experimenting with bilingual teaching (i.a. Sámi schools) and Ordinance 2011:131 includes instructions for the Sámi School Board.

**language use** Sámi and Swedish are the instruction language at Sámi school. Observations at Giron's Sámi school by Sámi language teacher Marit Sikku-Trägårdh give an impression of the language-use. Most pupils speak Swedish with each other, especially in higher grades, perhaps due to the dominance of Swedish in Giron's society. The language-use can be different among pupils in towns such as Gárasavvon, where the position and use of the language is stronger. Sámi speaking teachers often use Sámi for personal instruction of especially pupils that are mother tongue speakers. Four of the twelve teachers are Sámi language teachers (one for pre-school class, one for grade 1 and two for grade 2 – 6). Three non-language teachers teach in Swedish and Sámi language, while one of the six assistants speaks Sámi and supports with Sámi language teaching. All teachers use Sámi terms to greet or announce e.g. the end of a break.

Samiska is in grade 1 taught two times 4 hours a week (divided with the subject Swedish) and 4 hours a week in grade 2 – 6. Classes are in grade 1 and 4 – 6 divided in groups of mother tongue and second language speakers, while the shared class for grade 2 – 3 has a group of third language speakers and an extra language teacher as well. Mother tongue speakers with special needs are often placed in the second language speakers' group, which has a slower pace and easier content. Grade 1 has a Swedish speaking teacher and a Sámi language teacher who equally share the teaching hours. One of the

two teachers of grade 2 – 3 speaks Swedish and Sámi; Sámi is mainly used in the teaching of grade 3 pupils. In grade 4, Sámi is used a lot for the subjects of arts, crafts and physical education and sometimes in mathematics and science studies. Sámi is used partly in the teaching of almost all grade 5 subjects, only not for music and Swedish language. In grade 6, science studies, mathematics, arts, crafts, physical education and Swedish for second language speakers are partly taught in Sámi.

At municipal school, Sámi can be the instruction language for integrated Sámi education in several subjects and mother tongue tuition, provided by teachers on-site and/or distance-education. The tuition can be taught at least 45 minutes a week and is often scheduled outside school hours. Sámi can be, but hardly or never is, used in parallel with Swedish in the lower compulsory grades, if Sámi children make up a substantial part of a class. The municipality Vualtjere does mention the option to hire a teacher to ‘translate’ to South, Ume or North Sámi. Sámi as a language subject can be taught 2-3 times a week for 40 minutes, often in Swedish.

#### teaching materials

The Sámi School Board promotes the production and development of Sámi teaching materials, but it is difficult to renew and update teaching material (see chapter 9). It created North, South and Lule Sámi textbooks for grade 1 – 6 with native speakers, National Agency for Education, Uppsala University and Södertörn University. Instructions are made by the education agency to implement a Sámi perspective in teaching. Language teachers create own material and use platform ovttas.no (chapter 2) and oahpa.no, created by Romsa’s UiT The Arctic University of Norway, with tools to train North, South, Lule, Kildin, Skolt and Inari Sámi vocabulary and grammar. Apps like Memrise are used to practice phrases in Ume, Lule and South Sámi.

Radio and TV-programs of the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company are used. Some titles of material for North Sámi are *Áppes* (alphabet), *Gággi* and *Táhppán Siun* (language), *Logut* (mathematics), *Giellabálggis* (religion) and *Dálveluonda* (science). Teaching material for South Sámi can be the language

game *New Amigos* and the book *Tjijhtje tjaebpies*, which has also a Lule version, called *Gietjav tjáppa. Låhkåmtjiejhka* and *Boahhttsju tjoarve* are examples of Lule Sámi titles. South Sámi youth books like *Joekoen sjihteles ryöjnesjæjja* and *Gaaltije* are used in teaching, as well as South and Ume Sámi poems of youth in *Noerh tjaelieh / Nuarah tjállieh*. The master's thesis *Huvuddrag i umesamisk grammatik* is used for Ume Sámi teaching.

**statistics**

Grade 1 – 6 had 735.930 pupils and grade 7 – 9 had 350.250 pupils in school year 2019/20 (National Agency for Education, 2020c). At Sámi school, 173 pupils were taught by 31 licensed teachers (Sámi School Board, 2020). Table 2 of chapter 10 presents an overview. Integrated Sámi education was provided to 88 pupils of grade 1 – 6 of up to 18 schools in 8 municipalities, and to 146 pupils in grade 7 – 9 of up to 14 schools in 9 municipalities. Table 3 of chapter 10 presents an overview. Sámi mother tongue tuition was taught by 63 teachers to 443 pupils and Sámi was a language subject for 128 pupils of grade 6 – 9 (Sámi Language Centre, 2020).



## 4 Secondary education

<b>target group</b>	Upper-secondary education is non-compulsory and intended for pupils aged 16 – 19 years.
<b>structure</b>	<p>The three grades are free of fees and provided by and responsibility of free-school organisers and (co-operations of) municipalities. Pupils can choose from 6 programs to prepare for higher education or 12 programs to start working or prepare for higher vocational education. Pupils receive a School Leaving Certificate when finishing a program. Entrance requirements differ per program but mathematics, Swedish and English must be passed at compulsory school. If not, 4 introductory programs can be done to meet the requirements for a preparation program. Pupils with good language knowledge can have Sámi mother tongue tuition, even if it concerns one pupil at a school. Other pupils can have Sámi as a language subject if the school offers it.</p> <p>Pupils work with curricula, syllabi and individual study plans (National Agency for Education, 2018). They should gain knowledge of the culture, language, religion and history of national minorities. In Swedish 2, language legislation and (national) minority languages should get attention. The curriculum includes an interdisciplinary course on Sámi culture and history, a course on Sámi food and six courses on duodji (crafts). Schools offer variations of national programs. Lapplands gymnasium in Jåhkåmåhkke offers a Sámi social science program for pupils that want to immerse in Sámi culture and history. The reindeer herding specialisation in the agriculture program of Jämtlands gymnasium is cancelled since it never had applicants.</p>
<b>legislation</b>	The Ministry of Education and Research regulates and holds responsibility. Chapter 15 – 19 of the Education Act and the Upper-secondary Education Ordinance apply to upper-secondary education. Sámi as mother tongue tuition and language subject is discussed in §19 of chapter 15 of the act and in §15 – 21 of chapter 4 of the ordinance. For distance-education, §3 – 4 of chapter 23 of the act and chapter 4a of the ordinance should be consulted.

- language use** Mother tongue tuition/language subject is instructed in Sámi. Lapplands gymnasium teacher Jan-Erik Kuoljok writes Swedish is the instruction language in the social science program: even if all pupils speak Sámi, they often speak different varieties and cannot understand each other.
- teaching materials** The Sámi School Board promotes the development and production of Sámi teaching material. Teachers create own material and can make use of the mentioned platforms and titles in chapter 2 and 3. For Lule Sámi, *Sámásta* of the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company and online/offline material *Giellaj Hilá* are used. *Tjågkoe / Tjutju / Cugu* is used for South, Lule and North Sámi teaching, *Govlelgem* and *Gulahallan* for South and North Sámi teaching.
- statistics** 207.936 pupils followed a higher education program, 102.191 pupils a vocational program and 44.877 pupils an introductory program in school year 2019/20 (National Agency for Education, 2020d). Coordinators of 14 municipalities were asked how many pupils had Sámi as mother tongue tuition or language subject this school year: at 5 schools, 30 pupils learned South (15), North (7), Lule (7) and Ume Sámi (1). Table 4 of chapter 10 provides an overview per school.

## 5 Vocational education

**target group** Higher vocational education is intended for people with a School Leaving Certificate that want to combine theory with practical experience. For some programs, a specific vocational program at upper-secondary school should have been completed or work experience can be required.

**structure** The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is responsible for the quality of higher vocational programs of a university, municipality, county council or private institution, as well as for arts and culture courses and interpretation courses and programmes (adult education). It must ensure programs meet labour market needs. Students should learn skills needed at their future employer and have workplace training. A diploma is handed out for one-year programs, advanced diplomas for two-year programs. Tuition fees are charged but study aid is available.

Some Sámi organizations, a government grant and Jåhkâmáhkke municipality sponsor the Sámi Education Centre. It offers in cooperation with the crafts apprentice (Sw: hantverkslärling) program of Leksand a two-year program in duodji (crafts) in the North, South and Lule Sámi tradition, with focus on skin, textile, wood and horn working. Courses in Sámi language, culture and history are part of the program. Students can apply for grants at the Sámi Parliament of Sweden. The centre offered a one-year program in Sámi food craftsmanship in 2017 and 2018.

**legislation** The Ministry of Education and Research regulates and holds responsibility. The Act on Higher Vocational Education School and several ordinances apply to this level of education.

**language use** Sámi language might be (partly) used in the duodji-program of the Sámi Education Centre.

**teaching materials** There is no Sámi language material specifically produced for this level of education.

**statistics**

The Sámi Education Centre did not share information. Observations on social media give the impression that 10 – 20 students were part of the duodji-program in academic year 2019/20.

## 6 Higher education

**structure** Thirty public and 18 private higher education institutes – either university or university college – follow the European standard regarding the offering of individual courses and first-, second- and third cycle degree programs. The rewarded higher education credits (HEC) are compatible with credit system ECTS. A university college has limited rights to award second- and especially third-cycle degrees. The public universities in Umeå (Sámi: Ubmjejen universitiähta; Swedish: Umeå universitet; English: Umeå University) and Uppsala (Swedish: Uppsala universitet; English: Uppsala University) offer Sámi language and culture courses. The Swedish Higher Education Authority supervises higher education and government agency Swedish Council for Higher Education supports, promotes and analyses the sector. Students from outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland pay tuition fees.

**legislation** The Ministry of Education and Research regulates and holds responsibility. Private institutions agreed with the Swedish government to follow the same act, ordinances and statutes as public institutions do, which are the Higher Education Act and Ordinance on Higher Education.

**language use** North, Lule and South Sámi language courses at graduate level of Umeå University are divided in beginner's and A – C levels for mother tongue speakers and are offered in a two-year cycle. Beginner's courses are taught in Swedish, A – B courses in Sámi language. The online C-level course includes students that focus on their Sámi language variety of interest. Umeå University provides courses in Sámi languages at advanced levels (bachelor, master, doctoral) as well as first- and second-cycle courses with Swedish as medium of instruction. Courses did not always commence due to a lack of applicants (Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe, 2017). A bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree in Sámi Cultural Studies can be obtained.

Uppsala University offers North Sámi A – C level courses and,

since 2016, South Sámi A – B level courses with Swedish as medium of instruction. Sámi language cannot be a main area of a bachelor's degree. Intensive North and South Sámi language courses of the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu, Norway, attract students from all over Sápmi. The general institutional- and instruction language is North Sámi at this Indigenous Sámi university with first-, second- and some third-cycle degree programs in language and literature, duodji (crafts), reindeer husbandry, teacher training, film making and journalism.

Scientific publications in the journal *Dutkansearvvi dieđalaš áigečála* of the Sámi Language and Culture Research Association, hosted by the University of Helsinki, are on Sámi and Indigenous issues written in Sámi and English. Research in the fields of law, social sciences and linguistics is by the Sámi University of Applied Sciences published in journal *Dieđut* in Sámi languages, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, English and Russian languages. The same institution publishes journal *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála* with the Centre for Sámi Studies of the UiT The Arctic University of Norway, which includes scientific articles and book reviews in Sámi.

**teacher training** Up to 21 institutions offer teacher training for pre-school education, compulsory education and upper-secondary education. The curricula outline the objectives and guidelines. Graduates receive a certificate that they must show to the National Agency for Education to receive the for full-time positions necessary pre-school teacher or teacher certificate. Sámi mother tongue and language subject teachers do not need to meet official requirements to be able to teach the language. In February 2020, the Minister of Education expressed her idea to require them to obtain 30 HEC in a Sámi language to improve Sámi language education. However, no Umeå and Pite Sámi courses exist and the existing courses rely on a few qualified university teachers.

Umeå University offers a North and South Sámi language subject teacher training for grade 7 – 9 and upper-secondary education. The program has not attracted students due to

the lack of career prospects to teach in those grades. Sámi language lecturers of Umeå University have adapted to the needs of future teachers, adding e.g. Sámi didactics and practical sessions. Table 6 of chapter 10 presents the courses that could have included teacher training trainees who decided to follow Sámi language courses outside their general teacher training program. The table also shows that the general course *Fatta Sápmi!* about Sámi issues was offered to employed teachers and that Ume Sámi mother tongue teacher training was organized in 2017.

Sweden has a shortage of Sámi language teachers. The Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe (2017) stated that the government should make more effort to make the profession attractive, although it is aware of the general shortage of qualified teachers: the National Agency for Education predicts a shortage of 45.000 qualified teachers by 2033. The Advisory Committee mentions the possibility to create scholarships, adequate in-service training, retrain mother tongue speakers in pedagogy and recruit Sámi teachers from Norway and Finland. General programs have been created to attract teachers. Those with foreign certificates can follow a course to make their certificate meet Swedish requirements at six institutions. Two 1.5-year programs can provide graduates of higher education studies or experienced workers a certificate to teach the subject of their expertise in grade 7 – 9 and upper-secondary school. Another program is for teachers without certificate to complete their education. Budget is made available for the education agency to improve in-service training conditions. The Sámi School Board started a training for five Sámi speaking teachers at pre-school level in 2015: four of them work as a licensed teacher at a Sámi school in 2019 (Sámi School Board, 2020). *Jáhkâmáhkke* paid for the education of six Sámi language teachers, while other municipalities may sometimes offer financial benefits to attract teachers (Sámi Language Centre, 2020).

#### **pre-school and primary training**

Only the Sámi University of Applied Sciences provides Sámi pre-school and compulsory grade 1 – 6 teacher training programs

that focus on Sámi language as medium of interaction or instruction and with Sámi values and Indigenous knowledge as pedagogical starting point. In Sweden, Sámi language cannot be a main subject in the training for pre-school, pre-school class and grade 1 – 6 teachers. The only option is to follow language courses outside their teacher training program at Umeå University. Between 1978 – 1992, the School of Education in Julevu offered elective Sámi language courses for teacher trainees of those levels, but it was not a success, i.a. since the school had no Sámi teachers and hired temporary teachers.

Currently, 20 Swedish institutions provide a teacher training of 3.5 years (210 HEC) for pre-school teachers and a 4-year (240 HEC) pre-school class training, a training that is part of the program for compulsory school grade 1 – 3. Two more teacher training programs exist for compulsory education: 18 institutions offer a 4-year training for grade 4 – 6 (240 HEC) and 16 institutions offer a subject-teaching program for grade 7 – 9 that can take up to 4.5 years (240 – 250 HEC). Students specialize in the latter program in two or three subjects, which can, at Umeå University, include three courses of 30 HEC for the specialisation North and South Sámi language subject teaching in grade 7 – 9 and upper-secondary education (discussed below).

### **secondary training**

Umeå University is one of the 21 institutions offering the 5 – 5.5 years subject-teaching training for upper-secondary education wherein students specialize in two or three subjects (300 – 330 HEC). It is the only Swedish university offering a training for North and South Sámi language subject teachers. Students should follow three Sámi courses of 30 credits and a supplementary pedagogical training of 90 credits. The Sámi courses deal with i.a. rights to Sámi education, bilingual development, linguistics, didactics, literature, story-telling and language revitalization.

The program does not attract students since it prepares for a position that hardly exists. Sámi school has no grade 7 – 9 or upper-secondary education, only Lapplands gymnasium has



the subject integrated in a curriculum, few pupils have Sámi as language subject and it is not needed to follow a specialisation of 1.5 years to become a mother tongue tuition teacher. The only teacher training program at this level, that is taught in Sámi and takes its starting point in Sámi values and knowledge, is provided by the Sámi University of Applied Sciences.

#### **in-service training**

Teachers occasionally follow Umeå University's language courses to get formal qualifications to teach Sámi as a language subject, but some find it too hard since they have to study outside their paid work time. The university's former in-service training in cooperation with the National Agency for Education was not a great success, since teachers could often not join the courses.

The education agency received every year 2 million Swedish kronor to improve conditions for Sámi in-service training since 2018. Their new commissioned training in cooperation with the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Norway started in autumn 2018 and should lead to a teacher's qualification for Sámi language for 20 – 25 participants in autumn 2020. Participants were teachers lacking Sámi language knowledge and people without teacher training but with Sámi knowledge. The participants followed mainly online courses designed to strengthen their competences to teach Sámi language. This new type of training has not yet been evaluated.

#### **statistics**

Table 5 of chapter 10 presents the number of registered students of Sámi language courses at Uppsala University since spring 2017. According to associate professor Torbjörn Söder, 36 of the registered students for North Sámi and 24 of the registered students for South Sámi finished a course in 2019. At Umeå University, South Sámi courses had 21 students and Lule Sámi courses 8 registered students in 2019. Two students with previous studies in Lule and North Sámi finished teacher training in the spring of 2020. Table 6 of chapter 10 gives an overview of all Sámi related courses with applicants at Umeå University since spring 2017.

North Sámi language courses in Umeje have been on hold between autumn 2017 – spring 2020 due to a research project that required human resources to be relocated from teaching to research. According to the statistics from the latest intake numbers from spring 2020, there are record numbers of applicants to all beginner courses in autumn 2020. This development seems to coincide with the Covid-19 pandemic and an increased interest in university studies.

## 7 Adult education

### structure and language courses

Chapters 20 – 21 of the Education Act and the Ordinance on Adult Education (2011:1108, not included in reference list) concern adult education. Municipal adult education began to be offered in 1968 for adults who lack compulsory and upper-secondary education. Municipalities are obliged to offer programs equivalent to compulsory education. Upper-secondary subjects and Swedish language courses for immigrants are also offered. Students follow courses based on their needs and starting level and can receive grades, certificates or an upper-secondary diploma. Municipalities do not offer Sámi courses, nor is it part of the program for immigrants.

Education provided by the municipality is for free; organisations/foundations – such as the Folk University, Folk High School and the Sámi Educational Centre – can charge external costs for their programs and courses (e.g. material). The Folk University of Staare included South Sámi in their interpretation courses since 2020. One part-time distance-course of a year is for those wanting to become an authorized contact interpreter; the second course takes place in weekends and is designed for interpreters that want to gain and develop their competences. Before, the Folk High School of Härnösand and Mid Sweden University offered similar courses.

The Sámi Education Centre in Jáhkâmáhkke (introduced in chapter 5) has intensive beginners and advanced level courses in Lule and Ume Sámi language. North, South and Pite Sámi were in 2019 not taught due to a lack of teachers. In the language courses, in previous chapters discussed learning material and material created by their teacher can be used for teaching. Students can apply for study grants at the Sámi Parliament of Sweden. The centre offers jojk, culture and duodji courses, as well as reindeer husbandry courses with the aim to strengthen traditional knowledge and to provide tools and knowledge for entrepreneurship and the work in today's context. The program is for herders and individuals with the right to start herding.

Three examples from 2020 are introduced to present initiatives

that can be organized in Sápmi by or in a co-operation with Sámi educational or Sámi cultural organizations. The municipality of Vyöddale, administrative area for Sámi language since 2019, and national study association SV started a study-circle for inhabitants that want to discover together the local Sámi heritage. Several municipalities offer Sámi language courses with study association Medborgarskolan. Sámi Educational Association (Sámi oahppolávdegoddi) from the Norwegian side of Sápmi offered an English taught online North Sámi beginners' course for 300 Norwegian kroner.

**language use** Sámi languages might be the medium of instruction in the advanced language courses and the reindeer husbandry courses of the Sámi Education Centre.

**statistics** The Sámi Education Centre's Lule Sámi course in Jåhkâmáhkke had 24 students and 15 students learned Ume Sámi in Gávtavrie in 2019 (Sámi Language Centre, 2020). North Sámi is taught again in 2020. According to lecturer Ville Söderbaum of the North Sámi course of the Sámi Educational Association, 50 – 120 people from 22 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania attended each of the 12 lectures, including 12 inhabitants of Sweden.

## 8 Educational research

Guovdageaidnu's Sámi University of Applied Sciences has a central role in Sámi research. In Sweden, Umeå University conducts most Sámi and Indigenous educational research and hosts Várdduo Centre for Sámi Research. Educational research is conducted at the University of Lapland (Roavvenjárga), University of Oulu (host of Giellagas Institute), Nord University (Bådåddjo) and UiT The Arctic University of Norway (Romsa) as well. In this chapter, some scholars, themes and articles are introduced. A returning challenge concerns the integration of Sámi education in national systems, which has often to do with the will to make adjustments.

Teaching and instruction is dominated by the western school, which is connected with Sámi experiences of assimilation. Scholars work on the development of a pedagogy wherein the Sámi values, culture and worldview are central. Pigga Keskitalo (2018) stresses the need for cultural sensitivity in Indigenous education. Maria Peltola, Keskitalo and Rauni Äärelä-Vihriälä (2019) are the editors of a journal with articles on language nest pedagogy and pedagogical foundations, values, premises and everyday practices in Sámi early childhood education. The concept of Sámi language nest pedagogy is based on doctoral research of Äärelä (2016).

Torjer Olsen, Hilde Sollid and Åse Johansen (2017) propose a strategy to include Sámi issues and perspectives seriously in teacher training in Norway, to challenge misconceptions and misinformation in education. The state of Sámi education and work of Sámi teachers at Finnish schools is explored in Rauna Rahko-Ravantti's dissertation (2016), which includes strategies to deal with students of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as the limitations to include content based on Sámi culture due to curricula and lesson structures. She stresses Sámi teachers' role as cultural intermediaries for Indigenous Sámi youth in a western culture.

Ideological challenges in Sámi literacy education are researched by Hanna Outakoski (2015). She notes the risk of Sámi youth losing their Indigenous heritage language due to the exposure

to many languages and cultures in- and outside school and the lack of adequate teaching material, popular culture and media content in Sámi languages. The threat of globalization to North Sámi revitalization efforts is discussed by Sullivan et al. (2019), who show that youth have literacy skills for meaning making but to increase linguistic competences, more exposure and education possibilities are needed, as well as structural support from policy makers.

The need for the inclusion of Sámi culture, values and knowledge in the national curricula and syllabi of compulsory education in Sweden is part of Charlotta Svonni's research (2015). She points in her content analysis to the lack of Sámi themes and knowledge requirements. Kristina Belančić and Eva Lindgren (2017) show in their analysis of the Sámi school curriculum and syllabi the unequal opportunity to develop Swedish and Sámi language. To acquire functional bilingualism and develop a multilingual, multicultural and Indigenous identity, public awareness of Indigenous issues should increase and Sámi school should include secondary education.

Inker-Anni Linkola and Keskitalo (2015) highlight the priority to visualize Sámi language in the linguistic landscape of schools. Their work suggests Sámi language visibility at schools will promote a pluralistic language ideology and strengthen minority language policy, necessary to achieve language equality. Ekaterina Zmyvalova focuses on rights and the situation in practice. Subject of an article of her and Outakoski (2019) is the difficulty of Sámi children in Lujávri, Russia, to be provided in the right of Indigenous children to learn their mother tongue at school, due to i.a. a recent shift from Sámi language teaching to history and culture-oriented teaching.

## 9 Prospects

Sámi school is the only educational environment in Sweden where Sámi culture is dominant, but implications of the periods of assimilation and forced language shift are visible. Láttvárri's school (Giron municipality) closed in 2008 and the future of the only Sámi school in Swedish Southern Sápmi (in Dearna) is unsure. In Giron, some Sámi pupils only have basic language skills, while Swedish is mainly used among pupils and for a great part the instruction language. The misinterpretation of ordinances is one of the reasons why the Sámi schools have not developed into real Sámi schools with parallel bilingual education and full immersion intentions for Sámi, as done during a successful pilot at the Sámi school in Jáhkâmáhkke in the 1990s.

Sámi educational research revealed persisting disadvantages between Sámi pupils who follow the Sámi school curriculum and majority pupils, when it comes to the width and depth of the Sámi respectively Swedish language subject syllabus (Belančić and Lindgren, 2017). Sámi pupils do not get the support needed to function bilingually in all domains of society and it is their knowledge in Sámi language that is inhibited and restricted to include only some forms of language knowledge. Sámi literacy research has shown an ideological and practical imbalance between literacy skills in Sámi on one hand, and in majority language and English on the other hand (Outakoski, 2015). Sámi children are given the chance to learn their heritage language in school, but the school system is more interested in assuring their Swedish skills. The pupils face the expectation to meet high language knowledge standards in two languages, although only the knowledge in the majority language is valued and appreciated in the majority society.

Sámi pupils outside Sámi schools can be taught mother tongue tuition, but the lessons are not as attractive to attend since schools often schedule it outside regular hours and – unlike the subjects Swedish and modern language – no credits are gained, needed in the final grades to enter upper-secondary programs. Efforts are needed to make Sámi language an

interesting and serious subject in compulsory education, as it should be in upper-secondary education as well: perhaps a bit more than 30 pupils study Sámi language in this level and only one school has Sámi language integrated in a curriculum. It is also a challenge to educate the non-Sámi population about the Sámi languages and culture. As mentioned in the monitoring report of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe (2017), information on national minorities is rare in many textbooks, as well as in the teacher training curricula of Swedish universities.

There is a lack of renewed or updated teaching material in Sámi languages all over Sápmi. It takes time to translate material – renewals are often already needed after material has gone through the translation process – and there are debates within the Sámi educational sector on the lack of cultural sensitivity, adequacy and relevance in the content of majority education. Sámi perspectives, knowledge and languages are often marginalized, ignored or invisible in majority textbooks. The three Sámi Parliaments do invest in the production of new materials, teaching aids, textbooks and digital knowledge sources, however, to produce such material in the future as well, Sámi literacy skills need to be strengthened in all levels of education.

#### ***distance-education***

Improved legislation has increased the possibility to receive mother tongue tuition from grade 1 to upper-secondary school, since a school must provide this education even if it has only one pupil applying for it. According to a Schools Inspectorate report (2019), pupils in grade 7 – 9 are often, especially outside administrative areas for Sámi language, incorrect or incomplete informed about the rights and possibilities. It can be a reason why 41% of those with the right for Sámi mother tongue tuition did not receive this in school year 2019/20. Similarly, toddlers in administrative areas for Sámi language have the right for Sámi language activities at pre-school, but the offering depends on the management and demands parents to be pro-active.

While the number of pupils learning Sámi is growing and the



legal possibilities increase, Sámi language education deals with a shortage of Sámi teachers and a lack of interesting teaching positions. Distance-education seems to be one of the solutions to create positions with career prospects and educate the Sámi pupils that are scattered in small numbers over Sweden, if schools participate in arranging supervisors that are needed to provide distance-education, which is according to the Schools Inspectorate report not always the case. Although mother tongue tuition is a right, it can only be given if the school finds a teacher: distance-education can increase the possibility at municipal schools with few Sámi pupils to provide Sámi tuition. The initiative of Liksjoë municipality could set an example of how municipalities can cooperate to create positions and provide Sámi children their right to education in their heritage language. Liksjoë employed 7 teachers to instruct Sámi language from pre-school class to upper-secondary education to 30 local and 51 pupils of 14 other municipalities in school year 2019/20. In most municipalities, no interesting Sámi language teacher's positions can be offered since the number of pupils demanding Sámi tuition is little. Some municipalities try to solve this problem by hiring teachers for both Sámi mother tongue tuition and subjects as duodji (crafts).

#### ***teacher training***

Calls for a Sámi teacher training program for pre-school and grade 1 – 6 are unanswered and only a program for subject-teachers for grade 7 – 9 and upper-secondary school is allowed. The training of Sámi language teachers relies on efforts of engaged teachers and trainees who study Sámi language in their free time or as a side subject at Umeå University, which gives students a disadvantage in terms of the length of their studies. Teacher training can be a key to successful Indigenous education in Sápmi and strengthening of the Sámi languages and cultures, but the system in Sweden does not yet accommodate Indigenous pedagogy in the programs. This is only the case at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu.

Research from Sápmi and other Indigenous territories has

provided a lot of knowledge on developing education for Sámi children and strategies to avoid past mistakes. A dialogue with the state is needed to implement this knowledge and teacher programs need to include staff with the understanding that Sámi teachers need Sámi pedagogy and didactics to strengthen pupils' heritage language and Indigenous identity. The establishment of a joint program of the teacher training at Umeå University and at Sámi University of Applied Sciences could be a possibility to give trainees practical education in a Sámi context, while Umeå University takes care of national details, since the teacher training and education system in Norway is different.

This is only an idea about how to create a teacher training in Sweden with a Sámi perspective, because there are no signs that the Swedish government will invest – like Norway – in a Sámi teacher training or higher education institute where Sámi is an institutional language and Sámi cultural values guide the programs. Currently, the relatively few students in Sámi courses make it hard for Swedish universities to have an operating staff of more than a few people: student numbers are linked with budget for programs and no adjusted rules apply to Sámi programs, as is the case at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. As a result, Sámi higher education and educational research in Sweden is vulnerable and will continue to rely on the efforts of a relatively small number of individuals with a heavy workload and limited by regulations.

## 10 Summary statistics

Table 1. Overview of Sámi language education in Sweden for school year 2019/20

		Schools	Teachers	Pupils
<b>Non-compulsory pre-school</b>	Sámi school	5	15*	127
	Sámi language activities	-	-	-
<b>Compulsory pre-school class</b>	Sámi school	5	2*	28
	Integrated Sámi education	4/5	-	6
<b>Compulsory education 1 – 6</b>	Sámi school	5	31*	173
	Integrated Sámi education	≤18	-	88
<b>Compulsory education 6– 9</b>	Language subject	-	-	128
<b>Compulsory education 7 – 9</b>	Integrated Sámi education	≤ 14	-	146
<b>Compulsory education 1 – 9</b>	Mother tongue tuition	-	63	443
<b>Secondary education</b>	Subject/mother tongue tuition	≥ 5	≥ 3	≥ 30
<b>Adult education</b>	Lule Sámi (2019)	1	1	24
	Ume Sámi (2019)	1	1	15

Note: Data for non-compulsory pre-school, compulsory pre-school class and grade 1 – 6 from Sámi School Board (2020). Data for compulsory education 6 – 9, 7 – 9, 1 – 9 and adult education from Sámi Language Centre (2020). Data for secondary education based on inquiry. \* licensed teachers (obligatory for full-time positions since 2013). – no official or summarized data is available.

Table 2. Pupils at Sámi pre-school and Sámi school in (first part of) school year 2019/20.

	Pre-school	Total compulsory	P-class	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6
<b>Total numbers</b>	127*	173	28	38	26	29	30	27	23
- <b>Dearna</b>	6	10	0	1	1	2	1	2	3
- <b>Gárasavvon</b>	15	29	5	4	3	6	4	4	3
- <b>Giron</b>	40	72	9	20	7	9	12	9	6
- <b>Jáhkámáhkke</b>	42	62	10	11	11	8	7	10	5
- <b>Váhtjer</b>	26	28	4	2	4	4	6	2	6

Note: Data from Sámi School Board (2020). \* 2 pupils included in numbers of both Dearna and Giron.

Table 3. Pupils with integrated Sámi education per municipality in school year 2019/20.

<b>P-class: 6 pupils</b>	<b>Grade 1 – 6: 88 pupils</b>	<b>Grade 7 – 9: 146 pupils</b>
Herjedalie (2) Kråavvan Luspie (2) Liksjoie (1) Máláge (1)	Vuoltjere (22) Kråavvan Luspie (20) Liksjoie (18) Máláge (8) Jáhkámáhkke (7) Giron (6) Herjedalie (5) Bierje (2)	Jáhkámáhkke (47) Giron (46) Vuoltjere (25) Liksjoie (9) Lusspie (6) Herjedalie (5) Kråavvan Luspie (4) Bierje (3) Máláge (1)

Note: Data from Sámi School Board (2020)

Table 4. *Upper-secondary school pupils with Sámi mother tongue tuition/subject, 2019/20.*

School and municipality	North Sámi	Lule Sámi	South Sámi	Ume Sámi
Lapplands gymnasium - Bájil/Pajala, Giron, Jáhkámáhkke and Váhtjer	3	7	4	
Jämtlands gymnasium - Ååre, Bräcke, Kråavvan Luspje, Staare and Ragunda			6	
Lycksele gymnasium - Liksjo	3		4	1
Arjeplog gymnasium - Árjepluovve	1			
Härjedalens gymnasium - Hearjedealie			1	

Note: Data from school coordinators and South Sámi Science Park. Bjerje, Máláge and Stuehkie reported 0 pupils. Árviesjávvrje, Lusspie, Sjádtavaellie, Suorssá, Umeje and Vuoltjere did not respond.

 Table 5. *Registered students of Sámi language courses at Uppsala University, 2017 – 2019.*

	North Sámi A	North Sámi B	North Sámi C	South Sámi A	South Sámi B
2017	46	10	4	51	n/a
2018	47	11	6	8	8
2019	40	10	13	44	8

Note: Data from associate professor Torbjörn Söder of Finno-Ugric languages at Uppsala University.

 Table 6. *Registered students of Sámi courses at Umeå University, 2017 –2019.*

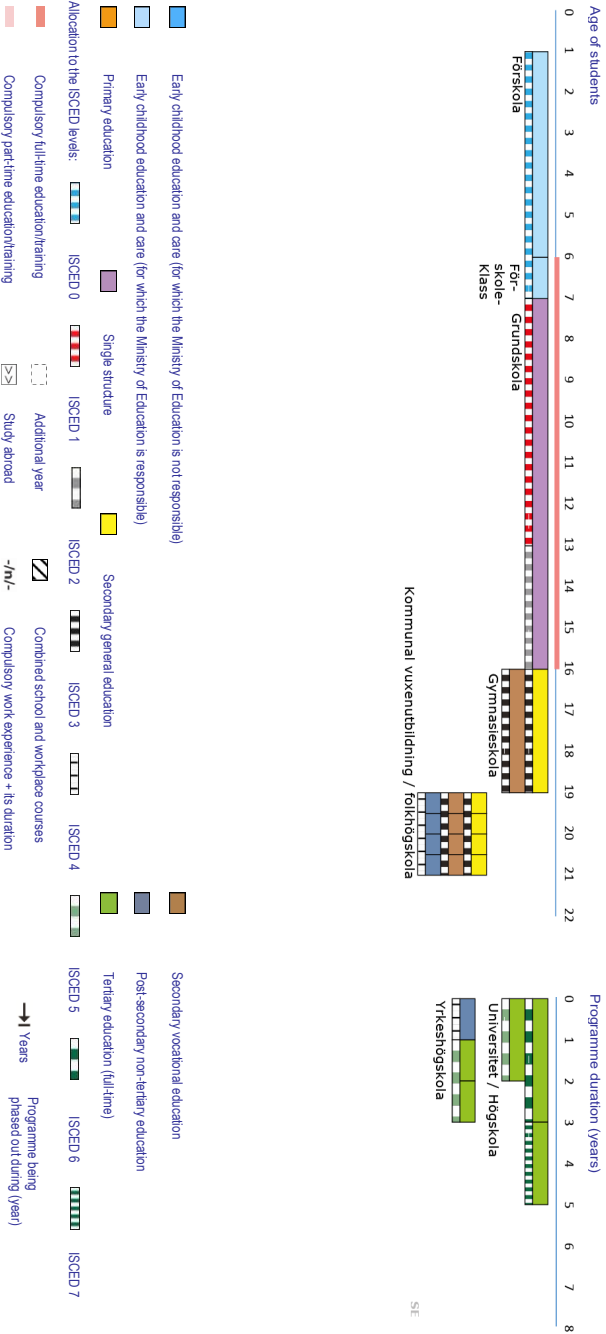
	Level	Course	Location	Students
2017	<b>Other</b>	North Sámi language beginner's level	Umeje	14
		South Sámi language beginner's level	Staare	10
		Lule Sámi language beginner's level	Julevu	7
		Mother tongue teacher training Ume Sámi	Umeje	6
		Fatta Sápmi! Course for employed teachers	Umeje	7
	<b>First-cycle studies</b>	North Sámi language B level	Umeje	6
		South Sámi language A level	Staare	7
		South Sámi language B level	Staare	2
		Lule Sámi language A level	Julevu	8
		Lule Sámi language B level	Julevu	7
		<u>Sámi linguistics C level</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>6</u>
		Sámi society: historic perspectives	Online	29
		Sámi culture studies A-level 1 <sup>st</sup> term	Julevu	5
		Comparative Indigenous studies A-level	Online	16
		Sámi culture: spirituality and faith	Online	25
	Culture and history in the north	Giron	18	
	<b>Second-cycle studies</b>	Development of Indigenous research	Umeje	7
		Sámi studies: repatriation	Umeje	2
		---: research methods in Indigenous research	Umeje	1

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	Level	Course	Location	Students
2018	<b>Other</b>	South Sámi language beginner's level	Staare	12
		Lule Sámi language beginner's level	Julevu	13
	<b>First-cycle studies</b>	South Sámi language A level	Staare	?
		South Sámi language B level	Staare	3
		Lule Sámi language A level	Julevu	?
		Lule Sámi language B level	Julevu	2
		Sámi language linguistics C level	Online	2
		<u>Sámi language didactics C level</u>	<u>Ubmeje</u>	<u>5</u>
		Sámi culture: crafts, music and literature	Online	40
		Sámi culture studies A-level 2 <sup>nd</sup> term	Julevu	5
	Sámi society: contemporary perspectives	Online	32	
	Culture and history in the north	Giron	30	
	<b>Second-cycle studies</b>	Sámi language: exam work	Online	3
		Sámi studies: exam work	Ubmeje	3
		Sámi studies: oral storytelling in jojk-form	Ubmeje	0
2019	<b>Other</b>	South Sámi language beginner's level	Staare	6
		Lule Sámi language beginner's level	Julevu	7
	<b>First-cycle studies</b>	South Sámi language A level	Staare	12
		South Sámi language B level	Staare	3
		<u>Lule Sámi language B level</u>	<u>Julevu</u>	<u>1</u>
		Sámi society: historic perspectives	Online	38
		Sámi culture studies A-level	Ubmeje	15
	Comparative Indigenous studies A-level	Online	22	
	<b>Second-cycle studies</b>	Development of Indigenous research	Ubmeje	11

Note: Data from Ingela Valfridsson, assistant director of studies for Sámi languages at Umeå University.

The structure of the education system in Sweden in 2018/2019



Source: Eurydice (2018/2019).

## References and further reading

## regulations

Regulation (accessed in March 2020)	Order no.	In use since	Available at
Act on Higher Vocational Education School	2009:128	2009, April 15	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2009:128">lagen.nu/2009:128</a>
Act on National Minorities & Minority Languages	2009:724	2010, Jan. 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2009:724">lagen.nu/2009:724</a>
Compulsory School Ordinance	2011:185	2011, April 15	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2011:185">lagen.nu/2011:185</a>
Discrimination Act	2008:567	2009, Jan. 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2008:567">lagen.nu/2008:567</a>
Education Act	2010:800	2010, Aug. 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2010:800">lagen.nu/2010:800</a>
Higher Education Act	1992:1434	1993, July 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/1992:1434">lagen.nu/1992:1434</a>
Language Act	2009:600	2009, July 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2009:600">lagen.nu/2009:600</a>
Ordinance Experimenting with Bilingual Education at Compulsory School	2003:306	2003, Aug. 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2003:306">lagen.nu/2003:306</a>
Ordinance with instr. for the Sámi School Board	2011:131	2011, July 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2011:131">lagen.nu/2011:131</a>
Sámi Parliament Act	1992:1433	1993, Jan. 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/1992:1433">lagen.nu/1992:1433</a>
Upper-secondary Education Ordinance	2010:2039	2011, Feb. 1	<a href="http://lagen.nu/2010:2039">lagen.nu/2010:2039</a>

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## Other websites on minority languages

**Mercator Research Centre** [www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)  
Homepage of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The website contains the series of Regional dossiers, a database with organisations, a bibliography, information on current activities, and many links to relevant websites.

**Mercator Network** [www.mercator-network.eu](http://www.mercator-network.eu)  
General site of the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres. It gives information about the network and leads you to the homepages of the network partners.

**European Commission** <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>  
The website of the European Commission gives information about the EU's support for language diversity.

**Council of Europe** <http://conventions.coe.int>  
*European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995). European Treaty Series 148 and 157, Strasbourg.

**Eurydice** <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>  
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.

### European Parliament Committee – supporting analyses database

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/supporting-analyses-search.html>.

In this database you will find research papers produced by the European Parliament's research service. A study for the CULT Committee, conducted by Mercator, is published in 2017: *Minority Languages and Education: Best Practices and Pitfalls*.

**NPLD**

**<http://www.npld.eu/>**

The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is a European wide network working in the field of language policy & planning for Constitutional, Regional and Small-State Languages (CRSS) across Europe.

**FUEN**

**<https://www.fuen.org/>**

The Federal Union of European Nationalities is the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities/ethnic groups in Europe and represents the interests of European minorities on regional, national and European level.

**ELEN**

**<https://elen.ngo/>**

The European Language Equality Network (ELEN) is a non-governmental organisation that has as its goal to promote and protect European lesser-used languages, (RMLs), to work towards linguistic equality for these languages, and multilingualism, under the broader framework of human rights, and to be a voice for the speakers of these languages at all levels.

## What can the Mercator Research Centre offer you?

**mission & goals** The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning addresses the growing interest in multilingualism and endeavours to promote linguistic diversity within and outside Europe. The centre focuses on research, policy, and practice in the field of multilingualism and language learning. Through the creation, circulation and application of knowledge in the field of language learning at school, at home and through cultural participation, the Mercator Research Centre aims to provide for the increasing need of language communities to exchange experiences and to cooperate. Not only in European context, but also beyond the borders of Europe. Though the main focus lies in the field of regional and minority languages, immigrant languages are topics of study as well.

**partners** The Mercator Research Centre is the leading partner of the European Mercator network, initiated by the European Commission in 1987. The Mercator network partners are: Mercator Media, hosted at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, Mercator Legislation, hosted at the Ciemen Foundation, the University of Barcelona in Barcelona, the Stockholm University in Sweden and the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Hungary. Mercator also works and co-operates closely with a large number of research organisations and universities. This cooperation includes partners in the province Fryslân and other parts of the Netherlands, as well as partners across Europe and beyond. The main funding body of the Mercator Research Centre is the provincial government of Fryslân. The EU and regional authorities in Europe also regularly fund projects and activities.

**research** The research activities of the Mercator Research Centre focus on various aspects of bilingual and trilingual education such as language proficiency in different languages, interaction in the multilingual classroom, and teachers' qualifications for working in a multilingual classroom. Latest developments look at how

educational models for minority languages can also cater for immigrant pupils. Whenever possible, research is carried out in a comparative perspective. Results are disseminated through publications, conferences and publications in collaboration with Mercator's partners.

**conferences**

The Mercator Research Centre organises conferences and seminars on a regular basis. The main target groups are professionals, researchers and policymakers from all member states of the Council of Europe and beyond. Themes for the conferences are: assessment & best practice, educational models, development of minimum standards, teacher training and the application of the Common European Framework of Reference.

**q&a**

If you have any questions, please contact us at:  
[mercator@fryske-akademy.nl](mailto:mercator@fryske-akademy.nl)



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