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By

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**The Education of the Sámi in
the Comprehensive Schooling of
Three Nordic Countries:
Norway, Finland and Sweden**

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Preface

Gáldu Resource Centre on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples presents the new Gáldu čála on the education of Sámi children in comprehensive schooling, written by researcher Ulla Aikio-Puoskari. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has the special theme for the year's session the Millennium Development Goals with particular focus on goal 2: "Achieve universal primary education". This also influenced the Resource Centre which has decided that education will be the theme for the year 2005.

This article is based on the report "The Status of Sámi Education in Nordic Compulsory Schooling", which author has prepared for the Sámi Parliamentary Council. The report will come out in 2005. Mrs. Aikio-Puoskari has for a long time endorsed the educational rights of Sámi people. In the late 1980s, she began to work in Sámi educational administration, working first as the Secretary of Sámi Educational Council – a body founded by the Finnish Ministry of Education – and, later, as the Educational Secretary/the Head of the Educational Office of the Finnish Sámi Parliament. In the late 1990s, Mrs. Aikio-Puoskari worked as a pro tem researcher in the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law in the University of Lapland. Consequently, she published study reports on teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language in Nordic schools (Juridica Lapponica 25/2001) and on the linguistic rights of the Finnish Sámi (together with Merja Pentikäinen, Juridica Lapponica 26/2001). Subsequently, she has worked as an acting researcher in the Giellagas Institute of the University of Oulu, where she is also a postgraduate student with "Sámi culture" as her major subject. Her special field is Sámi education and the linguistic human rights of Sámi pupils in Nordic compulsory education.

On behalf of the Gáldu I wish for educational and beneficial moments to all our readers.
Cordially,



Mr. Magne Ove Varsi
Director

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SUMMARY

In the compulsory schooling of the Nordic countries, pupils study and learn through five Sámi languages. These languages are North, Lule, South, Inari and Skolt Sámi. North Sámi is the biggest one of them, and about 90% of the Sámi education consists of teaching in North Sámi or the teaching of North Sámi. The position of the other Sámi languages in education is a great deal weaker, and, in recent years, an attempt has been made to promote teaching in and the teaching of these languages.

The position of Sámi education has been defined in different ways in the three Nordic countries. In Norway, the Education Act defines the rights of Sámi pupils to study their own language and to learn through it. In the Swedish Education Act, there are special regulations about Sámi schools. In Finland, the law on compulsory schooling – the Basic Education Act – defines the obligations of those providing education. A common feature in all these countries is that their educational legislations provide Sámi education with a stronger position in certain areas of the country. Outside these areas, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language is restricted in many ways. This means, for example, that not many pupils learn through Sámi outside “the core Sámi areas” of the countries and that the possibility of studying the language in these areas is also limited. It is estimated that as much as 50% of the Sámi people live outside the core Sámi areas.

In Norway, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language is mainly provided in the ordinary municipal comprehensive schools. In addition, there are two special Sámi schools run by the State in the South

Sámi area and one such school in the North Sámi area. In Northern Sweden, there are six special Sámi schools, the education of which corresponds to the education provided in public schools in grades 1-6. In addition, municipal schools provide “integrated Sámi education” and teaching in the native language for minority groups. In Finland, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language take place in the ordinary comprehensive schools.

During the 2003-04 school year, most of the Sámi pupils still went to Norwegian-, Swedish- or Finnish-speaking schools. Of the pupils participating in Sámi education in Norway, 52% were from the six municipalities of the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented. In Finland, 90% of all such pupils went to schools that are situated within the Sámi Area. In Sweden, about 62% of the pupils participating in Sámi education went to school in the four municipalities of the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented. The greater part of the teaching in Sámi is provided in the core Sámi areas; in the other areas, most of the Sámi education consists of teaching the Sámi language as a subject. In the compulsory schooling of Norway, 89% of the teaching in Sámi was provided within the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented. In Finland and Sweden, the corresponding figure was 100%.

The states have transferred some of the administrative and pedagogical tasks and part of the policy-making in the field of Sámi education to the political bodies and educational administrations of the Sámi themselves. These bodies mostly function as expert and preparatory bodies. They still

have little authority to decide about the education of the Sámi people.

This article is based on a report that was made for the Sámi Parliamentary Council; the report consists of many Nordic comparisons and proposals for measures which would make it possible to improve the conditions of Sámi education and its status in terms of educational policy. The proposals are based on a principle that have been expressed in many Sámi political documents: that the Sámi are one people, whose sense of unity should not be broken by state borders.

1. THE STATUS OF THE SÁMI LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION LEGISLATION

The status of Sámi education has been determined in different ways in the legislation on compulsory schooling in Norway, Sweden and Finland. In Norway, the decisions have been formulated as the student's rights that concern the teaching of the Sámi language and teaching in Sámi. In the Swedish educational legislation, there are special regulations about Sámi schools. In Finland, the law on compulsory schooling – the Basic Education Act – defines obligations for those who provide the education and possibilities that concern teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language.

The educational legislations of the three countries have one thing in common. In all the countries, the teaching of the Sámi language and teaching in Sámi have a stronger position in certain areas. In Norway, this region is called “the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented” (also known as “the Sámi Administrative Area”)¹ and, in Finland, the Sámi Area². In Sweden, there is a similar area: the area in which the special Sámi schools³ operate. Outside these areas, the possibilities of learning through Sámi and being taught the Sámi language are in many ways restricted in all the three countries.

Norway

The Education Act of Norway was revised in 1998.⁴ The reform meant that a system of ten-year comprehensive schools was

founded and school started earlier, at the age of six years. The law contains a special chapter on teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language (Chapter 6, “The teaching of the Sámi language”).

The sixth paragraph of the law (§ 6, Sect. 2) – which deals with teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language – is based on the rights of the students:

“In the Sámi area, all the pupils of the comprehensive schools have the right to be taught Sámi and to learn other subjects through Sámi.

Outside the Sámi area, pupils have the right to study Sámi and learn through Sámi if at least ten pupils in the municipality want to have such instruction; teaching is provided as long as there are at least six such pupils in the group.

The municipality can decide to provide such Sámi education in one or many schools in the municipality.

The municipality can also decide that all pupils who receive compulsory schooling in the Sámi area must study Sámi.

The Sámi pupils who receive compulsory schooling outside the Sámi areas have the right to study Sámi. The Ministry of Education decides, through its regulations, in detail how such education is to be provided if the school has no teachers who would be able to give such instruction.

1 The Sámi Act (*Sámeláhka/Samelov*), 1987:56; the amendment concerning the Sámi language in Chapter 3 (“The Sámi language”) in law 1990:78, § 3, Sect. 1.

2 The Law on the Sámi Parliament (*Laki Saamelaiskäräjistä/Láhka Sámedikkis*) 974/1995, § 4.

3 More about the Sámi schools later in this paper.

4 The Law on Compulsory Schooling and Upper Secondary Education (*Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregående opplæringa (opplæringslova)/Oahpahusláhka – ođđa láhka vuodđoskuvlii ja joatkkaoahpahussii*), 1998:61.

From eighth grade on, the pupils themselves can choose whether they want the education specified in the Sections 1, 2 and 5 of this paragraph.”

Thus, the law grants all the Sámi pupils at least the right to study Sámi during their compulsory schooling. According to the Education Act and Statute, the pupils have the right to alternative teaching methods if their school does not have a teacher who could teach them. This means that Internet and distance education, for example, have a legal basis in the educational legislation⁵.

Sámi education is mostly financed by the State of Norway. Every year, the municipalities that provide Sámi education apply for teaching hours from the Educational Departments of the provinces (for the financing of the teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language that will be provided the following year). The granting of teaching hours is based on the number of teaching hours defined for the whole country in the Sámi curriculum (O97S).⁶

Sweden

In Sweden, the present Education Act came into force in 1985⁷, but a new law is being drafted⁸. In both laws, there is a separate chapter on the Sámi schools (Chapter 8 in the present law and Chapter 10 in the new law proposal).

According to the Education Act (Chapter 1, § 1 and Chapter 8, § 3), the children of Sámi have a possibility of getting their compulsory education in separate Sámi schools, which are part of the public school system (*offentliga skolväsendet*). For special reasons, other children can also get their compulsory education in a Sámi school. The Sámi schools are run by the State (Chapter 1, § 7). The schools are administered by a board (*Sámeskuvlastivra*),

which is appointed by the Sámi Parliament of Sweden. For example, the Sámi School Board chooses the pupils for the schools and is annually granted – through the state budget – an appropriation for its activities. The education provided in the Sámi schools corresponds to the education given in grades 1-6 in the comprehensive schools of Sweden, but the education of the Sámi children must have Sámi content (Chapter 8, § 1).

There are no regulations about the Sámi language in the Education Act: they are found at a lower level, in statutes (*förordning*). In the statute on Sámi schools⁹, there are regulations about the Sámi language as a subject and as the language of instruction in the Sámi schools as well as about integrated¹⁰ Sámi education in municipal schools. According to the statute (Chapter 3, § 2), a Sámi school must provide education both in Swedish and Sámi; Sámi must also be taught as a subject in every grade.

The statute on Sámi schools defines the concept “Sámi education” (*samisk undervisning*) as education which contains aspects of Sámi culture, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language as a native language.¹¹ A municipality can provide Sámi education for Sámi pupils in its comprehensive schools if it makes an agreement about this with the Sámi School Board. Such education is called integrated Sámi education (*integrerad samisk undervisning*), and its administration is then also the task of the Sámi School Board.

Outside the Sámi schools, the Sámi language is taught according to the paragraphs that deal with the instruction of the native language in the statute on compulsory schooling¹² (Chapter 2, § 9-14). The term native language (or “mother tongue”, *modersmål*) refers to minority languages.

5 Foreword to the Education Act (*Forskrift til opplæringslova*). June 28, 1999/722.7, § 1, *Alternative opplæringsformer i samisk og finsk* (Alternative teaching methods in Sámi and Finnish).

6 More about this later in this paper.

7 The Education Act (*Skollag*) SFS 1985:1100.

8 “The Education Law for Quality and Equality” (*Skollag för kvalitet och likvärdighet*). A report by the 1999 Education Act Committee, SOU 2002:121.

9 *Sameskolförordningen*, SFS 1995:205.

10 Integrated Sámi education means having aspects of Sámi culture included in the teaching of the different subjects.

11 The amendment of the statute on Sámi schools, SFS 2002:1009.

12 The statute on compulsory schooling *Grundskoleförordningen*, SFS 1994:1194.

If a pupil has one or two parents/ guardians who speak some language other than Swedish as their mother tongue, the pupil has a right to instruction in his/her native language. According to the statute, the pupil also needs to have basic knowledge in this language and he/she has to want to study the language (Chapter 2, § 9). The municipality is obligated to arrange teaching in the mother tongue of the pupil only if there is a suitable teacher available (Chapter 2, § 13). If necessary, Swedish is taught as a second language for the pupils who do not have Swedish as their mother tongue (Chapter 2, § 15).

Finland

In 1998, a new educational legislation came into force in Finland, and, after that, Finland has had a continuous nine-year comprehensive school system. The reform brought together most of the regulations of the educational legislation¹³ that concern teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language. The only clear regulation in the Finnish educational legislation that concerns the provision of Sámi education is in the law on compulsory schooling, the Basic Education Act. The other educational laws only provide possibilities for the teaching of the Sámi language and for teaching in Sámi.

According to the law on compulsory schooling (§ 10, “The language of instruction”),

“The language of instruction and the language used in extracurricular teaching shall be either Finnish or Swedish. The language of instruction may also be Saami, Roma or sign language.---

Pupils living in the Sámi Area who are proficient in the Saami language shall be primarily taught in Saami.---

If the education provider provides education in more than one of the languages of instruction referred to in subsections 1 and 2 in which the pupil can study, the parent/

carer shall choose the language of instruction.”

In the law, the term “native language” (or “mother tongue”, *äidinkieli*) refers to the first language of the pupils, and special attention must be paid to it in the first grades. According to the law (§ 12, “Teaching the mother tongue”),
“As mother tongue, the pupil shall be taught Finnish, Swedish or Saami in keeping with the language of instruction.

As mother tongue, the pupil may also be taught the Roma language, sign language or some other language which is the pupil’s native language.”

The last part of the regulation also makes it possible to teach Sámi as the native language, or mother tongue, in the schools that do not teach in Sámi. Sámi can also be a free-choice subject (“Second foreign language”, A2) in the first grades of compulsory schooling, and the teaching of this subject then continues in grades 7-9 as an optional subject. Schools decide themselves which free-choice subjects they provide.

It was a new thing in the reform of 1998 that the Sámi language was mentioned in the connection of the curriculum paragraph of the law on compulsory schooling. In the paragraph on the obligations of the provider of education (§15), the law states that the curriculum must be approved separately for the teaching that is provided in Finnish, Swedish and Sámi.

Neither in the law nor in the statute are there any regulations about the teaching that is provided outside the Sámi Area. This teaching is based on a special decision¹⁴ that the Ministry of Education has made about the grounds for granting state subsidies for the complementary compulsory and upper secondary schooling of immigrants and pupils who speak Sámi,

¹³ By educational legislation I mean here the Basic Education Act, the General Upper Secondary Schools Act and the Vocational Education and Training Act (*Perusopetuslaki, Lukiolaki ja Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta*), SSK 1998/628-630.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education, June 3, 2004, 132/428/2004.

Romany or other foreign languages as their native language.

In 1999, a regulation about the financing of teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language came into force in Finland¹⁵; according to it, the salary expenses of Sámi teachers in the Sámi Area are paid by the State. The Sámi Parliament considers the regulation a good one for the municipalities of the Sámi Area, but, at the same time, it means that the right of Sámi pupils to be taught their native language is not fulfilled outside this area.

¹⁵ SSK, August 21, 1998/635, amendment Dec. 30, 1998/1186. A law on the financing of education and cultural activities.

2. SÁMI EDUCATION UNDER THE NATIONAL CURRICULA

Norway

In Norway, the national curriculum was reformed in the mid-1990s. In 1997, two documents that have equal significance were passed: the public, national curriculum (L97) and *the Sámi Curriculum for the Ten-Year Comprehensive School (O97S)* – a document which is 460 pages long. This reform – Reform 97 – enhanced Sámi education, as, for the first time, all teaching – the contents of the subjects – at the level of compulsory schooling was based on Sámi culture. However, an evaluation study of Reform 97 that was completed in 2003 showed that, in the municipalities, there are many shortcomings in meeting the demands of the Sámi curriculum and providing education on the basis of it.¹⁶ A new curriculum reform has recently been started (2004).

In terms of legislation, the Sámi curriculum is based on the Constitution of Norway¹⁷ and the Sámi Act¹⁸. The foreword of the Sámi curriculum also refers to the ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent States¹⁹, which Norway ratified in 1990 as the only Nordic country. The general part of the curriculum – which was adopted as early as 1993 and which applies to the whole country – states (p. 21), for example, that:

The Sámi language and culture are part of... common heritage, and Norway and the Nordic countries have a special

responsibility to safeguard Sámi language and culture. Furthermore, this heritage is to be emphasized in schools where there are Sámi pupils, to strengthen the Sámi identity and our common knowledge of Sámi culture.

The curriculum's section on principles and guidelines defines the starting-point of education (pp. 55-56) in the following way:

The Sámi School²⁰, as part of the common school, is founded on the principle that education must be common and equal and start from and be based on the nature and needs of the Sámi society. In terms of content and quality, education must provide basic skills which bring the cultural heritage to life and motivate pupils to make use of the local culture. At the same time, children and the young are to become active and innovative in both the Sámi and Norwegian societies. Education must enhance a positive self-esteem in each pupil and functional bilingualism...The multicultural society is, for most children and young people, a part of their everyday lives. Thus, the Sámi perspective is of crucial importance in education in order for the Sámi culture and traditions to be equal with the dominant culture.

The Sámi curriculum is applied in all compulsory schooling within the area where the Sámi Language Act is implemented²¹

¹⁶ Hirvonen 2003 a,b and 2004.

¹⁷ The Constitution of Norway, May 27, 1998, § 110a.

¹⁸ The Sámi Act / The Law on the Sámi Parliament and Other Rights of the Sámi, 1998:56 (Sámeláhka/Láhka Sámedikki ja eara sámi vuoigatvuohtadiliid birra).

¹⁹ The Convention refers to education in its Articles 26, 27 and 28.

²⁰ The Sámi School means "the classes, schools and municipalities, which follow the Sámi curriculum" (p. 55).

²¹ A letter by the Ministry of Education (*Rundskriv*) F-95-97. According to the Sámi Act (§ 3, Sect. 1), the area in which the Sámi Language Act is to be implemented consists of the municipalities of Kárášjohka/Karasjok, Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, Unjárga/Nesseby, Porsángu/Porsanger, Deatnu/Tana and Gáivuotna/Kåfjord. Altogether 21 schools in these municipalities implement the Sámi curriculum (Hirvonen 2003a, 7).

and in Loabát²² and Málatvuopmi²³ Sámi schools. In addition, the Sámi curriculum's syllabuses concerning the Sámi language and the hour resources needed in meeting the goals of these syllabuses are applied everywhere in Norway where pupils are taught the Sámi language or learn through it. Pupils studying according to the Sámi curriculum can choose between five alternatives (p. 87):

- 1 *Sámi as a first language* is meant for the Sámi-speaking pupils who want to study in Sámi. They are taught Norwegian as a second language, and they do not need to study the other form of Norwegian at the lower secondary level;
- 2 *Sámi as a second language* is meant for the pupils who want to study Norwegian as a first language, and they do not need to study the other form of Norwegian at the lower secondary level;
- 3 *Sámi language and culture* is meant for the Norwegian-speaking pupils. The number of lessons in this subject during the year is about half of that in the alternatives 1 and 2, and the pupils who choose this alternative also have to study the other form of Norwegian at the lower secondary level;
- 4 *Norwegian as a first language and Finnish as a second language* is meant for the pupils who want to study Finnish instead of Sámi. These pupils do not need to study the other form of Norwegian at the lower secondary level;
- 5 *Norwegian as a first language* is meant for the Norwegian-speaking pupils who do not want to study Sámi.
- 6 One of the common goals of the subject "Sámi as a first language" is that teaching should strengthen the pupils as users of their native language, strengthen their cultural and personal identities and promote their awareness

in the sphere of the Sámi language and its development as well as enhance their capacity for cooperation and tolerance across the language borders of the Sámi (p. 126). The main objective of the subject "Sámi as a second language" is to attain functional bilingualism. In addition to their first language, the pupils should know Sámi so well that they can be active members of the Sámi society (p. 167).

The national curriculum (L97) also defined, for all subjects (except mathematics) and for all grades, the aspects of Sámi culture²⁴ that were to be taken into consideration everywhere in Norway. These "Sámi pillars" became, for the first time, an obligatory part of the national curriculum, and they should fulfill the objective that the Government of Norway defined for education in the first part of Reform L97; according to this principle, Sámi culture is a part of the national heritage which all the children in Norway should be familiar with. Therefore, fundamental aspects of Sámi culture are to be part of the teaching that is provided in the common subjects of compulsory schooling.²⁵

Another reform of the curricula of compulsory schooling was begun in 2004.²⁶ The Sámediggi Council – the executive committee of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament – has launched a reform of the Sámi curricula and decided²⁷ to prepare comprehensive syllabuses for compulsory and upper secondary schooling in the following subjects:

- Sámi as a first language,
- Sámi as a second language (alternative I),
- Sámi as a second language (alternative II),
- Sámi as a foreign language,
- Norwegian for the pupils who study Sámi as a first language,
- Norwegian for the pupils who study Sámi as a second language,
- Natural studies, and
- Social studies.

22 The Sámi-speaking classes of Loabát Central School are called Loabát Sámi School. Loabát/Lavangen is in the province of Finnmark.

23 In Málatvuopmi/Målselv in the province of Troms, there is a special Sámi school which is run by the state.

24 Sámi content in the curriculum L97, 14-21.

25 Parliamentary Notice (*St. melding*) No. 52 (1992-93), 16.

26 Parliamentary Notice (*St. melding*) No. 30 (2003-2004), Culture and Education (*Kultur for læring*).

27 The records of the Sámediggi Council (*Sámediggeráđi beavdegirji*) 112-114/04.

The realization of the objectives of the Sámediggi Council would give the teaching of the Sámi language a better position in the School. The objective is to narrow the gap that there is today between compulsory and upper secondary schooling and to take the needs and different linguistic backgrounds of the pupils better into consideration in the teaching of Sámi.

The subject “Sámi as a first language” is meant for the pupils who have Sámi as their home language and who themselves speak Sámi when starting school. “Sámi as a second language (alternative I)” is meant for the pupils who know some Sámi when starting school, and “Sámi as a second language (alternative II)” is meant for the pupils who do not know Sámi when starting school. The present subject “Sámi language and culture” will be replaced by a new subject “Sámi as a second language (alternative II)”. The alternative “Sámi as a foreign language” is linked with the new principle in the national reform, according to which pupils will be studying another obligatory foreign language during their compulsory schooling. The syllabus of this alternative will apply to the Sámi language too, enabling non-Sámi pupils to study Sámi. The teaching of the second foreign language starts at lower secondary level.

In addition to the syllabuses of the Sámi language, the Sámi Parliament has also been given the task of preparing the Sámi content for the national curriculum. The curriculum reform will be completed in 2006.

Sweden

In compulsory schooling in Sweden, the curriculum *Lpo 94*²⁸ that came into force in 1994 is implemented. In the second chapter of the document, there is a section that deals with Sámi education, defining the objectives of the Sámi schools in the following way:

A Sámi school is to make sure that every pupil who has gone to the school is familiar with the cultural heritage of the Sámi and knows how to speak, read and write the Sámi language.

In addition to the curriculum, there is a national course plan, or syllabus, and a list of evaluation criteria (*betygskriterier*) for each subject. The Sámi schools are to implement the national syllabuses of compulsory schooling. The Sámi School Board has prepared special guidelines for how Sámi culture can be taken into consideration in teaching when meeting the demands of the course plans.²⁹ The syllabus³⁰ of the Sámi language states the objectives of the subjects “Sámi as a first language” and “Sámi as a second language”. This syllabus is to be applied in the Sámi schools and in the teaching of the mother tongue everywhere in Sweden. The subject “Mother tongue” consists of one lesson every week.³¹

The syllabus for the Sámi language emphasizes how important proficiency in Sámi can be, as it can be considered a merit in social and employment situations and as it enables the pupil to continue studying Sámi. Thus, the course plan states that (p. 2):

...the teaching should enhance pupils' functional bilingualism and provide possibilities for living in and having an effect on both the Sámi society and the society of the majority population.

According to the syllabus (p. 3), the teaching of the language should strengthen the pupil's identity and include the perspective of bilingualism. In the case of Sámi-speaking pupils, education should provide the pupils with good possibilities of improving their skills in speaking, listening, understanding, reading and writing. For the pupils who are Swedish-speaking or who do not know Sámi very well, the final

28 The 1994 curriculum for compulsory schooling, pre-school education and free-time activities (*Lpo 94*); the statute on compulsory schooling, pre-school education and free-time activities, SKOLFS 1994:1.

29 The Sámi School – The Course Plan, Schedule and Comments (*Sameskolan – Kursplan, timplan och kommentarer*). Skolverket (the National Agency for Education) 1996.

30 The Educational Board's regulation about the syllabus of the Sámi language in the Sámi School and in compulsory schooling, SKOLFS 2003:8.

31 <http://modersmal.skolutveckling.se>, theme “*Modersmål*” (Mother Tongue Theme Site). (March 23, 2004).

objective (*det yttersta syftet*) of education is to achieve the proficiency of native speakers in Sámi (p. 1).

The objective of the subject “Swedish as a second language” is that the pupils attain the same level of functional proficiency (*en funktionell behärskning*) in the language as the pupils who have Swedish as their native language. Without such proficiency, pupils will not be able to live in and be active members of the Swedish society and use the skills they have learned in the other subjects for their own good to the same extent Swedish-speaking pupils can.³²

In the national curriculum, there are no details about Sámi content in the education provided throughout the country, although the Swedish Parliament decided, when adopting the Sámi Language Act³³, that information about the languages, cultures, beliefs and histories of minorities must be included in the national curricula.³⁴

Finland

In compulsory schooling in Finland, schools are now, in 2004, about to start implementing a new curriculum. The National Board of Education adopted a new national curriculum at the beginning of 2004, and schools must start following this curriculum by the beginning of the 2006-07 school year. “The Principles of the Curriculum for Compulsory Schooling” (*Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet*)³⁵ realizes the principle of a continuous nine-year comprehensive school that is stated in the new educational legislation. The document is a national norm and it is also applied in Sámi education. The separate curriculum on the teaching given in Sámi – which the law on compulsory schooling requires that the provider of education prepares³⁶ – is a local document and must be based on the national principles. The State Provincial Office of Lapland (*Lapin lääninhallitus*) has launched a project, which

should draft a proposal for the municipalities of the Sámi Area about a continuous, regional syllabus for teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language; this regional syllabus should take the distinctive characteristics of Sámi culture into consideration.

The national curriculum contains a separate chapter on the teaching of linguistic and ethnic groups, in which the principles of the education of the Sámi are also drawn up (6.1., p. 32). According to these principles, the education of the Sámi is to take into consideration the fact that the Sámi are an indigenous people with its own language and culture. The section mentions the three Sámi languages that are spoken in Finland; it also states that Sámi-speaking pupils in the Sámi Area must be, for the most part, taught in Sámi. The teaching must support the indigenous identity of the pupils and enhance their knowledge of their own culture and history and the Nordic Sámi community as well as their awareness of the Sámi as one of the indigenous peoples of the world. For example, the section states that

With the help of the school, the pupils should acquire a healthy self-esteem so that they can maintain their Sámi identity without assimilating into the majority population.

The main objective of the education of the Sámi-speaking pupils is to promote their growth into actively bilingual and multicultural persons. When the pupil studies through the Sámi language, the teaching of all the subjects supports the enhancement of the pupil’s skills in his/her native language. Education must comply with the national objectives and content of teaching, but, according to the section, so that the special characteristics of Sámi culture and language situation are taken into consideration.

32 Swedish as a second language (*Svenska som andraspråk*), The National Agency for Education, *Skolverket* 2000.

33 The law on the right to use Sámi with authorities and in courts (*Lag om rätt att använda samiska hos förvaltningsmyndigheter och domstolar*). SFS 1999:1175.

34 The Parliament of Sweden, press release on Dec. 2, 1999.

35 The National Board of Education’s decisions 1, 2 and 3/01,1/Jan. 16, 2004.

36 SSK 1998/628, § 15.

As regards the teaching of the Sámi-speaking pupils, the national curriculum contains two syllabuses for the subject “Mother tongue and literature” (7.3.): one for “Sámi as a mother tongue” and the other for “Finnish for Sámi-speaking pupils”. The aim of the subject “Finnish for Sámi-speaking pupils” is to strengthen the student’s awareness of his/her Finnish skills and bilingualism (p. 101). The teaching must support the pupil in attaining a high level of bilingualism and in enabling him/her to be an active and equal member in both the Sámi- and Finnish-speaking societies.

In the section that deals with the teaching of foreign languages, there are two syllabuses for the Sámi language. “Sámi as an A language” means studying it as a foreign language throughout compulsory schooling (from 1st to 9th grade³⁷), and “Sámi as an optional subject” means taking a shorter course of it (from 7th to 9th grade).

The above-mentioned syllabuses are the only places in which the Sámi or Sámi culture are mentioned in the national curriculum. Thus, teaching about the Sámi and Sámi culture in compulsory schooling in Finland depends on the activity of individual schools and teachers. In the Sámi Area, the aspects of Sámi culture belong to the special local features which the new curriculum reform will try to integrate more strongly into education. In Finland, schools make the decisions about teaching local features to the pupils.

37 Schools decide in which grade the teaching begins. Usually the instruction of the second foreign language begins in the third or the fifth grade.

3. A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES – LEGISLATIONS AND CURRICULA

Rights. The educational legislation of Norway defines clearly the rights that it grants to Sámi pupils who receive compulsory schooling as regards the teaching of the Sámi language and teaching in Sámi. The Education Act is based on individual rights, guaranteeing every Sámi pupil in Norway at least the right to learn his/her native language. In the Sámi Administrative Area³⁸, this right is more extensive, covering all the pupils of the region and also granting a right to learn through the Sámi language. Outside the Sámi Administrative Area, Sámi pupils have the right to learn through Sámi if the group consists of at least ten pupils. This right exists as long as the group has at least six pupils. This legal right can also be fulfilled so that the school provides the teaching in the form of distance education or through the Internet or school camps, if there are no other possibilities.

The Swedish educational legislation does not talk about rights, but the formulations of the law clearly grant Sámi education rights that apply to all the Sámi pupils – but not other pupils, as in Norway. Sámi pupils have the right to get their compulsory schooling in special Sámi schools, which means the right to study the Sámi language as well as the right to learn through Sámi and about the Sámi culture. Other Sámi children who are of school age have the right to study Sámi as a native language, or mother tongue, for one lesson a week. To have this right, the pupils must have basic skills in the Sámi language.

This has provided a reason for a school in the municipality of Norrtälje to refuse to arrange teaching in South Sámi, for example.³⁹ At the same time, the regulation about the Sámi pupils' right to be taught Sámi as a mother tongue means that the Sámi pupils who have already lost their traditional language have no right to study the Sámi language at school.

The basis of the Finnish law on compulsory schooling is different from that of the neighboring countries. The law is not based on rights but on obligations. The law's regulation on the language of instruction – according to which most of the teaching of the Sámi-speaking pupils should be in Sámi in the Sámi Area⁴⁰ – can be interpreted as giving the Sámi-speaking pupils in the comprehensive schools of the Sámi Area the right to get at least half of their schooling in Sámi. For the pupils living within the Sámi Area, the right to instruction in Sámi also means the right to be taught Sámi as the subject “Mother tongue”. In the other parts of Finland, the law on compulsory schooling grants the schools only the possibility of providing teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language.

Restrictions. The legislations on compulsory schooling in the Nordic countries have one thing in common: they all define certain areas as the central areas of Sámi education, guaranteeing greater rights and greater possibilities of providing teaching

³⁸ See footnote 21.

³⁹ Rådmansö, Gräddö School, Norrtälje. Larsson & Harnesk, Notification to the School Board on Apr. 7, 2003; Norrtälje Municipality, Children's and Educational Administration, Statement on May 12, 2003; School Board, Decision on Aug. 28, 2003.

⁴⁰ See footnote no. 2. The Sámi Area consists of the municipalities of Anár/Inari, Eanodat/Enontekiö and Ohcejohka/Utsjoki and the northernmost part – the Sámi Reindeer-Herding Cooperative – of the municipality of Soadegilli/Sodankylä.

in these areas. In Norway, this core area is the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented, and, in Finland, the area is called the Sámi Area. In Sweden, there is also a regulation about the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented⁴¹, but the most extensive possibilities concerning education are tied to the regulation concerning Sámi schools. This geographical restriction clearly complies with the commitments that the Nordic countries made in the sphere of the Sámi language when they signed the European Council's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.⁴² In Norway, the rights are also more extensive outside the Sámi Administrative Area than in the corresponding areas in the neighboring countries. This is partly a result of the fact that, through ratifying the ILO Convention No. 169⁴³, Norway has committed itself to guaranteeing the Sámi, as an indigenous people, more extensive rights to their language and culture.

The geographical restrictions that Sweden and Finland have put on Sámi education mean that at least half of the Sámi pupils who are of school age are left without Sámi education. In these countries, municipalities have no obligations to provide such teaching, and the pupils living outside the core Sámi area have no right to be taught the language through virtual or camp education, as in Norway.⁴⁴ The Finnish Sámi Parliament has estimated that about 50% of the Sámi of Finland live outside the Sámi Area.⁴⁵ The proportion is likely to be about the same in the neighboring countries, too.

Outside the Swedish Sámi schools, it is possible to participate in integrated Sámi education, which, for many pupils, means continuing the education of the Sámi schools in grades 7-9. A great part of integrated education is still given in Swedish,

and not all the pupils who have wanted integrated education have been able to get it, because there are not enough resources. The right to study one's native language, again, is restricted in terms of lessons. One weekly lesson in one's native language in areas where one's whole life is surrounded by the majority language is indeed little. In Finland, the conditions of being taught the Sámi language outside the Sámi Area are similar to the ones that exist in Sweden. The teaching is restricted to two weekly hours⁴⁶, and the number of pupils is even smaller than in Sweden.

In Sweden, it has been estimated that the pupils attending the Sámi schools represent 5-10% of all the Sámi pupils in the country.⁴⁷ The number of pupils participating in integrated Sámi education and studying Sámi as their mother tongue is about twice as big as the total number of pupils going to Sámi schools. If it is true that the number of pupils going to Sámi schools is only 5-10% of all the Sámi pupils who attend the comprehensive schools, as much as 70% of the Sámi pupils in Sweden have no Sámi education at all.

Another common feature in the situation in Finland and Sweden is that the teaching provided outside the Sámi area is based on the same regulations as, for example, the teaching immigrants get in their own languages. Actually, the Sámi are mentioned as an indigenous people in the principles of the curriculum for compulsory schooling in Finland⁴⁸, and the Sámi language can be, according to the law on compulsory schooling, be studied as the subject "Mother tongue" along with Finnish and Swedish, but the regulation is not implemented outside the Sámi Area. In the educational legislation of Sweden, Sámi is defined as *a historical minority language* along with Finnish and *meän kieli*, the language

41 Law 1999:1175, § 1. This area ("förvaltningsområdet för samiska") consists of the municipalities of Giron/Kiruna, Váhčir/Gällivare, Johkamohkki/Jokkmokk and Árrjatluoovi/Arjeplog.

42 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ETS No. 148.

43 The ILO Convention (No. 169) Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent States.

44 The law does not, in principle, forbid the schools from arranging such education, but it, and its financing, is not based on law.

45 The Election Committee of the Sámi Parliament, Finland. Oct. 30, 2003

46 Regulation by the Ministry of Education on June 3, 2004, 132/428/2004.

47 Helander E. 1990, 408-409.

48 The Principles of the Curriculum for Compulsory Schooling 2004, 2 The starting-points of providing education, 2.1. The value basis of compulsory schooling, 12.

spoken in the Torneå River Valley.⁴⁹ The pupil's right to be provided with teaching in his/her native language is restricted in many ways, but these restrictions do not apply to these three "historical minority languages" nor to the Romany language. The restriction that has the greatest influence on the meaning of such teaching for the pupil is the restriction that concerns the number of lessons taught: in Sweden one lesson and in Finland two lessons a week. This restriction also means that there are no real syllabuses, objectives and contents for such teaching in Finland and Sweden.

Bilingualism as an objective of education. Bilingualism and the different alternatives of learning Sámi are especially important in terms of the objectives of the education of the Sámi. The concept of bilingualism is mentioned in the curricula of all the three countries. However, the differences in the goals and the term "bilingualism" show that there is, in the Nordic countries, no common understanding of how bilingualism is to be defined and what kinds of requirements this objective puts, in terms of language skills, on the teaching of different kinds of pupils.

In the curricula of all the three countries, differences between the language skills and backgrounds of pupils are mentioned, and objectives have been defined for both teaching Sámi as a first language (as a mother tongue in Finland) and as a second language (as a foreign language in Finland).

In the Sámi curriculum in Norway, bilingualism is defined as an objective of education for all the pupils (O97S, Principles and guidelines, p. 57) and emphasized especially in the syllabus for the subject "Sámi as a second language" (p. 167). The curriculum uses the term *functional bilingualism*. According to the syllabus for the Sámi language in Sweden, teaching must contain *the perspective of bilingualism*.

The syllabus states that education should enhance *pupils' functional bilingualism*, which is the same term as the one used in the curriculum in Norway. The final goal of the Swedish-speaking pupils and the pupils who do not know Sámi very well is to attain, in Sámi, the level of knowledge a pupil studying it as a first language has. This objective means the same as attaining bilingualism in Swedish and Sámi. In the principles for the curriculum of compulsory schooling in Finland, the main objective of the teaching of Sámi-speaking pupils is that the pupils become *actively bilingual persons*. One of the goals of the subject "Finnish for Sámi-speaking pupils" is that the pupils attain *a high level of bilingualism*. For the pupils who learn Sámi as a foreign language, bilingualism is not stated as a goal.

Bilingualism can be understood and defined in many ways.⁵⁰ However, it is clearly impossible to attain any kind of bilingualism through the language teaching provided at school if the pupil has little or no skills in the language when starting school and if the teaching of the language only consists of one or two weekly hours. In her evaluation of the Sámi curriculum for compulsory schooling in Norway, Hirvonen finds that, even in Norway, it seems impossible to attain the objective of bilingualism in the case of the pupils who study Sámi as a second language.⁵¹ In Norway, the teaching of the Sámi language consists of the number of weekly lessons that have been granted for the subject in the Sámi curriculum no matter where in Norway the education takes place. Compared with the neighboring countries, the number of lessons is high. The evaluation study of Hirvonen – completed in 2003 – showed that the municipalities of the Sámi Administrative Area have not realized the right of all pupils – even those who study Sámi as a second language – to be taught in Sámi. Therefore, the objective of bilingualism does not seem a realistic one for them – and is not fulfilled.

49 Laws 1999: 1175 and 1176.

50 See e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas 1984 and 2000, Saunders 1988.

51 Hirvonen 2003a, 82 and 2004, 82.

Hirvonen also refers to⁵² international studies and research conducted in *Sápmi* – the Land of the Sámi – which show that it is almost impossible to attain bilingualism only through the teaching of the language. Bilingualism requires the support of other subjects, and the entire school also needs to work consciously to create a positive environment for the Sámi language and culture in the everyday life of the school.

Sámi culture as the basis and content of the curricula. Sámi culture appears in the curricula of the three countries in many different ways and at different levels. The Sámi curriculum for compulsory schooling in Norway is a result of relatively equal negotiations between the Sámi and the State, and the objectives and contents that concern Sámi culture have been included in the common subject division of the school which is, in other respects, Norwegian. The result is a curriculum according to which Sámi culture should be used actively as a basis of education. However, the objectives are difficult to fulfill in practice, as the 2003 evaluation project showed.⁵³

The Sámi curriculum for compulsory schooling in Norway is now, for the first time, based on the same primary objective that has been, through the ages, a goal of the compulsory education of different countries: *to pass down the national cultural heritage to new generations*. In addition, the Sámi curriculum especially emphasizes traditional Sámi skills and the strengthening of the pupils' sense of being part of the local nature, culture, traditions, livelihoods and ways of life. In connection with the evaluation of the Sámi curriculum, Sara shows how difficult it is to realize these objectives; he considers it necessary to provide the schools and teachers with real possibilities of enhancing their professional knowledge in the sphere of traditional skills and of putting time and effort into this.⁵⁴ In the present situation, the objectives concerning the teaching of traditional

skills can be used as a landmark leading to a new school culture, which will, in the future, force the School to adopt new ways of thinking and working.

In Sweden and Finland, Sámi education follows national curricula which also include the syllabuses of the Sámi language (in Sweden, the course plan and, in Finland, the syllabus of the Sámi language). Neither Sámi culture and history nor the Sámi as the indigenous people of the country are mentioned in the syllabuses for other subjects than the Sámi language in these two countries. In Norway, the national curriculum (L97) also defines the Sámi content that is to be taught in all compulsory schooling. Thus, it can be said that Sámi education is treated in the educational policy of the State of Norway as a part of national culture. In Sweden and Finland, Sámi education is – in the core Sámi areas – still treated as a linguistic issue which concerns only the Sámi; outside the core Sámi areas, Sámi education has the same status as the teaching of the language of immigrants and other minorities (except the Swedish-speaking Finns).

The levels of the linguistic rights of Sámi pupils in Nordic compulsory schooling.

The picture on the next page is based on the legislations and curricula examined in this paper. In the evaluation, I have also used information about practical educational situations. On the lowest level, we find the *possibilities* that states provide for teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language. The concept of possibilities refers to a situation where regulations do not, in principle, any longer prevent schools from providing Sámi education, but where the realization of such possibilities depends on the resources allocated for the providing of such teaching, on the availability of teachers, or on other practical matters – often the willingness of the school to provide such instruction. Possibilities are the starting-point; at this

52 Hirvonen 2003a, 147 and 2004, 147.

53 Hirvonen 2003, a and b; especially 2003a, 144-156 and 2004, 144-156.

54 Sara 2003, 121-138.

level, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language are begun in the first grades of compulsory schooling in these countries. At the higher levels, possibilities are replaced by *rights*, and, on the highest rung of the ladder, we find the Sámi School which is based on the Sámi language and culture and in which linguistic rights are guaranteed to a great extent. The concept “right” means that instruction must be provided and that the one who has the right to receive instruction can lodge a complaint if the right is violated. Individual (subjective) rights as well as possibilities that have been realized are marked in the picture with capital letters. Small letters refer to possibilities and rights which are restricted in terms of the group of pupils or the number of lessons or which have not been fully realized.

As regards the Sámi language and culture, the pupil’s rights that have been defined in the educational legislation of Norway and the curriculum’s objectives and content of teaching are, indeed, of a high level and comply to a great extent with the demands of the Sámi. However, the everyday practices of schools and teaching have not kept up with the reforms. Thus, there is a small letter n instead of a capital N on the highest levels. In Sweden, the rights are unambiguous in the Sámi schools but heavily restricted in the other areas. In Finnish compulsory schooling, only the Sámi-speaking pupils who live in the Sámi Area have individual rights. The other pupils have only possibilities, which are strongly restricted outside the Sámi Area.

THE LEVELS OF THE LINGUISTIC RIGHTS OF SÁMI PUPILS IN NORDIC COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

'Core Sámi areas' means:

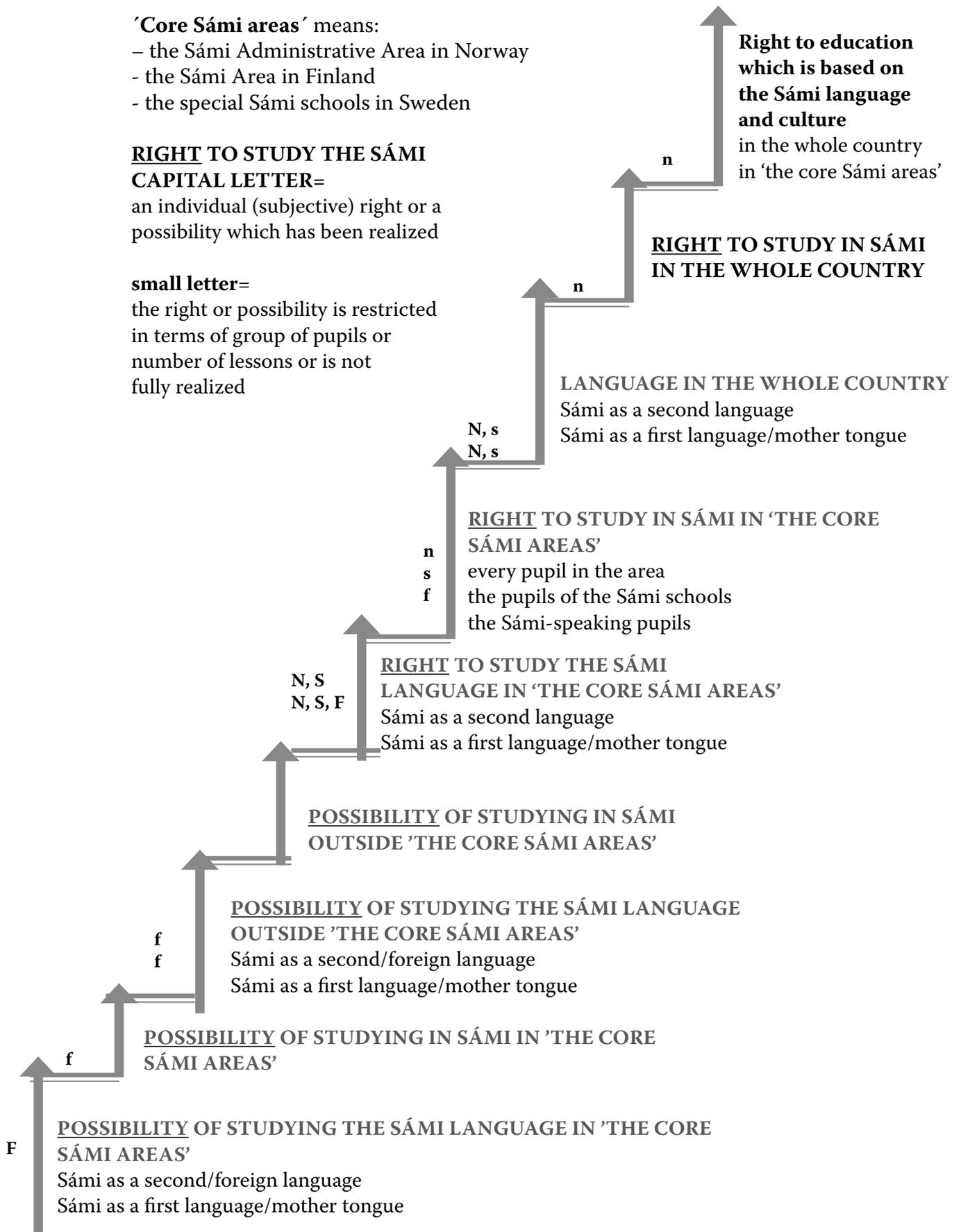
- the Sámi Administrative Area in Norway
- the Sámi Area in Finland
- the special Sámi schools in Sweden

RIGHT TO STUDY THE SÁMI CAPITAL LETTER=

an individual (subjective) right or a possibility which has been realized

small letter=

the right or possibility is restricted in terms of group of pupils or number of lessons or is not fully realized



4. THE INFLUENCE AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE SÁMI IN EDUCATION

Norway

The Sámi Educational Board (*Samisk utdanningsråd*), which was founded in 1976 as an expert body of the Ministry of Church Affairs and Education, became, together with its resources, part of the system of the Sámi Parliament at the beginning of 2000. This change is connected with the policy of the Government of Norway which aims at strengthening the position of the Sámi Parliament as the primary agent in developing the Sámi society.⁵⁵ The objective is to provide the Sámi Parliament with decision-making power in issues that concern the Sámi people and, at the same time, give the Sámi an indigenous people's right to self-government as defined by the ILO Convention No. 169.⁵⁶

The role of the present Sámi Parliament's Department of Education (*opplæringsavdeling*) can be defined as follows:

It is

the Sámi Parliament's education-political and pedagogical expert department and the financier, pedagogical director and leader of the work on the educational material that is published in Sámi.

The tasks of the department have been defined as follows⁵⁷:

- to work towards a situation where the needs and rights of Sámi pupils are taken into consideration;
- to work towards a situation where all the Sámi children and young people can

strengthen and enhance their language skills, culture and identity;

- to be responsible for preparing the curricula for the Sámi pupils who participate in compulsory schooling and the syllabuses of the Sámi language and special Sámi subjects for the upper secondary level;
- to be responsible for preparing the Sámi content of the different subjects;
- to provide pedagogical guidance and to spread information in the field of Sámi educational material;
- to guarantee that educational material is of high quality (and available), and to administer the financial resources intended for promoting such material;
- to spread information about Sámi educational material and to lend it to schools and kindergartens;
- to distribute assessment material in the Sámi language (= examination material for the different subjects);
- to implement the different scholarship regulations in the field of education, and
- to arrange further and supplementary training for those working in the field of education.

Significantly, the task of the Department of Education is to be the preparatory body of the Sámi Parliament in educational policy and to provide pedagogical guidance in the preparation and use of educational material and curricula; in addition, the department is responsible for quite concrete tasks, such as issues concerning

⁵⁵ Parliamentary Notices (*St. melding.*) 41 (1996-97, 7-8), 18 (1997-98, 8) and 48 (1998-99, 24).

⁵⁶ An investigation of the organization of Sámi education. A report by a committee appointed by the Sámi Parliament, 1993.

⁵⁷ www.samediggi.no, Department of Education, June 8, 2004; Studying Sámi in compulsory schooling outside the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented. A brochure 2003 (*Opplæring i samisk i grunnskolen utenom forvaltningsområdet for samisk språk*).

the financing of projects. The fact that the distribution of assessment material is the responsibility of the Sámi Parliament means that it has to monitor the results of education and ensure that Sámi examination material is available. The Department of Education is relatively independent – within the framework of its annual budget. As regards decisions about education, the direct decision-making power of the Sámi Parliament is, however, restricted to the drawing up of the syllabuses for the subject “Sámi language”.

The objectives of the schooling and educational policy of the Sámi Parliament are defined in the Plan for the Sámi Parliament.⁵⁸ It emphasizes the right of the Sámi Parliament to decide about the content and forms of education at all levels of schooling. The Sámi Parliament states that the present system, in which the responsibility, power and distribution of resources is, on the one hand, the task of the department, regional state bodies and the Sámi Parliament and, on the other hand, the task of municipalities and provincial administration, does not protect the rights of Sámi children and young people well enough. Therefore, the power of the Sámi Parliament must be extended in all education; the individual right of the Sámi to study the Sámi language must also be guaranteed as a primary right. The main demands and objectives of the Sámi Parliament are:

- to have the authority to shape the legislation concerning the content of education;
- to have the authority to decide about the legislation concerning the syllabuses of all the subjects in the Sámi curriculum (O97S);
- to have more authority in supervising and lodging complaints as regards Chapter 6 of the Education Act (“The teaching of the Sámi language”), and
- to be able to administer the financial resources intended for teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language.

As its goal, the Sámi Parliament has a situation where the compulsory schooling of as many pupils as possible is based on the Sámi curriculum and where the Sámi language is taught to such an extent that “functional bilingualism” is a real possibility for all the Sámi pupils of Norway. The objective of “functional bilingualism” is not achieved in the case of the pupils who live outside the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented. According to the Sámi Parliament, the situation in such areas must be improved so that the Sámi language can also be used in other subjects than in the teaching of the language. The Sámi Parliament intends to work for getting “the Sámi area”, as defined by the Education Act, extended; it also aims at motivating the municipalities and provinces to promote the use of the Sámi language in Sámi education.

The Sámi Parliament also demands that the Education Act be revised so that the right of an individual pupil to be taught Sámi and to learn through Sámi becomes a legal right.

Sweden

The proposals for the foundation of an educational administrative body that would give the Sámi themselves authority in school issues were realized in 1980 when the Swedish Parliament transferred the administration of the special Sámi schools from the Educational Department of the province of Norrbotten to the Sámi School Board (*Sameskolstyrelsen*). The authority to appoint the Sámi School Board was transferred from the National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*) to the Sámi Parliament in 1993.⁵⁹

In practice, the tasks of the Sámi School Board have been, from the very beginning, similar to the tasks of the educational administration of municipalities, as the Sámi School Board has been responsible for all the activities of the Sámi schools. In

58 Nov. 29, 2002, Chapter 5, “*Oahppu ii deatte*” (“Education is always useful”) contains the primary goals of the educational policy of the Sámi Parliament.

59 SF 1992: 1433, The Sámi Parliament Act (*Sametingslag*); Annual statement, the Sámi School Board 1993/94.2.

addition, it has the authority to influence the Sámi education that is provided in all of Sweden. From the 1990s on, the administration of kindergartens, pre-school classes and leisure-time activities of the Sámi pupils has also been the task of the Sámi School Board. The role of the Sámi School Board can be defined as follows:

It is

a state authority which administers the Sámi schools and the integrated Sámi education of the municipal schools; it can also undertake activities that are linked with the upbringing and education of Sámi children and which would otherwise be the task of municipalities.

The statute on the Sámi schools defines the tasks of the Sámi School Board as follows:⁶⁰

- the administration of the Sámi schools and their activities,
- the promotion of Sámi education in public schools (children and young people),
- the assisting of municipalities when they arrange activities that concern Sámi,
- the spreading of information about the Sámi schools and the Sámi education of the public schools. In addition
- the Sámi School Board can make agreements with municipalities about providing pre-school education and pre-school and leisure-time activities for Sámi children that would otherwise be the task of municipalities.

The tasks of the Sámi School Board include both administrative and pedagogical tasks as well as tasks in the sphere of educational policy. Of the alternatives of Sámi education, only the teaching of the native language, or mother tongue (*modersmåls undervisning*), in Sweden is not its responsibility. In its statement on the 1999 Report of the Educational Law Committee, the Sámi School Board also lays claim to the responsibility for providing the teaching of the subject “Mother tongue” in Sweden.⁶¹ It

also suggests that teacher training should be coordinated in all of Sápmi, the Land of the Sámi, paying attention to the fact that Sámi education needs more professional teachers. The Sámi School Board also proposes that a common Nordic Sámi curriculum be drawn up for the public schools in all of Sápmi.

Finland

In Finland, the first public officers in the sphere of Sámi education were employed in the 1970s to work in the Educational Department of the State Provincial Office of Lapland. In 1986, a Sámi Council of Educational Issues (*Saamelaisten koulutusasianneuvosto*) was founded; this council was part of the State Provincial Office of Lapland, and its task was to work as a cooperative body between the state educational administration, the municipalities and the Sámi. As a result of the Act on the Sámi Parliament and the granting of cultural self-government to the Sámi in the Constitution of Finland, the Provincial Office’s public officers who are responsible for Sámi education (except for one officer) and the work on educational material and its resources became part of the Sámi Parliament in 1996.⁶² Within the Sámi Parliament, educational policy and other issues dealing with schools and training are the task of the Educational Committee and its office. The role of the Education Office can be defined as follows:

It is

the Sámi Parliament’s department which is responsible for preparing issues that concern educational policy and other school matters and for financing and producing Sámi educational material.

The tasks of the Educational Committee and the Education Office are:⁶³

- to promote the cultural self-government of the Sámi⁶⁴ in the field of education,
- to promote the position of teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language in educational legislation, in

60 SFS 1995:205, The Sámi School Statute (Sameskolförordningen), Chapter 2, § 1-3 (amendments 1996:551, 1997:600 and 1997:1232).

61 The Sámi School Board, statement 2003-09-15. Reg. No. 163-2003 P100/SOU 2002:121, The Educational Law for Quality and Equality (*Skollag för kvalitet och likvärdighet*).

62 Memorandums of Working Groups of the Ministry of Education (Opetusministeriön työryhmien muistioita) 1995:38, Helsinki 1995.

63 The objectives of the Sámi Parliament (*Sámedikki ulbmilplána*) 2002-2003; the procedure of the Sámi Parliament (*Sámedikki bargoortnet*), Mar. 1, 1996, the last amendment from Jan. 15, 2003.

64 SSK 1999/731, the Constitution of Finland, § 121.

- curricula, in the financing of education and in other educational spheres,
- to cooperate and discuss issues with the state and municipalities as well as to influence their educational policy,
 - to cooperate with Sámi educational authorities in the Nordic countries,
 - to supervise and plan the work on educational material that is published in Sámi, and to decide about the use of the appropriation granted for the production of educational material by the State and to decide which projects are given priority to,
 - to produce educational material for all levels of schooling and to distribute, to spread information about and to market such material, and
 - to arrange *the Art Event of the Sámi Youth* (a cultural event) every year.

In the field of education, the Finnish Sámi Parliament has authority to decide only about how the appropriation granted to the production of educational material in the state budget is to be used. When requested, the parliament gives statements, makes initiatives, negotiates and offers its expertise in other matters and connections. The Sámi Parliament has not been allocated special funds with which to promote Sámi education and to run development projects in the field. The appropriation that is granted for the production of educational material has stayed at the same level since 1993.

The educational policy of the Sámi Parliament and its objectives and proposals for the improvement of the educational situation have been defined in the document “The Cultural Self-Government of the Sámi in Education”.⁶⁵ The document’s part that deals with the objectives states, for example: “Children, young people and adults all must have a real possibility of attaining a high level of proficiency in their native and traditional language. In a civilization, the rights of an individual include the right to learn one’s native language fully. The people

who have lost their family’s first language or gone through a language shift also have the right to learn their traditional language so that it can, again, be used in everyday situations and in establishing connections with the Sámi living in other areas. Clearer than before, the school will also be responsible for passing down the common cultural heritage of the Sámi to the new generations.” The Sámi Parliament also demands that the constitutional right of the Sámi to self-government should be defined as a more extensive right of the Sámi to decide, on the basis of their own culture, about the content and financing of the education that they are provided and to participate in the decisions about such education. One of the main proposals of the document deals with providing special financing for Sámi education in the whole country, which would mean that teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language could be increased and arranged in a proper way for those Sámi who live outside the Sámi Area, too.

65 The plenum of the Sámi Parliament, June 17, 2003. www.samediggi.fi.

5. A NORDIC COMPARISON – THE INFLUENCE AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE SÁMI

In terms of resources and political and pedagogical influence, the situation is clearly best in Norway, where the Sámi Parliament's Department of Education has a relatively equal negotiation position with the state's educational administration. The department gets more resources for different educational development projects and it has more influence in pedagogical and political matters than the corresponding bodies in the neighboring countries do. However, it cannot directly influence the schools and education in the same way that the Sámi School Board in Sweden can influence the Sámi schools and integrated Sámi education.

A special feature of the Sámi School Board in Sweden is that it has been able to promote and extend the activities of the Sámi schools so that the schools are now becoming coherent Sámi environments in the sphere of upbringing: they provide kindergarten services, pre-school education, primary education (grades 1-6) and leisure-time services (*fritidshem*) for Sámi children. However, the number of pupils attending the Sámi schools is low, although most of the Sámi pupils who are of school age in the local communities go to them. At the national level, the Sámi School Board also lacks real influence in the educational policy concerning the Sámi. This is a result of the fact that the Sámi School Board itself is a state body and must administer and fulfill the special tasks it has been assigned.

In its work, the Finnish Sámi Parliament's

Educational Committee concentrates on political influence and on improving the understanding between itself and the educational authorities of both the municipalities and the State. The only thing that it can decide about is the use of the budget for the production of educational material. In other respects, it lacks the resources which would enable it to improve the conditions of Sámi education in Finland. Both its human and financial resources are strikingly scanty, and the situation has been such for almost fifteen years. The Finnish Parliament is obligated to listen to representatives of the Sámi when preparing matters that concern the Sámi in particular.⁶⁶

One thing is common for all the three countries: from the 1970s on, the States have transferred parts of the administration of Sámi education to the administrative and political bodies run by the Sámi. However, these bodies still have only limited authority in educational policy, and their possibilities of Nordic cooperation rests on an uncertain foundation. In all the countries, no funds are allocated for Nordic cooperation; nevertheless, the Sámi educational authorities have arranged annual negotiations and run a few joint projects. Effective Nordic cooperation would make it possible to improve the conditions of education, to enhance understanding and to save resources.

It is also common for all the three states that it is difficult to finance the providing of Sámi education outside the core Sámi areas. In 2001, the Norwegian Sámi Parliament

66 SSK Dec. 17, 1999/40. The procedure of the Parliament, § 37.

investigated what kinds of difficulties prevented the pupils studying outside the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented from getting the education to which they are, according to the Education Act, entitled. As a result of this investigation, it is now possible to study the Sámi language through distance education, but, at the moment, only few students participate in such education. In Sweden, there are not enough resources to provide integrated Sámi education, and, in Finland, the special regulations concerning the financing of Sámi education apply only to the Sámi Area.

6. A TABLE AND FIGURES ON THE CONDITIONS OF SÁMI EDUCATION IN NORDIC COMPULSORY SCHOOLING DURING THE 2003-2004 SCHOOL YEAR.⁶⁷

Sweden	Finland	Norway	
SCHOOL SYSTEM VS. SÁMI EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 special Sámi schools which have the same status as the education provided in grades 1-6 in compulsory schooling (in comprehensive schools) (Láttevárri/Lannavaara, Giron/Kiruna, Váhčir/Gällivare, Deardná/Tärnaby, Johkamohkki/Jokkmokk, Gárasavvon/Karesuando) - integrated Sámi education in the municipal schools with which the Sámi School Board has made an agreement about the matter - the teaching of the native language (mother tongue) in public schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all Sámi education is provided by ordinary public schools (comprehensive schools) - in schools that provide teaching in Sámi, the Sámi- and Finnish-speaking classes work side by side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 state-owned special Sámi schools in the South Sámi area (Snåase/Snåsa and Árborde/Hattfjelldal) - 1 special Sámi school owned by the municipality in the North Sámi areas (in Málatvuopmi/Målselv in the province of Troms); its activities are financed by the State - otherwise, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language take place in the ordinary municipal schools, in which the Sámi- and Norwegian-speaking classes work side by side
THE SÁMI LANGUAGES TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS	North Sámi Lule Sámi South Sámi	North Sámi Inari Sámi Skolt Sámi	North Sámi Lule Sámi South Sámi

⁶⁷ Aikio-Puoskari 2004, Chapters 3-5. The sources of information: for Norway, the Educational Office of the province of Finnmark and the Department of Education in the Sámi Parliament; for Sweden: the Sámi School Board and the national statistics office *Statistiska Centralbyrån*, SCB; for Finland: the municipalities and schools of the Sámi Area, the Education Office of the Sámi Parliament and the State Provincial Office of Lapland. For Sweden, the data are from two school years (2002/03 and 2003/04).

<p>SÁMI AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION (=teaching in Sámi)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in the Sámi schools (grades 0-6) at least 5 weekly lessons/grade - Lule Sámi as the language of instruction in 2 Sámi schools in 2003-04 - South Sámi was not used as the language of instruction in 2003-04 - in the Sámi schools (grades 0-6) of Gárasavvon, Giron and Váhčir, about 50% of the teaching is provided in North Sámi - part of the integrated Sámi education (grades 7-9; in Gárasavvon, Giron and Johkamohkki) in North Sámi - Sámi is not the language of instruction outside the Sámi schools and integrated Sámi education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is realized best in the schools of the Sámi Area, in grades 1-6, in North Sámi; teaching usually covers almost 100% of the pupil's lessons - is limited to the Sámi Area (in Vuohčču, a few weekly hours of language immersion) - teaching in Inari Sámi is increasing; Skolt Sámi is also being used as the language of instruction - teaching in North Sámi is about to begin in grades 7-9; at present, it decreases radically at the beginning of grade 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mainly in the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented and to some extent in other areas (e.g. Málatvuopmi Sámi School, in the city of Romsa/Tromsø, in Loabat/Lavangen and in Oslo) - in grades 1-7, teaching in North Sámi usually covers about 100% of the pupil's lessons - teaching in Lule Sámi is increasing; little and scattered instruction in South Sámi - all instruction in Sámi decreases clearly at the beginning of grade 8
<p>TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS IN COMPULSORY SCHOOLING/teaching in Sámi, the teaching of the Sámi language + teaching in the Sámi language and culture</p>	<p>476</p>	<p>486</p>	<p>2834</p>
<p>Teaching in North Sámi and the teaching of North Sámi, total number of pupils</p>	<p>The figures for the different languages and those on the language of instruction for Sweden apply only to the Sámi schools and are from the 2003-2004 school year:⁶⁸</p> <p style="text-align: center;">132</p>	<p>428 (=88% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)</p>	<p>2620 (=92,4% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)</p>
<p>Teaching in Lule Sámi and the teaching of Lule Sámi, total number of pupils</p>	<p>29</p>		<p>76 (=2,7% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)</p>
<p>Teaching in South Sámi and the teaching of South Sámi, total number of pupils</p>	<p>14</p>		<p>138 (=4,9% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)</p>

⁶⁸ It is impossible to calculate the percentage, because the other data on the number of pupils in Sweden are from the 2002-03 school year. It is not possible to calculate how many pupils study each of the Sámi languages outside the Sámi schools (2002-03), because the information provided by the SCB – *Statistiska Centralbyrån* is unclear.

Teaching in Inari Sámi and the teaching of Inari Sámi , total number of pupils		30 (= 6,2% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)	
Teaching in Skolt Sámi and the teaching of Skolt Sámi , total number of pupils		28 (= 5,8% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)	
TEACHING IN SÁMI - total number of pupils - percentage of all who participate in some form of Sámi education in the country	132 ?	154 31,7%	963 34%
Teaching in Sámi by language:			
- in North Sámi	104	135	950
- in Lule Sámi	28		33
- in South Sámi	0		10
- in Inari Sámi		14	
- in Skolt Sámi		5	
PUPILS STUDYING SÁMI AND LEARNING THROUGH SÁMI IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS IN THE SÁMI ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS - total number - % of all the pupils studying Sámi in the country - instruction in Sámi - study the language (and culture)	295 (2002-03) 62% ? ?	439 90,3% 154 5% of the pupils who study Sámi in the Sámi Area 285 (=65% of the pupils who study Sámi in the Sámi Area)	1476 52,1% 885 (=60% of the pupils who study Sámi in the Sámi Adm. Area) 591 (=40% of the pupils who study Sámi in the Sámi Adm. Area)
PUPILS OUTSIDE THE SÁMI ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS - total number - % of all the pupils studying Sámi in the country - instruction in Sámi - study the language (and culture)	181 (2002-03) 38% - 181	47 9,7% - 47	1358 47,9% 108 1250

Figure 1. Pupils studying Sámi in Norwegian comprehensive schools by language in 2003-04. Instruction in Sámi for 963 pupils = 35% (+30 pupils studying Sámi as the subject "First language" > altogether 993).

- NS, a subject 1670
- LS, a subject 43
- SS, a subject 128
- NS-speaking 950
- LS-speaking 33
- SS-speaking 10

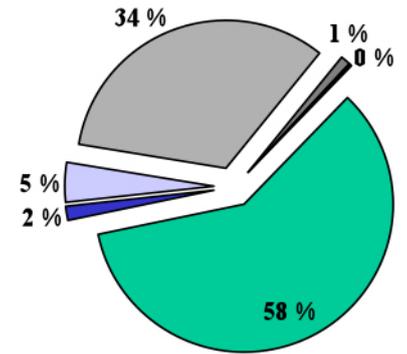


Figure 2. Sámi education in Norway: Sámi in the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented (Sámi Administrative Area) and elsewhere in the country in 2003-04:

- Pupils in the Sámi Adm. Area 1476
- Pupils elsewhere in Norway 1358

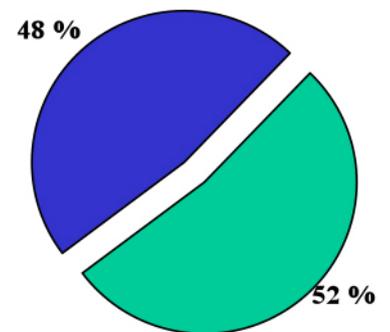
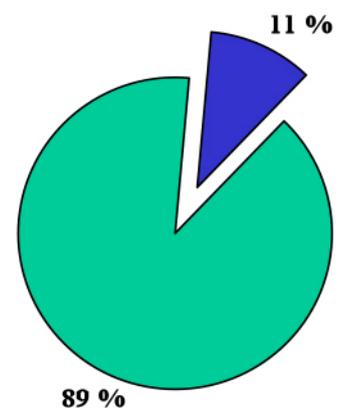


Figure 3. Pupils studying in Sámi in the Sámi Administrative Area and elsewhere in the country in 2003-04:

- Pupils in the Sámi Adm. Area 885
- Pupils elsewhere in Norway 108



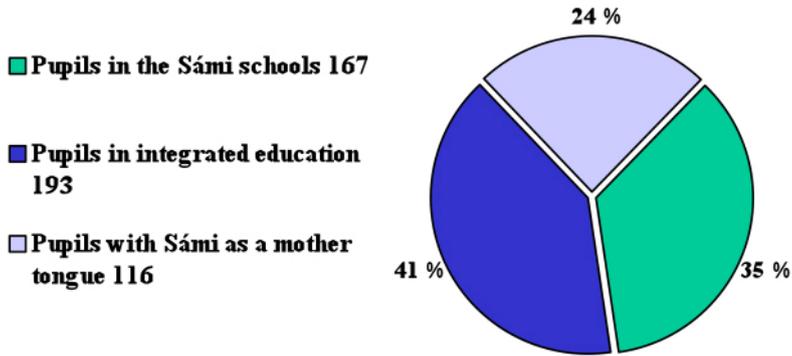


Figure 4. Pupils studying the Sámi language and culture in Swedish comprehensive schools in 2002-2003, altogether 476:

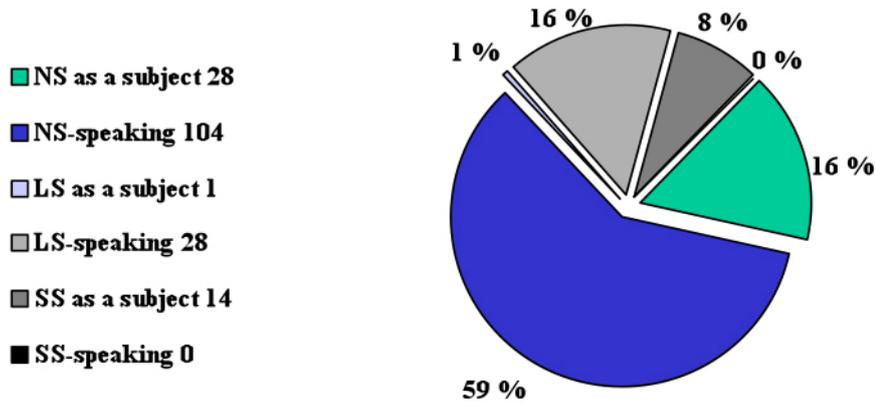


Figure 5. The pupils of the Sámi schools in Sweden by language in 2003-2004, altogether 175. Pupils taught in Sámi: 132 = 75%.

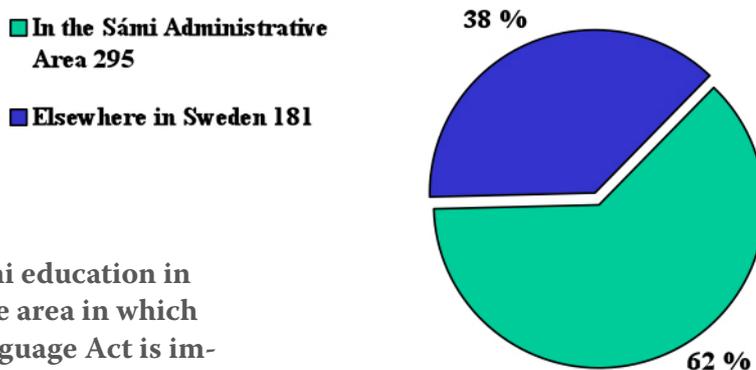


Figure 6. Sámi education in Sweden in the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented (the Sámi Administrative Area) and elsewhere in Sweden in 2002-2003:

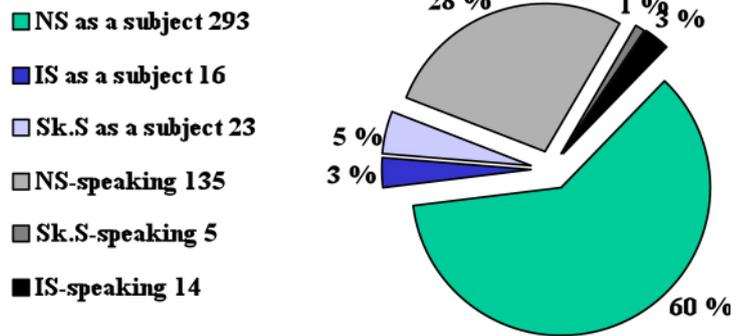


Figure 7. Pupils studying Sámi and learning through Sámi by language in Finnish comprehensive schools in 2003-2004, altogether 486. Pupils taught in Sámi: 154 = 31,7%.

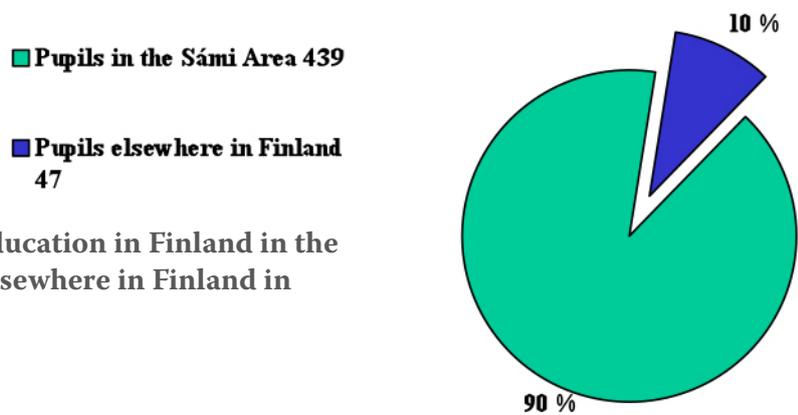


Figure 8. Sámi education in Finland in the Sámi Area and elsewhere in Finland in 2003-2004.

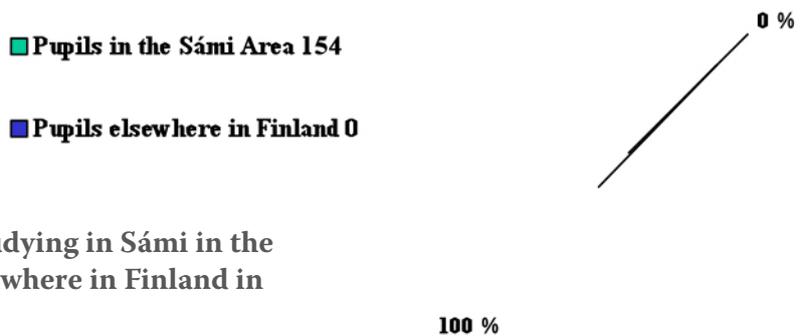


Figure 9. Pupils studying in Sámi in the Sámi Area and elsewhere in Finland in 2003-2004:

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