13

The Ethnic Revival, Language and Education of the Sámi, an Indigenous People, in three Nordic Countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden)

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Introduction

The Sámi are an indigenous people who live in the territories of four states: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. There are some 70–100,000 ethnic Sámi in these states, about 40–60,000 in Norway, about 15–20,000 in Sweden, about 9,000 in Finland and approximately 2,000 in Russia (www.sametinget.se, www.samediggi.fi, www.samediggi.no, accessed on 9.7.2008). The core areas of the Sámi are situated in the northern parts of these countries (see Map 13.1). The Sámi have their own language(s) and distinct culture(s) that differ from the cultures of the neighbouring populations.[1] Five out of the ten original Sámi languages are currently used as languages of instruction and taught as school subjects in three Nordic states. One of the languages, Kildin Sámi, is taught in Russia to a limited extent.

From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the Sámi were subjected to a conscious and, at times, very harsh assimilation policy. For centuries, many people have predicted that Sámi culture, which they have characterised as primitive, and the Sámi languages, which they have considered unfit for civilised people, will disappear. Despite such predictions, the Sámi languages and culture still survive but in conditions that are very different from what prevailed as recently as the mid-twentieth century. The present situation is characterised by an intensive struggle between a language and cultural shift on the one hand, and revitalisation and cultural survival on the other. The school and the teaching of and through the native languages are of great significance for the outcome of this competition.

Over the past 50–60 years, Sámi society and culture have gone through a drastic change, which many researchers have compared to a revolution (e.g. Eidheim 1997: 29). The change has had a profound effect on all spheres of life: on mentalities,

Map 13.1. Explanations for the coloured areas in three countries

Norga/ NORWAY. The Administrative Area of Sámi Language: Municipalities of Kárášjohka/ Karasjok, Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, Unjárga/Nesseby, Porsáŋgu/Porsanger, Deatnu/Tana, Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, Divttasvuotna/Tysfjord and Snoasa/Snåsa. **The Special Sámi Schools in Norway** are located in Snoasa/Snåsa, Árborde/Hattfjelldal, Romssa Málatvuopmi/Målselv in Tromsø.

Ruotta/ SWEDEN. The Administrative Area of Sámi Language: Municipalities of Giron/Kiruna, Váhčir/Gällivare, Johkamohkki/Jokkmokk and Árjjatluovvi/Arjeplog. **The Special Sámi Schools in Sweden** are located in Gárasavvon/Karesuando, Láttevárri/Lannavaara (will be closed in 2008), Giron/Kiruna, Johkamohkki/Jokkmokk, Váhčir/Gällivare and Deartná/Tärnaby.

Suopma/ FINLAND. The Home Area of Sámi / The Area of Cultural Self-determination of Sámi: Municipalities of Ohcejohka/Utsjoki, Anár/Aanaar/Inari, Eanodat/Enontekiö and the northern part (the reindeer herding area called Sámi bálggus/Lapin paliskunta) of Soađegilli/Sodankylä

material and social conditions. It has also accelerated the change that has been going on in the languages. Above all, it has resulted in the emancipation of the Sámi community and the creation of emancipatory politics in Anthony Giddens's sense of the term (Giddens 1991: 210-211, Lindgren 1999, 2005: 48, Huss and Lindgren 2005). Today the Sámi community consciously promotes its political strategies[2] in order to develop and defend its language, culture and traditional sources of livelihood, and in order to pass them on to new generations by means of education, as well as to create conditions that permit the Sámi culture to survive. Because of the fact that the Sámi live in several states, it is not possible to say there would be one common strategy shared by all the Sámi. There is a lot of cooperation and a growing awareness of Sámi as one people but, for their political strategies to succeed, the Sámi have to understand and act in the political, administrative and cultural systems of four different kinds of society. Recent developments in cooperation between the Sámi Parliaments and the governments of three Nordic countries suggest something quite new in Nordic cooperation and in the field of human rights. A proposal for adopting a Nordic Sámi Convention was released in 2005 and the states are now preparing to sign it. The main purpose of the new Convention will be to harmonise national legislation and Sámi rights (Åhren, Scheinin and Henriksen 2007).

Education—all its levels from compulsory schooling to higher secondary and vocational education and colleges and universities—is central to how the Sámi language, history, cultural knowledge and skills can be passed down to new generations. Education is important for whether children and young people are provided with the chance of growing up and living their lives as Sámi, as citizens who know their own culture, have good skills in their own language and have a strong identity and a sound self-esteem. At present, everyone needs to know, in addition to the main language of one's native country, at least one foreign language, mostly meaning English, which is becoming more and more prevalent in the Nordic countries. Every Sámi young person who goes to school today is more or less a world citizen, using the Internet for global communication and exposure to cultural influence of every kind. On the other hand, every Sámi is nowadays also aware of the other indigenous peoples of the world and of the fact that their own languages and cultures are threatened. The Sámi have been deeply involved in the international ethno-political movement of the world's indigenous peoples since its start. Torill Nyseth and Paul Pedersen (2005: 76) describe the change as follows: 'The enlargement of awareness, which sees Sámi as an Indigenous people, implies a change from local and specific ethnic group identification to the general concept of indigenousness, where the Sámi become a part of the international movement of Indigenous peoples.' The first president of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was a Sámi, Ole Henrik Magga.

The world was a great deal smaller in the days when my grandmother Elsa-Marja Aikio (1891–1979) grew up. In the early 1900s, one's identity was interlaced with one's first language and the Sámi way of life that one happened to be part of. My

grandmother was born in a Sámi tent, or *goahti*, in the woods; she was born to a nomadic Sámi family that spoke the local variety of the North Sámi language. Of the ten original Sámi languages, North Sámi is the most widely spoken one. Today it is used in schools, the mass media, literature and cross-border cooperation between the Sámi to a greater extent than any other Sámi language. When my grandmother was a child, the Nordic countries did not yet exist as the states we know of today. However, the establishment of the first school system that was to provide compulsory education was under way in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In the schools of my grandmother´s generation, the Sámi language was non-existent. Only the youngest of her grandchildren were provided with some training in their native language. The teaching of the Sámi language did not begin in any of the three Nordic countries in which I was educated—Norway, Sweden and Finland—until a new 9-grade system of compulsory schooling was created in the 1960s and 1970s.

This article examines Sámi education historically with a focus on educational policy. Initially and for a long time, Sámi education was considered only a linguistic issue. Over the past 10–15 years we have reached a new phase in promoting Sámi education: we do not focus only on the language, but also on the content of instruction and on the position of native culture in education. I need to stress that these are concerns of recent origin. At present the most important issues are the right to self-determination in education and the potential of reviving the language and culture with the help of the school.

Northern multilingualism and the roots of Sámi education

In the north, in the traditional Sámi areas, the borders of Norway, Sweden and Finland cut through the linguistic and cultural communities. In all three countries, three different Sámi languages are spoken: in Norway and Sweden, North Lule and South Sámi; and, in Finland, North Inari and Skolt Sámi. The northern parts of these countries are a real mosaic of languages and cultures. In the northern parts of Norway and Sweden, there are also minorities that speak, in addition to the Sámi language, different varieties of the Finnish language. In Sweden, this Finno-Ugric language spoken is *meänkieli* [= our language], which is officially recognised as a regional minority language. In Norway, it is the *Kven* language, which has been defined as a historical minority language. In addition to the northern minorities, these countries also have other traditional minorities. The Swedish-speaking population of Finland (some 5.8% of the whole population) probably has greater recognition than any other linguistic minority in the world (McRae 1997). Finland is officially a bilingual country, with Swedish as one of its two national languages. In addition, there are other linguistic minorities of long standing in these countries, for example Sign language, the Roma, the Russian-speaking population (in Finland), and a range of new immigrant minorities, whose native languages are to some extent also taught in school as subjects. Thus, the three countries are, due to history and recent immigration, multilingual and multicultural.

The Sámi, who are the indigenous people of these states, represent the oldest languages and cultures of these countries, long pre-dating the present-day states.[3] The first Sámi author Johan Turi (1854–1936) wrote in his world-famous novel of 1910:

> Nobody claims that the Lapps have come here from somewhere else. The Lapps have been an ancient inhabitant right across Lapland, and when the Lapps lived here by the coast in ancient times, there were no other inhabitants here and so the Lapps were free to do so. And the Lapps have also lived all over the place on the Swedish side in ancient times. There were no farmers anywhere at that time; the Lapps were unaware of the existence of any people other than themselves.[4] (Turi 1910; English translation www.eng.samer.se, accessed on July 9, 2008).

Thus one might think that the Sámi languages would have been, and would still be, an integral part of the systems of compulsory schooling of these states. However, this is not the case. Furthermore, the development has been a most paradoxical one in Sweden, which was the first state to begin the formal education of the Sámi (as early as the eighteenth century). In Sweden, there are still a few small Sámi schools (*sámeskuvla* in Sámi/ *sameskola* in Swedish) that began to provide education before the first general system of compulsory schooling (*folkskola*) was launched. These schools, which were called 'nomad schools' (*nomadskola* in Swedish) until the 1970s, were originally special schools intended for the children of reindeer-herding Sámi families. Paradoxically, they did not even teach the Sámi language as a subject, although one of their objectives in the early twentieth century was to make sure that the children would not become alienated from their own culture. The Swedish policy of the nomad school period can be seen as *protective segregationist*, segregating the reindeer-herding Sámi from the rest of the Sámi population and from ethnic Swedes. According to this policy, the reindeer-herding Sámi were 'the real Sámi' whose culture was to be protected, whereas the other Sámi, a majority of the Sámi population, were to be assimilated into the Swedish population (e.g. Svonni 1997). This division is still highly visible in Sweden: it can be seen in the language situation and the education of the Sámi, in the prevalent stereotypes of the Sámi, and even in Sámi politics. In comparison with the other two states, the state that began to formally educate its indigenous people long before its neighbouring states now lags behind in its Sámi education, if we consider this education from the point of view of today's assessment criteria for Sámi education.

Norwegianisation, a harsh and overtly assimilationist official policy that was launched in Norway in the mid-nineteenth century, was implemented specifically through educational and economic policies (Eriksen and Niemi 1981; NOU [Norwegian Committee Reports] 1985: 14,15, Lehtola 2002: 44–48, Minde 2005a). This assimilation policy lasted for about a hundred years. For decades, it was forbidden to use the Sámi language and to *yoik*—to sing in the traditional Sámi way—in the school; being a Sámi was a marked stigma. In Finland, the policy of assimilating the Sámi was not as overt, nor as harsh as in Norway. Nevertheless, it

was based on a similar way of thinking. The objective of 'civilizing the primitive Sámi' through assimilation became visible later in many conflicts, when the Sámi demanded that Sámi children be taught their own language in compulsory schooling (e.g., Itkonen 1970).

The first systems of compulsory schooling were created in the late nineteenth century during the period when the three Nordic countries that I discuss here evolved into present day nation-states. In line with the ideals of the time, the school system was based on the idea of a united, monolingual nation. Such a system had only room for the main languages of the countries and for schools that were, in terms of their content, similar throughout the country, from south to north. From the point of view of the Sámi, this phase in history was a distressing period that led to a rapid language and cultural shift. Paradoxically—again from the point of view of the indigenous people—the first steps towards a new direction were not taken until the 1960s and 1970s, when immigration to the Nordic countries increased. As a result, and especially in Sweden and Finland, the system of compulsory schooling began to provide some opportunities for teaching the native language of the Sámi at schools —on an equal footing with the 'other minority languages'. Thus, immigrants helped advocacy for and the launch of the teaching of the Sámi languages, the indigenous languages of the Nordic countries.

Norway, which had attempted to root out the Sámi language and Sáminess in the most forceful way in the Nordic countries also experienced the most drastic change in the other direction. This was caused by a conflict that took place at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s in connection with the building of a power station on the River Alta (Paine 1992, Magga 1990, Lehtola 2002: 76–77, Lindgren 1999, Huss 1999: 76–77, Minde 2005b). In one sense the Sámi lost the conflict, as the river was dammed, but through active protest they achieved many things. Officially, the policy of Norwegianisation had been abolished as early as the 1950s, but an active Sámi policy only evolved after the Alta clash between the state and the Sámi. The new policy focused on promoting the rights of the Sámi to their native language and Sámi education. This change in Norway triggered the ethnic movement of the Sámi that had already begun to grow stronger in the 1950s (Magga 1990, Lehtola 2002: 70–77, Lindgren 1999, Seurujärvi-Kari 2005). This development is still continuing, and the cross-border cooperation of the Sámi—their stepping forward as a united nation—has developed many new political, cultural and administrative forms. The most important ones of these are the Sámi University College (*Sámi allaskuvla*) and the Sámi Research Institute (*Sámi instituhtta*), which was founded in the early 1970s and is now affiliated to the Sámi University College (founded in 1989). To promote cooperation between the elected Sámi Parliaments, a Sámi Parliamentary Council was established at the beginning of the 2000s. The Russian Sámi also participate in all these institutions. In addition the Sámi have a cooperative body, the Sámi Council *(Sámiráđđi)*, which was established for non-governmental Sámi organisations as early as the 1950s.

The Sámi language and culture in education

The dominant historical tendencies are not abolished within one generation but go on for long after they have officially been forsaken. The Sámi community still carries the burden of the active assimilation policy on its shoulders. As a result of this, the present generation of Sámi pupils is heterogeneous in terms of its linguistic background and identity. Only a limited number of children and young people, perhaps one in four or one in three, now speak Sámi as their first language. Many parents wish that the school could give the children back the language that they have lost. The children and young people who speak Sámi as their first language are usually bilingual, some even trilingual: in addition to their native language, they speak the main language of the country as their second mother tongue. Other young people can speak some Sámi, and the rest do not know the language at all. Some of the young people have become assimilated both in terms of language and culture. On the other hand, some young people who have lost their language still identify themselves strongly with the Sámi community and its culture, trying to reclaim and learn the language. Unfortunately there are neither research results nor statistics available on the linguistic situation of Sámi children and youth on these aspects.

Other consequences of the assimilation policy include the negative attitudes that still affect the improvement of the status of the Sámi language and Sámi education, and, likewise, the ignorance, and the stereotypes of the Sámi population that still prevail. However, the language is still the most important element of the identity for the Sámi —in addition to self-identification and the feeling of belonging to a Sámi family. But it is also possible to see a change in attitudes, especially in attitudes of Sámi youngsters. According to a new report, prepared by the Children's ombudsperson in Finland, the Sámi youngsters of today say 'it's cool to be a Sámi' (Rasmus 2008). That is something our parents and grandparents would never have said, because of their experience of shame and discrimination on the basis of their ethnic and linguistic background. We also need to remember that the issue of language never deals with 'just' language: it is also about the culture and the cultural changes that the language sustains and lives in. Therefore we need to ask whether the compulsory schooling of the Nordic welfare states today takes into consideration the language, culture and identity of the children and youth of the indigenous peoples of these states. Is compulsory schooling a counter-force to the language shift that was about to break the cultural backbone of the earlier generations, or does it promote the shift?

According to present regulations, the Sámi language *can be* the language of instruction, or a subject called 'the mother tongue/ first language', or 'a foreign/ second language' in the schools of Norway, Sweden and Finland. However, there are great differences between the three countries. Sámi education in these countries can be compared to an unsolvable jigsaw puzzle, the pieces of which differ from each other in terms of their size (= resources and accessibility), forms (= forms of education) and colours (= the guidelines for education policy) (Aikio-Puoskari

2005, 2006 and 2007). As regards the status of Sámi education in the schools of these countries, there is one common feature: the rights and possibilities of a Sámi pupil to learn his/her own language are guaranteed especially in 'the core Sámi areas' (see map 13.1). In Sweden, these core areas can be defined as the special Sámi schools, in Norway the Administrative Area in which the Sámi Language Act is to be implemented (*sámegiela hálddašanguovlu* in Sámi) (The Sámi Act, L 1987: 56; the amendment concerning the Sámi language in Chapter 3, in law 1990: 78, § 3, Sect.1.), and, in Finland, the Sámi Area as prescribed by the Act on the Sámi Parliament (*sámiid ruovttuguovlu* in Sámi) (The Law on the Sámi Parliament, SSK 1995/974, § 4.). In the latter areas, the Sámi also have rights that concern their own language in other spheres of public life. Outside these areas, teaching in Sámi and the teaching of the Sámi language are restricted in many ways. It is estimated that as many as 50% of the Sámi people live outside the core Sámi areas.

Sweden

In Sweden, Sámi education has been organised in three different ways: (1) the six small special Sámi schools in the North, (2) home language/ mother tongue instruction, and (3) integrated Sámi education in other-than-Sámi schools. The special Sámi schools are situated in the traditional areas of the reindeer-herding Sámi. They have a long history and are today open to all Sámi children. According to the Education Act (SFS 1985: 1100, SFS 2008: 317, Chapter 1, §1 and Chapter 8, § 3), Sámi children can get their compulsory education in separate Sámi schools that are part of the public school system. The Sámi schools are run by the state and administered by the Sámi School Board (*Sámeskuvlastivra* in Sámi, www.sameskolstyrelsen.se), which is appointed by the Sámi Parliament of Sweden. The education provided in the Sámi schools corresponds to the education provided in grades 1–6 of Swedish primary schools, but Sámi children must have Sámi content (SFS 1985: 1100, Chapter 8, § 1). The Sámi schools have both the Sámi language(s) and Swedish as their languages of instruction (The Statute on Sámi schools, SFS 1995: 205, Chapter 3, § 2) and, according to the curriculum (The 1994 curriculum for compulsory schooling, pre-school education and free-time activities, Lpo 94, SKOLFS 1994: 1) the schools are to ensure that every pupil who has gone to the Sámi school is familiar with the cultural heritage of the Sámi and can speak, read and write the Sámi language. Sámi is used as the language of instruction only in the Sámi schools, in which teaching provided through Sámi was strengthened in the 1990s. The Sámi School Board is also responsible for integrated Sámi education (see below) and the pre-school education of the 6-year-old children that is provided in connection with the Sámi schools. In addition, there are now kindergartens that are connected to the Sámi schools and function in the Sámi language(s); they also arrange after-school activities. At present, the special Sámi schools of Sweden are like small distillations of Sámi culture; they are effective cultural centres that have a great impact on the neighbourhood. They are very much Sámi in their appearance

and in them, Sámi culture is drawn on in the teaching to a great extent. The Sámi schools could be of great significance for the future of the Sámi, if they were extended to more than currently just 5–10 % of Sámi children in Sweden.

Outside the Sámi schools, the Sámi language(s) is/are taught according to the school regulations that deal with mother tongue instruction, until 1976 called 'home languages' (*hemspråk* in Swedish). Home language or heritage language instruction was launched in 1976. The subject is now called the mother tongue (*modersmål* in Swedish), and the teaching usually consists of 1–3 weekly lessons. (The Statute on Compulsory Schooling, SFS 1994: 1194 and 2008: 97, Chapter 2, § 9–14). To have the right to learn one's mother tongue in school, the pupil must have, according to the statute (SFS 1994: 1194 and 2008: 97, Chapter 2, § 9), basic skills in the language. This has provided a reason for some schools to refuse to arrange teaching in South Sámi (e.g. Rådmansö, Gräddö School in Norrtälje 2003). The regulations on Sámi pupils' right to be taught Sámi as a mother tongue provide no right for those Sámi pupils who have already lost their native language to study the language at school. According to the statute the municipality is also obliged to arrange teaching in the mother tongue of the pupil only if there is a suitable teacher available (Chapter 2, § 13). Lack of teachers is certainly one of the main reasons why this form of Sámi education only reaches about 200 pupils yearly.

The third type of Sámi education, called Integrated Sámi education, means teaching about Sámi culture as an integral part of the ordinary subjects of compulsory schooling. A municipality can provide this education for Sámi pupils in its comprehensive schools if it makes an agreement about it with the Sámi School Board. Integrated Sámi education means for many pupils continuing the education of the Sámi schools in grades 7–9. Most integrated education is still given in Swedish, and not all the pupils who have asked for it have been able to get it, because the Sámi School Board does not have sufficient funding to organise it for all pupils wanting it (personal communication with the staff of Sámi School Board, 2007).

All three of these types of Sámi education in Sweden taken together reach a total of some 10%–20 % of the Sámi pupils of compulsory school age. The regulations about Sámi education have remained approximately the same from the 1970s until today and there have not been any major changes in the total number of pupils getting Sámi education since the 1970s. The proportion of instruction through the medium of Sámi has risen since the 1990s. Part of it can be defined as revitalisation immersion education (Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarty 2008) because there are also Swedish-speaking Sámi pupils getting instruction through the Sámi language. The statistics from the school years 2002–2004 illustrate the situation (Figures 13.1–3):

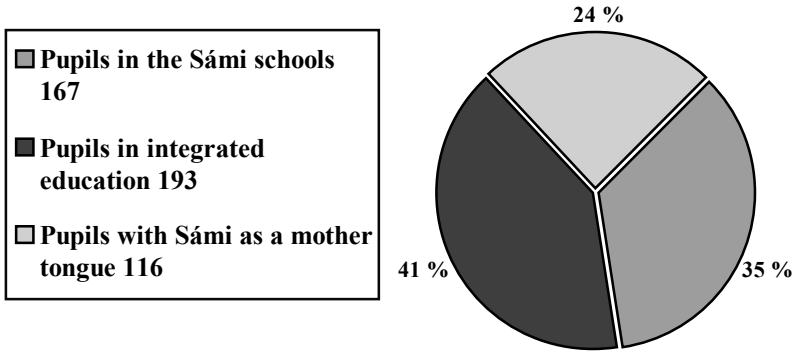

Figure 13.1. *Pupils studying the Sámi language and culture in Swedish comprehensive schools in 2002–2003, altogether 476:*

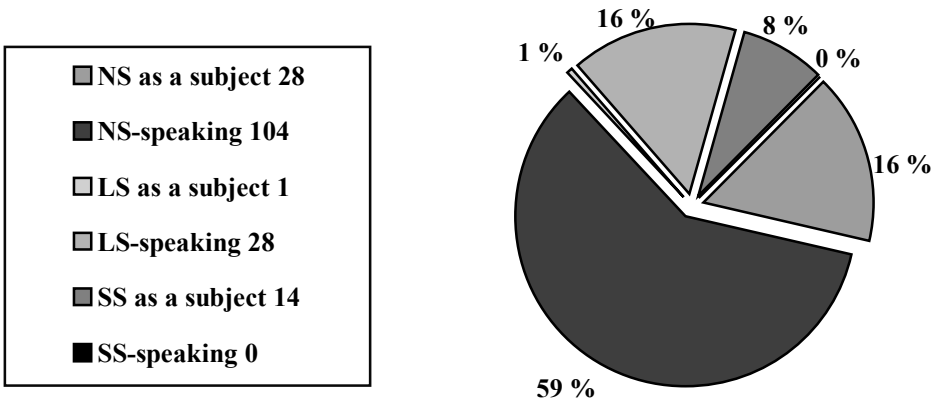

Figure 13.2. *The pupils of the Sámi schools in Sweden by language in 2003–2004, altogether 175. Pupils taught in Sámi: 132 = 75%.*

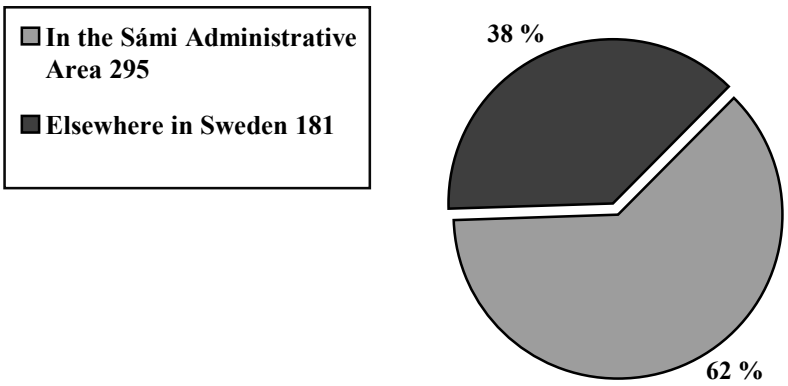

Figure 13.3. *Sámi education in Sweden in the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented (the Sámi Administrative Area) and elsewhere in Sweden in 2002–2003:*

Norway

One can say that Norway has been a pioneer in developing Sámi education, as the country has, during the period of 'the comprehensive school' (starting in the 1960s), carried out several reforms that have improved the position of the Sámi languages, culture and instruction in Sámi. As a result the situation and the educational–political status of Sámi education has improved fastest in Norway, where educational legislation contains clear rights—unlike the legislations of Sweden and Finland. Sámi education is mostly provided within regular Norwegian schools. In addition, there are three special Sámi schools that are run by the state, situated in the reindeer-herding Sámi areas (see Appendix 13.1).

The latest school law reform in 1998 meant that a system of ten-year comprehensive schools was established, and school started at the age of six years (Sweden and Finland have nine-years of comprehensive school and children start school at the age of seven). At present, legislation guarantees all the Sámi pupils in Norway, regardless of where they live, the individual right to be at least taught their native language as part of their compulsory schooling (The Law on Compulsory Schooling and Upper Secondary Education, L 1998: 61, Chapter 6, 'The teaching of the Sámi language'). The sixth chapter of the law is based on individual rights. According to the law (§ 6-2) in the Sámi area[5], all comprehensive school pupils (also non-Sámi) 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; once started, teaching is provided for as long as there are at least six pupils in the group. The Sámi pupils who receive compulsory schooling outside the Sámi area thus have the right to study Sámi. 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 the internet and distance education, for example, have a legal basis in the educational legislation. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century there have been three separate projects, one for each Sámi language taught in the school, organising distance learning for students in those schools where Sámi-speaking teachers are not available.

The number of comprehensive schools providing Sámi education in Norway has increased since the end of the 1970s from 25 schools to almost 200. The number of pupils getting Sámi education in comprehensive schools has increased from 1175 pupils in 1979 to about 3000 in 2008. These figures also reflect effective language revitalisation projects (see Huss 1999, Todal 2002, 2003, 2006 and 2007, http://www.arran.no, accessed on 9 July 2008) in the Lule Sámi and South Sámi areas. The instruction in Lule Sámi and South Sámi as first languages started at the beginning of the 1990s. Also the numbers of second language learners of these languages have increased. In Norway, Sámi education reaches the Sámi pupils more effectively than in the neighbouring countries, but in Norway, too, a great number of Sámi children and pupils are left without such education (see Figures 13.4-6).

Instruction in Sámi for 963 pupils = 35% (+30 pupils studying Sámi as the subject 'First language' > altogether 993).

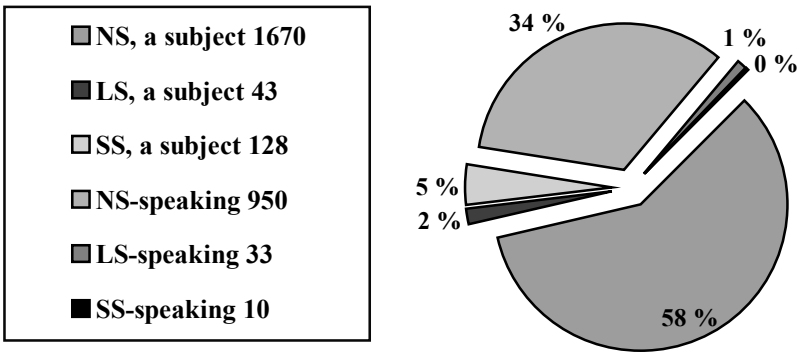

Figure 13.4. *Pupils studying Sámi in Norwegian comprehensive schools by language in 2003–04.*

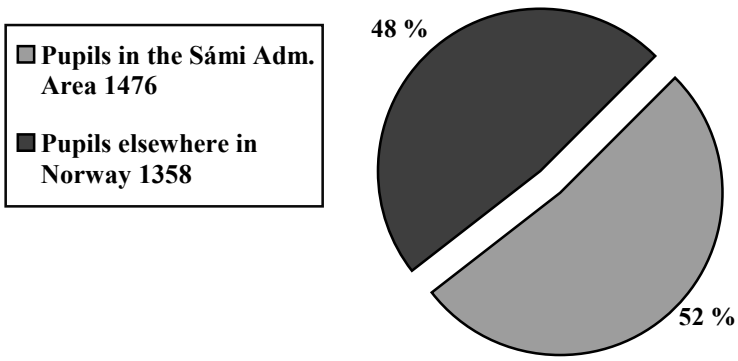

Figure 13.5. *Sámi education in Norway: Sámi in the area in which the Sámi Language Act is implemented (Sámi Administrative Area) and elsewhere in the country in 2003–04.*

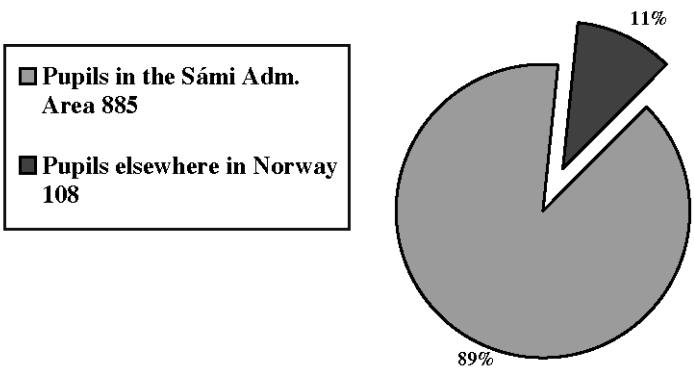

Figure 13.6. *Pupils studying in Sámi in the Sámi Administrative Area and elsewhere in the country in 2003–04.*

Finland

In Finland, Sámi education is provided in regular Finnish schools, which means it has been totally developed within the national centralised school system. Since the 1970s, the objective has been to build channels for the teaching of and through Sámi within these schools.

In 1998, new educational legislation came into force in Finland. It resulted in a continuous nine-year comprehensive school system; before the reform school was divided to a lower level (grades 1–6) and a higher level (grades 7–9). The only regulation in the legislation giving a clear right to Sámi education is in the law on compulsory schooling, the Basic Education Act (SSK 1998/628, § 10). The other regulations in the Basic Education Act only provide possibilities for the teaching of the Sámi language and for teaching in Sámi. According to the law (§ 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.' Thus, the right to get instruction through the medium of Sámi is restricted firstly to the Sámi-speaking pupils and secondly to the Sámi area[6] (see map). 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.' Sámi can also be an elective subject ('second foreign language' A2) in the first grades of compulsory schooling, and the teaching of this subject continues in grades 7–9 as an optional subject. Schools decide themselves which electives they provide. This regulation thus implies that non Sámi-speaking Sámi pupils have to learn their native language under the label 'foreign'

Neither in the law nor in the statutory instrument are there any regulations about teaching outside the Sámi area. This teaching (realised to a very small extent, see Figure 13.8) is based on a special decree of the Ministry of Education on the grounds for granting state subsidies for the complementary compulsory and upper secondary schooling of immigrants and pupils who speak Sámi, Roma or other foreign languages as their native language (Statutes of the Ministry of Education, SSK 2007/392). In the Sámi Area, Sámi education is guaranteed through a special financing regulation which encourages the schools of the area to increase their Sámi education (Law on the financing of education and cultural activities SSK 1998/635, Amendment SSK 1998/1186). The more the school increases this education, the higher are the subsidies it gets for it from the state. However, the accessibility of Sámi education is a big problem in Finland, where, according to the Sámi Parliament (The Sámi Parliament of Finland, August 2007), approximately 60 % of the whole population of Finnish Sámi and as many as 70 % of the Sámi children under the age of 10 live outside the traditional Sámi area. These Sámi have the same opportunity to be taught their own language as immigrants. At most they can have 2.5 hours of teaching per week, and there are always great difficulties in arranging this instruction.

The situation is similar to the situation in Sweden, where schools other than the Sámi schools base their teaching in the Sámi language on the same regulation as the one that also allows the new minorities, that is, the immigrant groups, to be taught their own languages. Thus, the educational policies of Finland and Sweden treat the indigenous people who live outside their traditional territories as if they were immigrants!

The number of pupils getting Sámi education in comprehensive schools rose from about 350 pupils in 1979 to about 550 pupils in following ten years. As a consequence of the increasing immigration from the Sámi area to towns and cities further south, the number of pupils in Sámi education has decreased, to about 430 in comprehensive schools in 2008 (see Figures 13.7–9). The latest reforms in educational legislation (1998) strengthened instruction through the medium of Sámi in the Sámi area. Thus the development in Sámi education in Finland has taken place within the instruction itself (i.e. using Sámi as a medium instead of studying it as a subject only has increased), not in the numbers of pupils. For most pupils who now get instruction through the Sámi language, Sámi-medium instruction usually covers close to 100% of their school subjects. The language revitalisation activities, run by the active Sámi associations and the Sámi Parliament, are mainly special projects funded by the EU and the Finnish Cultural Foundation, thus they are limited in relation to length and resources. The most effective one has been the Inari Sámi-speaking language nest for children under school age, started in 1997, following the model developed in Aotearoa (see Huss 1999, Pasanen 2005, Olthuis 2003, 2008). As a consequence of the language nest, Inari Sámi-medium school instruction was started in 2000. The revitalisation of Inari Sámi will continue with a teacher-training project funded by the Finnish Academy in 2008 (Olthuis, personal communication).

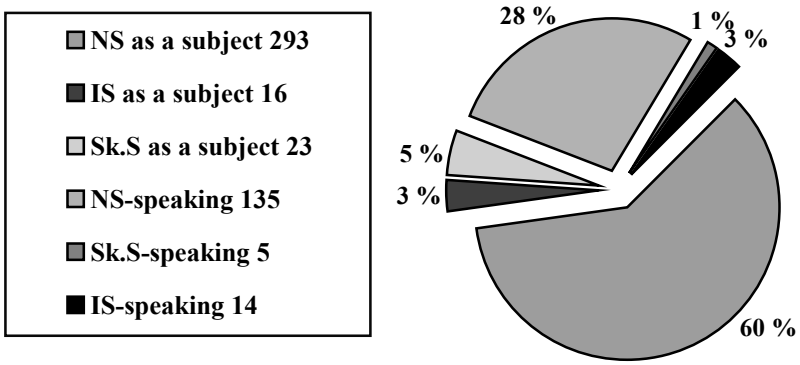

Figure 13.7. *Pupils studying Sámi and learning through Sámi by language in Finnish comprehensive schools in 2003-2004, altogether 486. Pupils taught in Sámi: 154 = 31,7%.*

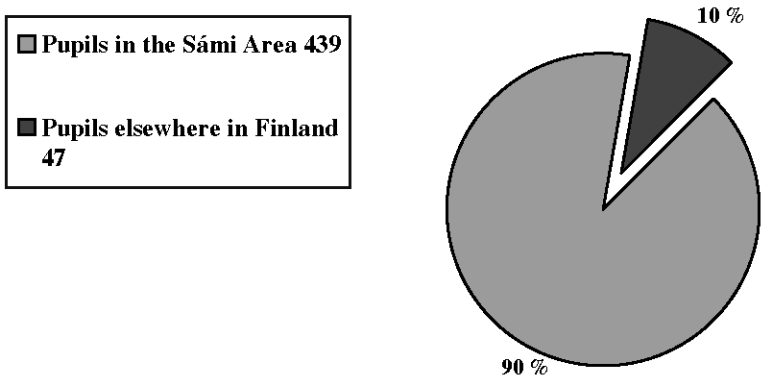

Figure 13.8. *Sámi education in Finland in the Sámi Area and elsewhere in Finland in 2003-2004.*

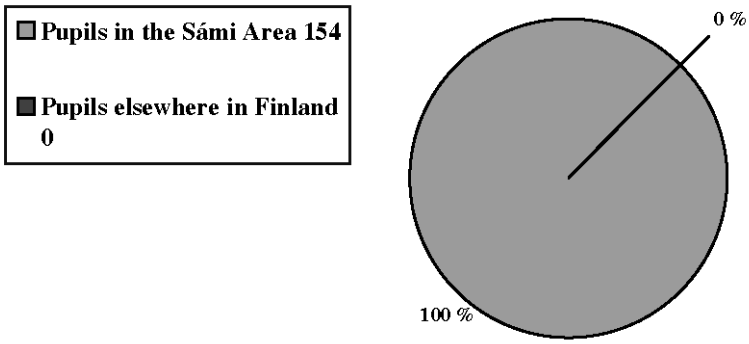

Figure 13.9. *Pupils studying in Sámi in the Sámi Area and elsewhere in Finland in 2003-2004.*

Conclusions

The large number of children and young people for whom Sámi education is not available in some areas, and the fact that Sámi education is clearly improving in the core Sámi areas provide us with the answer to the question I asked earlier: in some regions, the language is being revived, and, in other regions, language shift continues (Aikio-Puoskari & Skutnabb-Kangas 2007). Furthermore, a closer study of Sámi education as a whole shows that a vast majority of the Sámi pupils are still only taught the language as a subject: they have the main language of the country as their language of instruction. In all three countries, a small minority of pupils learn through their own language—something that would be a condition for attaining a high level of bi- and multilingualism. Multilingualism and multiculturalism are prominent themes in the education policies of the Nordic countries. In reality, Sweden and Finland in particular only seem to be tolerating the languages that the majority does not know, and implementing the principle of non-discrimination, meaning granting negative rights only. The goal of bilingualism which is part of the curricula of Norway, Sweden and Finland, applies only to indigenous peoples

and minorities; there is no reciprocity even in the traditional Sámi areas so that the linguistic majority would learn an indigenous or minority language. The only exception is the Swedish language in Finland that is to be taught to every pupil in the country. In their educational policy, the Sámi themselves consider bilingualism and multilingualism as a valuable capital which should now be maintained. Nevertheless, bilingualism is threatened as long as one of the two mother tongues of a bilingual person is endangered.

The objective of making the school thoroughly Sámi—of making Sámi culture an integral part of the content and methods of education—has advanced furthest in Norway, as the country has passed two equal versions of the curriculum for compulsory schooling: the national (Norwegian) and the Sámi curriculum (the first one in 1997, O97S, The Sámi Curriculum for the Ten-Year Comprehensive School; the latest in 2006, *Máhttolokten—Sámi oahppoplánabuvttus, Læreplanverket—Kunnskappsløftet Samisk*). The national curriculum of 1997 (L97) also defined, for all subjects (except mathematics) and for all grades, the aspects of Sámi culture that were to be taken into consideration everywhere in Norway. These 'Sámi pillars' became then, 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. Fundamental aspects of Sámi culture are therefore part of the teaching that is provided in the common curriculum of compulsory schooling (Parliamentary Notice (*St. melding*) No. 52 (1992-93): 16). The new national curriculum also includes the contents of Sámi culture (*Oversikt over samisk innhold i Kunnskapsløftet, Læreplaner for gjennomgående fag i grunnskolen og videregående opplæring,* 2006, http://www.skolenettet.no, accessed on 9 January 2007). As a new goal the Norwegian pupils all over the country now have to learn the alphabet of a Sámi language.

The Sámi curriculum especially emphasises 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 (2003, 121–138) shows how difficult it is to realise these objectives: he considers it necessary to provide the schools and teachers with a real chance to enhance their professional knowledge in the sphere of traditional skills and to put time and effort into this. Lauhamaa also shows in her study (2008) how difficult it will be to transfer indigenous knowledge into the school. The school culture that is shaped by Western schooling history is often slow and even reluctant to change established practices. 'For instance, the use of local people and nature and flexible scheduling were included in teaching to a limited degree, although these are fundamental measures in the education of Native peoples, such as among the New Zealand Māori and the native Americans,' she states. 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.

What can be learned of the linguistic history and today's educational situation of one of the smallest indigenous peoples in the world, a people living in the richest welfare states of the world? Is there anything similar to the linguistic and educational situation of the indigenous peoples and minorities in India or Nepal and elsewhere? Scandinavian countries and Finland are linguistically very homogeneous if we compare them with Asian countries such as India, a country with more than one thousand mother tongues. Still I can see many kinds of similarities. In other words, because we are all human beings and we share the same worry about the right to maintain our native identity, the right to be accepted such as we are. We will need recognition and acceptance in the official school systems. The special needs, rooted in assimilation policies and its consequences, seen in the heterogeneous linguistic and cultural background of our children and youngsters today, need to be accepted in the official curricula. That means that we need different kinds of teaching programmes: language nests for children under school-age, revitalisation immersion programmes for those who have lost their native language, protective language shelter programmes for mother tongues, revitaliation programmes for adults. And, finally, the basis for all this, we need teacher training that is closely connected to the native cultures and languages of the pupils. A large and challenging task will be to formalise and transfer the native/ indigenous knowledge into the school curriculum. All these changes are under way in several parts of the world among indigenous peoples and minority groups. We already have a lot of knowledge and understanding from people/s, from researchers and from theories developed even on the other side on the globe. We are building further on these efforts.

Notes

1 The Sámi community consists of a group of regional Sámi cultures. The groups differ in terms of their traditional sources of livelihood, popular culture, folklore and languages, though the languages are closely related.

2 See the websites of the Sámi Parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden www.samediggi.fi, www.samediggi.no, www.sametinget.se and the website of the Saami Council, a rainbow organisation for Sámi NGOs www.saamicouncil.net.

3 Norway became independent (after Danish and Swedish rule) in 1905, when Sweden's current borders were fixed. Finland became independent (after Swedish and Russian rule) in 1917.

4 Turi used the ethnonym 'Sápmi' of his people, but the translation quoted has replaced it with 'Lapp'. 'Lapp' has today been replaced with the Sámi language ethnonyms ´Sápmi´ (for the country and also for the people) and ´Sápmelaš´ (about the people only), rendered Sámi or Saami in English. The ethnonym ´Lapp´ is now considered a (derogatory) name given to Sámi by outsiders.

5 'Sámi area' in Norway refers to the administrative area where the Sámi Language Act is to be implemented (see map). Sámi Language Act refers to Chapter 3 concerning the Sámi language in the Sámi Act (Sámeláhka/ Sameloven, L1087:56). The amendment was made in 1990 (L1990: 78).

[6] 'Sámi area' in Finland refers to the cultural self-determination area of Sámi in Finland. It was specified for the first time at the beginning of 1970s. The latest regulation on the Sámi area is included in the Law on the Sámi Parliament, SSK 974/1995, §4.

Appendix 13.1. *The conditions of Sámi education in Nordic compulsory schooling during the 2003-2004 school year*[1].

	SWEDEN	*FINLAND*	*NORWAY*
SCHOOL SYSTEM VS. SÁMI EDUCATION	- **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	- 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	- **2 state-owned special Sámi schools** in the South Sámi area (Snoasa/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

SÁMI AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION (=teaching in Sámi)	- 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	- is realised 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	- 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
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS IN COMPULSORY SCHOOLING/ teaching in Sámi, the teaching of the Sámi language + teaching in the Sámi language and culture	**476**	**486**	**2834**

Teaching in North Sámi and the teaching of North Sámi, total number of pupils	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[2]: **132**	**428** (=88% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)	**2620** (=92,4% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)
Teaching in Lule Sámi and the teaching of Lule Sámi, total number of pupils	**29**		**76** (=2,7% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)
Teaching in South Sámi and the teaching of South Sámi, total number of pupils	**14**		**138** (=4,9% of all the Sámi pupils of the country)
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 - Sámi-medium instr. - study the language (and culture) as a subject **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) as a subject	**295** (2002-03) 62% ? ? **181** (2002-03) 38% - **181**	**439** 90,3% **154** (=35% of the pupils who study Sámi in the Sámi Area) **285** (=65% of the pupils in the Sámi Area) **47** 9,7% - **47**	**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) **1358** 47,9% **108** **1250**

Notes

[1] 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).

[2] 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.