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AEJLIES

Conditions for Sami Culture

A report for *Viermie K* and *Kultur i Norr*
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GIRON SÁMI TEÁHTER

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1 The mission

VIERMIE K IS A NETWORK made up of six Sami cultural institutions on the Swedish side of Sápmi. The founders are *Aejlies*, *Giron Sámi Teáhter*, *Sameföreningen i Stockholm*, *Stiftelsen Gaaltije, Sáhkie – Umeå sameförening* and *Tjállegoathe*. The goal of the network is to create a joint and strong actor that can work for the best of the entire Sami cultural life on a local, regional and national level.

KULTUR I NORR IS AN INTERREGIONAL cooperation between the four Swedish northern county regions – Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland. These have jointly submitted a cultural

policy position paper that among other things defines a standpoint that strengthening and developing the Sami cultural life is one of three priorities of northern Sweden.

VIERMIE K AND KULTUR I NORR have therefore agreed on a cooperation agreement where one of the tasks is to complete this report and in close dialogue with each other find areas for improvement and concrete cultural policy proposals that strengthen the entire Sami cultural sector.

THE STARTING POINT OF THE MISSION is to complete a report on the conditions for the current Sami cultural actors included in Viermie K and the overall conditions for Sami culture in the four regions. Based on this, the report shall describe the needs of Sami culture within these four regions. The intention was to carry out a careful and critical review of the Sami cultural institutions, but an evaluation has concluded that the financial conditions are so small that it is not useful in the context for this report.

THE REPORT WILL ALSO take a closer look at how the Swedish public sphere including the Swedish State and government could act in the best interest for Sami culture.

THE REPORT WILL NOT EXAMINE the situation for all of Sápmi, with the exception of certain comparisons on how Sweden and Norway work for the Sami culture. Sápmi spans over four countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia), which is important to remember. The more immediate reason is that the Saami Council¹ (a voluntary joint Sami cultural policy and political institution for Nordic countries) is carrying out a similar investigation from a global Sami perspective and the ambition is that both documents complement each other.

THE REPORT WRITER is Tomas Bokstad from Giron Sámi Teáhter and the text has been shared several times for comments and adjustments from both Viermie K and Kultur i Norrr.

¹ <https://www.saamicouncil.net/se/hem/>



2 Summery

THIS REPORT IS UNIQUE in the sense that it is based on the Sami cultural life's own situation. The conclusions found stem from the analyses and findings done by those authorities (government, State cultural agencies, Sami Parliament, regions, municipalities, etc.) that are responsible for the current conditions for the Sami cultural life. These conditions stand in sharp contrast to the reality and the conditions that the Sami cultural institutions deal with every day.

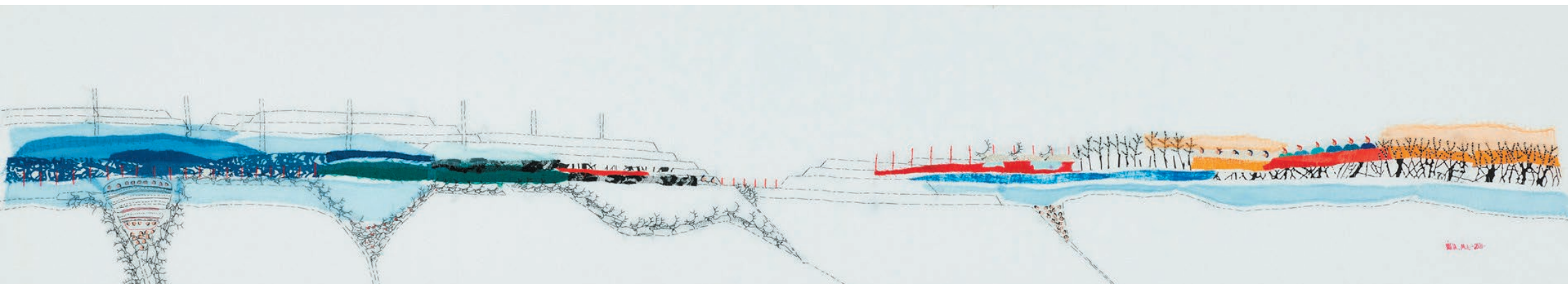
A CLEAR PICTURE of deep inequity takes form when comparing conditions between Swedish and Sami cultural institutions. Balancing this inequity requires substantially strengthening the entire Sami cultural infrastructure to at least acquire the same conditions as the Swedish equivalents. This report proposes as a first step an increase in cultural funding to the Sami Parliament by 50 MSEK annually.

THE REPORT ALSO REVEALS that the broad overall need is to strengthen the entire Sami cultural infrastructure. A reflection of the Swedish cultural policy system that includes resources for awarding grants, stable cultural institutions, production support, organizers, scholarships to artists, museums. All designed by Sami experts that understand and are based in the Sami cultural view.

IN CONCLUSION, the report proposes measures that strengthen the entire Sami cultural life:

- **Substantial increase of resources;**
- **Establishment of competency and language centre;**
- **Make available activities/institutions and improve organizer skills;**
- **Create a nomadic meeting place that works over all of Sápmi.**

The report means that achieving this requires that the reader needs to understand how the Sami cultural view offers conditions for how Sami art and culture is created and relates to the entire Sami world and history. This next chapter is written by Christina Hætta (Head of the Saami Council Cultural Unit) to acquire the best possible Sami insider perspective.



3

Sami cultural view

ART AND CULTURE FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE

The Sami artist Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943-2001) actively worked with spreading an understanding of the unique character of Sami art and culture and often spoke of how Sami artists naturally work with multiple disciplines and how all Sami are artists.

The Sami way of living, working and creative methods have always been intertwined and must be holistically viewed and understood. The creative methods, duodji, and art have not always been separate entities, but rather a part of life and practical culture. As an example, the entire animal is used

when slaughtered. Some parts are used for food, others become warm clothing, belt buttons, a knife or something abstract and beautiful to enjoy.

In 1979, Valkeapää published the book "En helsing fra Lappland" (translated 1983: Greetings from Lappland: the Sami - Europe's forgotten people), where he explains that:

"Art as an isolated phenomenon is an unaccustomed idea for the Sámi. As a result, artists as a professional group are also a product of modern society, a result of the mad rush of our time. Through the Sámi lifestyle, each moment in life becomes an artistic experience. Carving with a knife, colorful clothes with a belt, a cap and a scarf, white moccasins on the snow, isn't it a dance, even if the steps may be unsteady from time to time? Isn't it beautiful when folk sit down in the snow, make a fire and gather around the flames?"



Traditionally, the Sami have not had words for art or artists. The word dáidda (art) and dáiddar (artists) have been translated in modern times to Sami and are today used when referring to art or artists. Still, the praxis in Sápmi has not changed. Everything must still be understood and viewed in a holistic manner. Sami art, culture and duodji can therefore not be defined within certain terms or categories in accordance with the western model since they are a part of a whole and a constantly evolving living culture.

The Sami Council report in 2016 on the brand Sámi Duodji also concludes that: “Duodji can thus mean many things depending on the context. Duodji has social, psychological and financial significance and they are often intertwined. Since the concept duodji is interpreted so differently in the living Sami culture, it is nearly impossible to formulate a definitive and final definition.”

The concept of culture is broadly defined in a Sami perspective and includes the material basis of life. Simply because the creative practices are so intertwined with the lifestyle, our connections to land and water, livelihoods, cultural heritage, the traditional knowledge, language and

traditional methods. Sami cultural actors and artists have thus an important social mission: to preserve and support our creative methods, traditional knowledge and language.

Most Sami livelihoods can be considered cultural or creative livelihoods since most livelihoods base their activities in the Sami culture and also entail anti-reductionistic practices.

Sami creative practices and creative livelihoods with a holistic harmonization are often sustainable and work from the principle of never taking more than you need and always assure that there is more left for coming generations.

“... buot maid mii bargat, bargat maiddái boahhtevaš buolvvaid ovdii, vai sis livčče vejolašvuodat eallit Sámis ja sápmelažžan. Min dáidaga ja kultuvrra vuolggasadji iešalddis lea 1000 jagi dás duohko.”

“...everything we do, we do it for the coming generations, so they will have the opportunity to live in Sápmi as Sami. Our art and culture have an origin, 1000 years from now, into the future.”

Jenni Laiti, dáiddar/konstnär

WHY IS THE SAMI FIELD DIFFERENT FROM THE NATIONAL?

Sápmi is a nation spanning over four national states: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Sami travel, work and live across these borders and consider themselves as one people and one nation.

As with the Sami people, the Sami field of art and culture also stretched over the four national borders and contributes to strengthen Sami cohesion and identity. It is in the nature of the field to work across borders between nations and artistic expressions which is evident from the broad



content in Sami festivals, theatre productions, music groups, art projects, film productions, literary publications and other Sami art and cultural productions. At a Sami festival you will also meet an audience from all of Sápmi, as well as artists from around the globe since Sami artists also work with other global indigenous people networks.

When modern Sami music history became established about 50-60 years ago, and the very first Easter Festival in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) was arranged, participants enjoyed seeing Nils-Aslak Valkeapää on stage with yoik performers from all over Sápmi, such as Inga Juuso, Jaakko Gauriloff,

Åsa Blind, Ellen-Anne Buljo and more. Valkeapää also released several yoik and music recordings, often in collaboration with artists from all over Sápmi.

Even if this was quite a while ago, it is something that still exists. There is a perception that the field of Sami music is narrow and small, but it must be viewed from a holistic perspective, stretching over the national borders of Sápmi. Sami music flourishes there within a wide spectrum of genre and collaborations. The cross-border cooperation within the field of Sami art and culture is still practiced and is fundamental in understanding and developing the field.

BASIS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE FIELD OF SAMI ART AND CULTURE:

The field of Sami art and culture is considered to transverse four national borders, and Sami cultural workers and artists inherently work across these borders.

Sami art, duodji, and creativity should be understood as interdisciplinary creative practices that are closely interwoven with life and are therefore constantly changing.

Sami art and creative practices are often by their nature sustainable and are based on the principle of preserving the cultural heritage and Earth for coming generations.



4 Laws and conventions – Sami cultural rights

It is important that the Sami cultural viewpoint is kept in mind when reading the entire report. It is a filtering foundation for understanding how the Sami cultural life can be strengthened based on the Sami cultural viewpoint.

The other filter the reader is asked to bear in mind is about the rights and especially the cultural rights of the Sami people, acknowledged through acts, conventions and other instruments.

The basis for the Sami people's cultural rights stem from among other Sweden's constitution² and the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages³. In addition, Sweden has committed to human rights for Sami as an indigenous people and national minority through the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁴.

There are also other aspects that contribute to the Sami cultural rights such as UN:s Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples, but here the focus is set on those two acts and that convention that commits the public Sweden (municipality, region, state and their agencies and such) to act for the Sami cultural rights.

One may say that two principals steer nationally and internationally. The public Sweden shall **support** the opportunities for Sami to sustain and develop their culture in Sweden. The Sami hold the right of **influence** in issues that concern them (among others in issues concerning Sami culture).

THESE PRINCIPLES REST ON THREE FOUNDATIONS:

Equality. That persons belonging to the Sami people shall have the same opportunities to preserve and develop their culture and to influence as those who belong to the majority society.

Special measures. For Sami to have the same opportunities to preserve and develop their culture as those of the majority society, special positive measures are required to compensate for earlier discrimination.

Influence. Achieving this requires the same rights and participation for Sami as for the majority society. This in turn requires measures of effective participation and influence.

Simply put, the public Sweden shall not only support the Sami culture but also implement special positive measures to ensure the realization.

² Act 2010:1408

³ Act 2009:724 changed in 2019 as Act 2019:938

⁴ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. SÖ 2002:2



5

Viermie K:s cultural institution

- What are the working conditions for Sami cultural institutions?

During the initial planning of this report, the idea was to investigate the six cultural institutions that founded Viermie K. After interviews with all six institutions, reading through activity reports, financial statements and similar material, the writers of this report decided that it was not very effective to further investigate for an analysis of each institution since the financial conditions are so limited. The institutions work under considerable financial stress, but despite this, they accomplish a variety of activities that are vitally important for the Sami community and the Swedish public.

AEJLIES is a cultural centre and museum, permeated by Sami norm under development and construction. Aejlies is a meeting place, a forum for knowledge, an art residence, a showroom, an innovative hub for creating, a “safe space” for cultural development, and museum that continuously evolves. Together with the local Sami resources, the spiritual mountains and cultural reserve Aatoeklibpie, history, stories and our collaboration with many institutions, here is the foundation and earth for a new Sami museum in Tärnaby.

Aejlies has set up in their own premises in Tärnaby where we run an expanding institution. We organize courses, public programs, exhibitions and more. We collaborate with both local, national and international Sami organizations, artists and cultural workers, who also use our premises and resources according to their individual needs.

Aejlies is created BY Sami FOR Sami. The activities at Aejlies are ABOUT Sami and Sami culture, cultural heritage, history and today, seen through and conveyed by the Sami themselves. The concept of Aejlies has grown from a longstanding Sami culture and satisfies many needs in Sami society, in Sápmi and in Sweden. It is an institution that has filled a void in the Sami and Swedish cultural landscape. Aejlies strives to contribute to the cultural development of the Sami people. We want to take responsibility. We offer opportunities. We want to develop Sápmi and thus also Sweden.

GIRON SÁMI TEÁHTER is the Sami people's theatre and of interest for all of Sweden. Its roots stem from the independent theatre group Dálvadis, a pioneer institution without a home stage, that performed in Sami with tours in Nordic countries, Europe and Canada. Sámi Teáhter was established in 1992, changing its name to Giron Sámi Teáhter in 2009.



The theatre has its own stage, premises and administration in Kiruna. The commission of Giron Sámi Teáhter is to realize professional performing arts with the Sami culture and identity as a foundation and support the Sami languages by focusing on current social issues.

Giron Sámi Teáhter is an important arena for performing arts and develops performances that primarily turn to all Sami. The different productions are targeted at children, youth, adults and the elderly. The theatre has a repertoire that enables the audience to participate based on their own mother language and language skills. This means that Sami languages and Swedish are used as performing languages. All performances tour the traditional Sami region, Sápmi and other parts of the Nordic region. The theatre educates by taking initiative for seminars and offering discussions between science and performing arts. The theatre conducts development work in writing manuscripts and works for stimulating an interest in theatre.

SAMEFÖRENINGEN I STOCKHOLM (*Stockholm Sami Association*) was founded in 1947 and has had a variety of activities over the years. The association's mission statement is: "The task of the Association is to, in Stockholm and neighboring areas, make the most of and support Sami interests with respect to cultural, social and financial interests, and work to spread knowledge about Sami conditions. This is to be done in a democratic manner and in accordance with Sami tradition."

The Sami Association conducts and plans continuous activities where the focus is on the development of Sami culture and language as well as social connection. Sami in Stockholm is the focus group. Activities in the area are language circles, language cafés, language emersion activities, handicraft courses, family gatherings, cultural circles and member meetings with focus on Sami food and culture.

In addition, the association carries out and plans to organize activities with guest performances of Sami theatre, lectures, Sami national day celebrations



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AEJLIES

as well as organizing our own Sami music and story-telling evening, Samisk Afton (includes daytime school performances) targeted to the general public as well as Sami in Stockholm.

We coordinate and inform about events with Sami cultural content. One of our partners is the Stockholm City Library that happily organizes Sami children's culture. Other Swedish cultural institutions such as art galleries, museums, festivals, concert organizers and lecture organizers contact us to reach out to the Sami public and the Sami cultural actors in Stockholm as well as those who have expressed an interest by becoming members of our social media network and newsletter, about 4,000 people. By advertising on social media, we can potentially reach 220,000 citizens in the Stockholm region.

In addition to a small amount of activity support from The Sami Parliament and Region Stockholm of about 290 kSEK annually, the activities are financed by applying for different forms of project support of about 2 to 3 MSEK annually. A major expense is the coordination of consultation in the Sami administration area in accordance with the national minority language act in Stockholm city and the region's administrations. It is worth to mention that up to four association members participate in the consultations on a voluntary basis up to 20 times annually.

STIFTELSEN GAALTJE (Gaaltje Foundation) was founded in 1984 to work for the Sami people's cultural and Christian interests, among other things by running the Sami cultural centre Gaaltje. The activities of the foundation contribute to the cultural, language and livelihood development in the Sami community in the South Sami area. Through the South Sami culture centre, the Gaaltje Foundation shall act as a public and welcoming centre for information about the Sami society and culture as well as a Sami meeting place. The culture centre holds exhibitions, events and lectures. The Gaaltje Foundation is renovating their exhibition halls with the intention of developing a Sami museum. The Gaaltje Foundation is situated in Staare/Östersund.

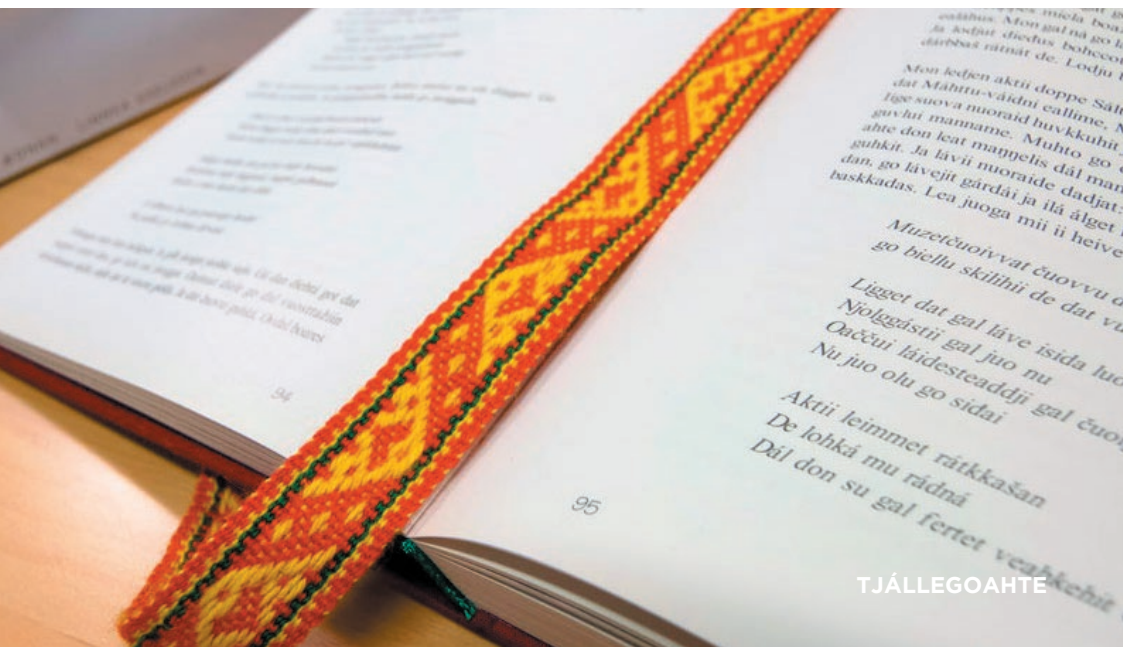
SÅHKIE – UMEÅ SAMEFÖRENING

(Umeå Sami Association) is a very active Sami association in Sapmi. Ever since Sâhkïe was established in 1977 it has worked to support Sami culture and Sami interests in the community. Every year since 2000, Sâhkïe has organized Ubmejen Biejvïeh – Sami week, a Sami cultural festival. It has expanded over the years and is today the largest entirely Sami cultural festival in Sweden. The festival is organized together with regional and international Sami actors, as well as organizers with Ubmeje. The program is quite broad, with for example lectures, children's activities, exhibitions and concerts. Since 2013, Sâhkï runs the Sami cultural centre Trâhppïe in Ubmeje. In the Ume Sami language, Trâhppïe means "reindeer horn with many branches" which symbolizes the broad range of activities available year-round at the cultural centre.

Ubmejen biejvïeh and Trahppïe have evolved to become meaningful Sami meeting places that are very central and important in the Sami community. This is reflected in the wide range of activities that other actors hold at our cultural festival and cultural centre. Here there is a wide variety of Sami culture for both Sami and general audiences, and where Sami issues and cultural life are brought up to date for everyone. As the organizer, Sâhkïe

helps Sami cultural artists and performers, creates arenas that elevate/ highlight Sami culture on society's agenda.

TJÁLLEGOAHTE is a Sami writer's centre that shall offer more Sami the opportunity to read and write in their own language. The purpose of Tjállegoahte is to contribute to removing the current obstacles that stand in the way for Sami authorship and publication of Sami literature. By improving the conditions for literature, we strengthen the Sami culture and the Sami languages. The overall goal is greater access to literature in Sami and literature written by Sami in other languages. Everyone with Sami as their mother language shall be given the opportunity to develop good reading skills and have access to literature in their own language. Opening more avenues shall also contribute to more having greater opportunities to an artistic experience through literary Sami meetings, via workshops, author talks and seminars. We shall both support people along the way to becoming an author and see to that the published Sami literature is communicated. The long-term goal is to improve the literary infrastructure to cover all of Sápmi. This in turn strengthens people's self-reliance and language identity. Knowledge of how important reading is for education, learning and increased participation in social life shall also be brought forth.



TJÁLLEGOAHTE

These Sami cultural institutions all share that they work under a very pressed situation where activity support is meager, there are no resources for development, where the institutions are too greatly dependent on the projects to keep them afloat, and institutional organization and administration is scarce. More on this in the next section.

A situation that clashes with those laws and cultural rights described earlier



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THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE INSTITUTIONS

The total operational support to Aejlies, Giron Sámi Teáhter, Sameföreningen i Stockholm, Stiftelsen Gaaltije, Sáhkie – Umeå sameförening and Tjállegohte totals about 12 MSEK⁵. Operational support is a regular annual operational grant from the State, region and municipality, not project subsidies, ticket income or other external financing.

Here we should also keep in mind that the approx. 7 MSEK that is granted Giron Sámi Teáhter is a large piece of the pie, due to the high cost of producing performing arts. Compared to the average Swedish regional theatre (for example, Västerbottenteatern, a regional theatre in the north of Sweden, is granted approx. 30 MSEK in operational support), even that sum is very low.

The average operational support for the six institutions is in other words is less than 2 MSEK. And if we omit Giron Sámi Teáhter, the sum sinks to 1 MSEK.

⁵Aejlies 0 SEK (organized via Storumans municipality with project resources), Giron Sámi Teáhter 7 MSEK, Sameföreningen i Stockholm 300,000 SEK (run with regular project resources), Stiftelsen Gaaltije 1,9 MSEK, Sáhkie - Umeå sameförening 2 MSEK, Tjállegohte 800,000 SEK. A total of about 12 MSEK.

ORGANIZATION OF THE INSTITUTIONS

Despite the meager basic resources available to the institutions, they still succeed in organizing themselves rather impressively. All six institutions have working organizations but are under stress as a result of the low operational support and a great demand for Sami knowledge and competency from the external world.

Since the grants are so low, the institutions must rely to a greater part on external financing to have the necessary capacity of personnel and administration. In practice this means that projects are run by seeking support from several different sources (municipal, regional, national, Nordic and private funds). The realized projects are often in line with the regular planned regular activities and is thus the only way to fulfill the goals set by the institution. The consequence is a greater load on the organization that must administrate applications and accounting from several different financial sources.

The latest years' great surge and visibility of the Sami culture through national and international success by among others Jon-Henrik Fjällgren, Monica L Edmondson, Amanda Kernell, Britta Marakatt Labba, Anders Sunna, Linnea Axelsson, Elin Anna Labba, Sofia Jannok, Sara Ajnnak, and

many more has resulted in a demand to know more and engage more Sami artists (by artists we mean all forms of art). The same applies for education from lower secondary school to university as well as among others television series, exhibitions, theatre performances with a Sami theme. The institutions spend a lot of time and energy on answering enquiries concerning all this and at the same time feel that it is something that simply cannot be ignored.

Despite the institutions are stressed and vulnerable, they succeed in organizing themselves and carry out an impressive array of activities and events. In paradox, the Sami culture still blossoms. The situation is very frail and needs to be heeded by the public Sweden.

THE VALUE OF THE INSTITUTIONS

The six Sami cultural institutions used for this report represent a majority of the Sami cultural institutions that exist on the Swedish side of Sápmi. Of course, the Sami cultural life also includes other important actors such as

Sámi Duodji. This means that these six cultural institutions carry a great deal of the responsibility to produce and organize cultural events that are important for the entire Sami population in Sweden.

This responsibility means that each of the institutions performs activities directed to and produced for children and youth, works with language development for the five Sami languages in Sweden and often work far from their home municipality. This is all done in addition to each institution's core activities since they are considered necessary Sami social obligations. This is about taking a responsibility that reaches far beyond what a Swedish cultural institution normally would do.

*It cannot be stressed enough how essential this adopted responsibility is for the entire Sami people.
That Sami children and youth are given the opportunity to take part in their own culture.
That the threatened Sami languages are spoken and shaped.
That the sum of the institutions' activities reaches a greater portion of the Sami society.*



6 Regional cultural plans and the cultural policy position paper

Kultur i Norr has previously in their respective cultural plans (Västernorrland, Jämtland Härjedalen, Västerbotten and Norrbotten) pointed out the need to strengthen the Sami culture. That the four northern regions now have an interregional organization means that they are better equipped to meet the Sami culture and its institutions that are very much a part of and work in these regions.

Although, there are conditions that this report comments on such as that Stockholm (where Sameföreningen i Stockholm is active) is a large arena for the Sami culture that primarily produces in the northern regions of Sweden and Sápmi. The Sami cultural life is also wider than the regional and national borders that divide Sápmi.

Having said this, the main perspective in this report is regional and national. One of the reasons for this is the cultural policy interaction between region and State that exists through the cultural interaction model. The Nordic

perspective is also central, but this report excludes this focus since the Sami Council, as mentioned earlier, is working with their own investigation with the Nordic perspective.

THE CURRENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The combined activity grants for the six Sami cultural institutions from the four regions amount to about 1 MSEK⁶ for 2020. This is of course a very small amount. What has happened though is that several regions have actively supported the institutions through project and development funding to strengthen the core operations of the institutions. An example of the type of funding is through the cultural collaboration model that has previously and is currently allocated to Aejlies and Giron Sámi Teáhter

⁶ Giron Sámi Teáhter ca 200 tkr från Region Västerbotten, 500 tkr från Region Norrbotten. Sáhkie ca 150 tkr från Region Västerbotten, Gaaltije ca 150 kr från Region Jämtland Härjedalen.



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DAN JÁMA

where the Norrbotten and Västerbotten regions are co-financers.

For Viermie K and Kultur i Norr, a cooperation agreement has been drawn up that enables the network to hire a coordinator, complete this report and work with cultural policy.

So even if the activity grants are very small, several ongoing processes point towards a different direction in the regions. This is also clearly expressed in the cultural policy position paper that was launched in 2020 during Folk och Kultur in Eskilstuna by Kultur i Norr. The first priority of three focuses on the Sami culture.

THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE SAMI

The four northernmost regions lie in the traditional Sami area, Sápmi, the home of the indigenous people Sami. Their cultural heritage is therefore an important part of northern Sweden's collective cultural expression. Strengthening the cultural identity by offering opportunities to participate in one's own culture for indigenous people as well as national minorities should be given priority in the northernmost regions. Increasing society's knowledge about indigenous people and national minorities, both historically and current, is a priority for the Sami democratic and cultural development and is described in the cultural policy position paper as follows:

- *Develop cooperation with the Sami Parliament and other Sami cultural institutions*
- *On different levels, support Sami scenes and Sami centres*
- *Support efforts for the Sami culture*

IF THE INTENTIONS IN THE POSITION PAPER ARE TO BE REALIZED, WHAT COULD IT MEAN?

The Sami cultural institutions are in urgent need of a substantial increase in activity support. This assessment comes from the institutions themselves⁷ where among other things they stress the need to build for long-term, stable Sami cultural institutions as well as a comprehensive system for the entire Sami cultural infrastructure.

Even if it is not directly promised in the position paper, here lies the decisive question to strengthen the Sami culture. It will require a long-term and increased financial support from the four regions, but it can hardly be only a regional matter that it is realized. It is a matter for the entire public Sweden that it is realized.

The one side of the coin has a heavy financial stamp. The other side of the coin is that the investment argued for here will result in very positive effects for both the Sami and Swedish populations. As pointed out earlier, the Sami culture and art is already artistically blooming. It is reasonable to anticipate that a long-term investment in the Sami cultural landscape will create conditions for more Sami art and culture under reasonable conditions.

Neither can one underestimate the effects that will benefit the Sami population. The responsibility that is essential for the Sami cultural institutions where children and youth are in focus together with language efforts and working over all of Sweden.

How can the regions strengthen Sami culture on municipal and national levels? This report has already several times invoked those demands placed on the public Sweden to carry out special positive measures that guarantee fulfillment of Sami cultural rights. Now when Kultur i Norr has initiated a

⁷ See Appendix 1. Viermie K – a network for Sami cultural institutions

process leading to this, there is a position to take where the municipal and national levels can be affected in the same direction. There is a potential and a strength in that Kultur i Norr and Viermie K have a common vision of what needs to be done.

A form of "best practice" that can serve as a model for everything from municipalities to national cultural agencies and the government. The outset for such a model can be the cooperation agreement between Kultur i Norr and Viermie K, how it is implemented and what effects it will have.

The public Sweden needs to start to act and take initiative for improvements for the entire Sami cultural life.





The Swedish State and the Sami Parliament

Sami Parliament was established in 1992 after a decision by the Swedish Riksdag. The Sami Parliament is both a Swedish agency and a Sami parliament. This dual role means that the Parliament lacks self-determination and is instead advisory and an expert on Sami issues. A part of the Parliament's work is the culture committee and culture administration that distributes the cultural funding the Swedish State makes available.

The financial development from the State to the Sami Parliament

The greater part of the funding to cultural institutions as well as projects is provided by the budget allocated to the Sami Parliament from the government. Additional funding from for example regions and municipalities is by comparison very small. Two cultural institutions are currently identified by the government as beneficiaries of the funds -Giron Sámi Teáhter and Stiftelsen Gaaltije.

From 1999 (when Giron Sámi Teáhter was included in the cultural budget) to 2020, there has been a weak development. From 14,5 MSEK in 1999 to a little under 18 MSEK in 2020⁸. The Sami Parliament itself emphasizes that if one considers price increases then the small budget increase does not even cover that. In practice, the grant has been hollowed out since 1999. What is the situation in our neighbor Norway?

Comparison to Norway

The funding from the Norwegian Sami Parliament for culture differs from the Swedish. Instead of the almost 18 MSEK in Sweden, the sum in Norway is about 162 MNOK, a sum that is nine times higher than in Sweden. This

comparison has been made before, but it is still astonishing that nothing has been done to improve the situation on the Swedish side of Sápmi.

What would be a reasonable starting point for financial equity?

According to the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis, the public cultural expenditures (State, regions, municipalities) were 30,6 BSEK in 2019⁹. The public cultural expenditures are 2959 SEK per Swedish citizen.

A careful estimate of how much of the public cultural activity funding that is available to Sami cultural institutions lands at around 25 MSEK. The number of Sami living in Sweden has not been assessed for a long time, but an estimate is about 40,000 Sami live in Sweden. The public cultural expenditures are then 625 SEK per Sami citizen.

This report has not covered project funding to Sami culture, but the difference between the two peoples is so great that the financial and cultural equity has not been reached.

Equity would mean at the very least if it was equal. That would mean a grant of a bit more than 69 MSEK to the Sami Parliament from the Swedish State. An increase of about 50 MSEK.

⁸ <https://www.sametinget.se/106945> Sametingets kulturpoltiska handlingsprogram 2018-2021 and Regulation letter for the Sami Parliament 2020 <https://www.esv.se/statsliggaren/regleringsbrev/?rbid=20387>

⁹ <https://kulturanalys.se/aktuell/ny-statistik-minskade-utgifter-inom-flera-kulturomraden-2019/>

8 Special challenges/areas that a Sami cultural institution must relate to

When one regards the Sami culture and its conditions, it is easy to get stuck in the financial aspects discussed above. And, yes, it is central to understand that a considerable increase in funding is needed for the Sami cultural institutions to be able to work under reasonable conditions. But there are also other areas where most of the Sami cultural institutions meet special challenges.

THE SAMI LANGUAGES

The five Sami languages in Sweden (North-, South-, Ume-, Lule- and Pite Sami) mean that in practice each Sami cultural institution is in its nature multilingual. Even if not all Sami languages are used all the time, there are practical situations to consider. There are, depending on what the activity is, a constant need for interpreters, translators and language coaches. It is not only an added cost for an institution, but these are skills that are hard to

come by since some of the languages are spoken and written by only a small group of people.

COMPETENCY

That the financial situation is so sparse for the Sami cultural institutions on the Swedish side of Sápmi results in a problem in competency. This includes both the artistic and administrative sides. The institutions have neither the time nor financial capacity to develop the competency needed in the organization.

Another aspect that makes this situation even worse is that the opportunities for competency development and employment are so much better on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. This means that artistic and administrative key people often move to Sami institutions in Norway.



GEOGRAPHY AND BORDERS

Just a simple ascertainment that the area covered by the four northern regions is larger than the rest of Sweden paints a picture of the extensive area the Sami institutions need to consider and cover as much as possible with the content that is produced, organized and carried out. Add to that the Sami population that lives in smaller communities to the north and the picture becomes even more complicated.

Furthermore, Sápmi contains several borders that are not in harmony with for example where collaborations, tours and exhibitions should naturally be carried out. The national borders create obstacles for this mobility and an added difficulty is that Norway is not a member of the EU which creates added obstacles.

Those who award institution grants also expect the institutions to work on local, regional and national levels. Everything put together results in a complicated situation for a Sami cultural institution.

ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZERS

This report mentioned earlier the stress that comes from being constantly available to answer questions about Sami culture. There are

few opportunities for Sami and Swedish cultural organizers to produce information about which artists, exhibitions, tours, performers that are available and with which productions or repertoire. There are no Sami showcase days, neither physical nor digital.

Today's Sami organizers, in addition to the six cultural institutions (where for example Sameföreingen i Stockholm is a clear organizing institution) are for example the Sami coordinators found in the Sami administrative municipalities. Currently they are 25 people that among other things work to offer Sami culture directed specially to children and youth as well as the older generations of the Sami population. Other organizers can be smaller Sami associations, and many share the need to strengthen their organizing skills and to better coordinate what they offer.

THE ENTIRE SAMI CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED

In conclusion, the report establishes that the significant overall need is to strengthen the entire Sami cultural infrastructure. A reflection of the Swedish cultural policy system where there are resources for allocating grants, stable cultural institutions, production support, organizers, artist scholarships, museums. All formed by Sami experts that understand and is based on the Sami cultural viewpoint.

It is a spiring ambition to achieve, and it will most likely require interaction between municipalities, regions, nations and the Nordic countries.



9

Analysis and proposed efforts

Strengthen the entire Sami cultural life

The entire Sami cultural infrastructure needs financial strengthening. But getting there requires a starting point. The first priority is to create reasonable conditions for long-term stable Sami cultural institutions that can work as motors for the entire Sami cultural life. This in turn requires financial resources. The analysis is shared by the Sami Parliament and is their foremost cultural policy priority. The suggested regional perspective is to both strengthen the Sami cultural institutions that exist in the region and jointly strengthen interregional efforts that among others can be one or several of the proposals suggested below.

From a state agency perspective, the establishment of an indigenous peoples department by the Canada Arts Council¹⁰ with indigenous people in management, administration and assessment groups is very interesting and should work as an inspiration for state cultural agencies such as the Swedish Arts Council. In short, a three-year introduction with increased resources each year. Including new support areas established in line with the cultural viewpoint held by the Canadian indigenous peoples.

From a financial and cultural equity perspective, this report proposes that financial equity between the two peoples of Sweden can be achieved by a substantial increase in the governmental support to the Sami Parliament cultural department.

PROPOSAL:

Regional: A stairway model where increased financial resources are enabled for Sami cultural institutions including Viermie K. The stairway entails those finances are allocated in stages so that the Sami cultural institutions can grow in a sustainable manner.

Government agencies: Investigate and carry through a change in how the national cultural agencies can better support the entire Sami cultural life with inspiration from the Canada Arts Council.

The Swedish government: Increase grants to the Sami Parliament with respect to culture to at least 69 MSEK so that a financial and cultural equity can be achieved between the two peoples in Sweden.

¹⁰ <https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/creating-knowing-sharing>

Create a Sami competency centre

Underfinancing has also had consequences for both artistic and administrative competency. There is quite simply no economy for either hiring people or raising the level of competence.

Furthermore, the working conditions on the Norwegian side of Sápmi are considerably better which results in a “brain drain” to Norway. For a growing Sami cultural infrastructure to work, education and qualification measures are needed in accordance with the Sami way of learning.

PROPOSAL:

Interregional: Develop Viermie K to a competency centre with expertise in counselling, production, cultural policy, negotiation support, information that is accessible to the entire Sami cultural life by contributing interregional funding from Kultur i Norr and with development funds from the Swedish Arts Council.

Future needs: Leadership programs, arts educations that are investigated by the competency center itself. Consider the opportunity to partake in coming education contributions with other actors.

Create a resource centre for Sami languages

In addition to that every Sami cultural institution needs to work with and manage the five Sami languages (in Sweden), there are special needs in the culture area. Among others, there is a continuous need for interpreters, translators and language coaches with cultural competency. A lot of time is spent on individually finding these skills, which in some cases are very difficult to find.

By cooperating with the entire Sami cultural life and other Sami actors with similar needs, these needs can be fulfilled.

PROPOSAL:

Regional/interregional: Work more in detail on developing a proposal on how a resource centre for Sami languages can be designed by giving a commission to Tjállegohte that already has considerable competence in the matter. Consider the opportunity to work with for example Swedish public television (SVT), public radio (SR), the Sami Parliament, Swedish Sami National Association (SSR) and other Sami actors.

Make information about activities more widely available and strengthen organizers

Today there is no joint information platform about the different Sami cultural alternatives available. Currently all knowledge sits with the Sami cultural institutions and individual persons. At a network meeting between the Sami coordinators and Viermie K, the call for gathering the Sami cultural alternatives was raised. Organization needs to be strengthened and developed for the Sami organizers that today consist mainly of Sami associations and the Sami coordinators. There is a need for frameworks that support these needs that are a central part of the Sami cultural infrastructure.

PROPOSAL:

Regional/interregional: A part of Viermie K: proposed operations such as a Sami competency centre directed to the cultural alternatives and organization. Initially, the Sami cultural alternatives shall be compiled in a digital cultural alternatives catalogue. There both artists and performers co-exist with cultural productions and exhibitions. Bring together the different Sami organizers and draft how a Sami organizer development can take shape.

Goal: To hand over the operations to a Sami organizer network after a few years.

Establish a nomadic meeting place for Sami culture and Sami artists

The long geographical distances in the North and the fact that Sápmi spans over four countries means that there are few opportunities for cultural institutions to meet, share experiences and find new collaborations. The current meeting places (for example Sami week in Umeå, Kultur Sápmi, festivals) do not have a forum for these aspects.

PROPOSAL:

Interregional/national: Grant Viermie K a commission to produce a proposal on the layout of a recurring nomadic meeting place where Sami cultural institutions and artists meet. The proposal should consider the opportunities to collaborate/unite with existing meeting places.