

Mapping of education and employment needs in the Sámi film industry and study paths to becoming a professional

Project: Capacity building in the Indigenous Sámi film industry and media education in a context of new digital media technologies

Erasmus+ programme



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Summary

The Sámi film industry is at a crossroads. The demand for Sámi films has exploded and the number of productions is growing rapidly. Whereas it used to take ten years between feature films, there are now several feature films, a TV series and various short films produced in the space of a year. In addition, a dozen feature films and five TV series are in production or in development.

The rapidly growing Sámi film industry needs funding and capacity building. The biggest challenge facing the industry today is a shortage of labour. There are simply not enough skilled workers. The Sámi film industry is not able to respond to the growing interest and needs with sufficient volume and speed.

The current Sámi film education hinges on the Sámi Education Institute's media education of nearly 20 years and the support, networks and education provided by the International Sámi Film Institute as well as the filmmaking studies of the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, or Sámi allaskuvla. Permanent film and media education should be established in the Sámi region especially for young people, taking into account the entire Sámi region and its languages. Although many Sámi filmmakers have studied at renowned national universities, higher education in film must be developed globally from an Indigenous perspective.

Developing permanent, high-quality education is also a solution to the industry's labour shortage. In addition to education, larger production companies and more production traineeships are needed. Networks of Sámi filmmakers must be strengthened, and many Sámi associations, centres and events can provide support in this respect. Educational solutions in the coming years, increased funding and cooperation are key in growing the Sámi film industry in accordance with the values and ethics of the Sámi community.

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Introduction

This report was written for the Sámi Film Industry and Media Education project. It's a small-scale Erasmus+ partnership project coordinated by the Sámi Education Institute (Sámi oahpahušguovddáš, SAKK) partnered with the International Sámi Film Institute (Internášunála Sámi Filbmainstituhtta, ISFI). The project has received EU funding totalling €60,000.

The strong boom in Sámi film and TV production has brought with it acute education needs and a shortage of future workers. Media and film professionals are needed throughout the Arctic region. The project has mapped potential study paths as well as education and employment needs in the Sámi film industry.

A total of 13 professionals from the Sámi film and media industry or representatives of educational organisations from the Sámi region and its surrounding areas were interviewed for the project. Seven of the interviewees work in the Sámi film industry and six work or have worked in the Sámi region or its surrounding areas as film and media teachers in educational organisations or as production advisors in the film industry. Project manager Tiina Jäppinen was responsible for writing the report and conducting the interviews for the mapping process. The process has been supported and the report pre-read by Film Commissioner Liisa Holmberg from ISFI and Development Manager Janne Näkkäljärvi from the Sámi Education Institute. The report was translated into English by Silvia Sarre.

ISFI's definition of a Sámi film – and also their grant requirement– is that at least two of the main functions (producer, screenwriter, director) in the film production must be Sámi and the main language of the film must be one of the Sámi languages. ISFI aims to support Sámi people in building their own film industry. The same criteria apply to Sámi films as to other Indigenous films. The Sámi film community is part of a larger global Indigenous film community consisting of Indigenous filmmakers and institutions under Indigenous control. It includes some 60–70 Indigenous film festivals, hundreds of institutions, film centres and



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dozens of funding agencies. There may be slight differences or exceptions in the criteria depending on the country, people, funding agencies and festivals, but the main criterion is that at least one of the main functions of a film must be Indigenous. The main functions in film are the director, the screenwriter and the producer (West, 2022).

The mapping focuses on the Sámi film industry, but since the film industry is part of the broader media industry where Sámi filmmakers have often worked or are working, the mapping also extends to the media industry. The aim of the project is to increase dialogue and disseminate best practices in the Sámi region and, ideally, more broadly in the Indigenous film industry. In the best-case scenario, this will bring new workers to the industry and increase the global visibility of the whole industry. The mapping process aims to clarify the education and employment needs of the rapidly growing Sámi film industry. At best, the mapping will support future plans for Sámi film education and provide the industry with the stability and continuity it needs. The report can also serve as a basis for new projects and cooperation plans.

We are greatly indebted to the interviewees, none of whom declined the request. Without the expert input of the interviewees, we would not have been able to complete this vital mapping of the needs of the Sámi film industry.



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Sámi Education Institute – unique basic media education in the Sámi region

"SAKK has taught me the art of filmmaking"

The Sámi Education Institute (SAKK) is a state-run educational facility operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture, and it plays a central role in the development of the Sámi region and Arctic skills. The Sámi Education Institute aims to increase the professional skills of the Sámi population in particular, to organise education that meets the needs of the Sámi economy, to promote employment in the region and to preserve and develop the Sámi culture. Cooperation in education and research extends not only across the countries of the Sámi region but also to the Indigenous peoples of the North, in particular.

If Sámi film is thought to have been born in the late 80s with the huge success of Nils Gaup's *Ofelaš – Pathfinder*, the second wave of Sámi film can be thought to have been born with Liisa Holmberg establishing film education at the Sámi Education Institute in Inari in 2003 (West, 2022). The film education was established in the late 90s, when many members of the Friends of Sámi Art association (Sámedáidaga doarjjasearvi) were teaching at the Sámi Education Institute, and they became aware of the problems regarding screening and distribution of Sámi films and the shortage of Sámi film professionals. When education concerning the Sámi culture was organised at the Sámi Education Institute in 1997, the teachers realised the scarcity of available course materials. Filmmaking was adopted as an educational tool, and the films produced during the course needed a wider audience. During a brainstorming session amongst the association members, a film festival was suggested as a screening venue. The idea, which initially seemed impossible, became feasible over time. (Karjalainen, 2012) The Skábmagovat Film Festival was launched in 1998. In January next year, the festival will celebrate its 25th anniversary and it will continue to be produced by the Friends of Sámi Art association in close cooperation with the Sámi Museum and Nature



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Centre Siida, the Indigenous Peoples' Film Centre Skábma operating under the Finnish Sámi Parliament, the Sámi Cultural Centre Sajos and the Sámi Education Institute.

The Sámi Education Institute's media education dating back nearly 20 years is in many ways a unique type of education in the Sámi region. Erkki Feodoroff has been the media education teacher for around ten years. The education programme lasts for 1–2 years and after two years, it's possible to obtain a vocational qualification through competence-based qualifications. The degree programme in media education is flexible, and it's able to respond to the rapidly changing needs of the industry.

The media education includes film and animation productions, learning about different aspects of audiovisual communication and participating in the organisation of local events. The teaching takes place in modern facilities at the Sámi Cultural Centre Sajos in Inari. The Sámi culture, multiculturalism and northern dimension are at the centre of the studies. The programme provides students with basic knowledge of filmmaking and can serve as a stepping stone for further studies, as an introduction to the film and media industry or as a way of building up individual media skills. It also provides an opportunity for students to network with people who operate and work in the film and media industry in the Sámi region. During the second year, students will have the opportunity to delve deeper into topics that interest them and the proportion of traineeships will increase. The Sámi Education Institute is authorised to provide education required for completing vocational qualifications, and students will be prepared for it during the second year of studies. The studies include a three-credit course on Sámi culture, which also includes language studies. In addition, students may choose to study a Sámi language of their choice (Skolt Sámi, Inari Sámi, Northern Sámi) for up to five credits during the school year.

A maximum of 10 students per year are admitted to the media education programme. The profile of applicants has traditionally been varied. The programme has drawn in students from young comprehensive school graduates to over 50-year-olds. About half of the applicants are from the Sámi region and the rest from elsewhere in Finland. Over the years,



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there have also been a few foreign students. As the language of instruction is Finnish, students must understand the language enough for studying to be possible.

The first-year media education traineeship lasts for four weeks. Students have to organise their own placement and any travel or accommodation needed. The institute supports students in finding a traineeship position if necessary. There has been no formal cooperation with local companies or organisations regarding the traineeships. The Sámi film and media industry is in need of workers. Through a well-planned traineeship, both trainees and employers have a chance to network with each other and trainees can build up their skills. There is room for improvement when it comes to traineeship cooperation. Possible partners could include educational organisations in or near the Sámi region, such as the Sámi University of Applied Sciences or organisations providing media education in Norway and Sweden.

A few years ago, ISFI and the Sámi Education Institute collaborated in organising a 360° video workshop for the institute's media education students. ISFI has also provided funding for the media students' short films on a small scale. The media education students also collaborate with Yle Sápmi. During a four-week animation course, the students create animations for children which are then shown in the children's TV show Unna Junná. Sámi languages are used in the animations, and the students recruit voice actors from the Sámi Education Institute's language programmes, among others.

The Sámi film industry is growing rapidly and there is a growing need for workers as well. The Sámi Education Institute aims to increase the professional skills of the Sámi population in particular, to organise education that meets the needs of the Sámi economy, to promote employment in the region and to preserve and develop the Sámi culture. How can the Sámi Education Institute's media education fulfil this purpose, taking into account the future needs of the Sámi film and media industry? There was a consensus among the interviewees that basic education in film and media should be available in the Sámi region, especially for young people. The strengthening of identity, networking in the film and media industry, contemplating further education opportunities and strengthening personal skills and



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motivation were some of the important reasons for organising film and media education in the Sámi region.

"What if the future would be the arena for the Sámi youth from four countries to come and learn media and film in Inari."

Students from the Sámi region outside Finland are restricted in applying because of the language of instruction, which is Finnish. If the language of instruction was English, programmes would be more accessible for people from the Nordic countries and Russia. English as a language of instruction could increase interest in people from the broader Sámi region to study in Inari. The Sámi people are one nation divided into four countries, and nowadays they cooperate widely across national borders. Cooperation within the Sámi film and media industry is extensive, so it would only be natural for there to be cooperation in developing film and media education.

The media education programme also serves as a stepping stone for higher education, and many of the students have gone on to study film and media in higher education institutions. In Finland, it's possible to pursue further education in film and media at a higher education level. Depending on language skills, other options include the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Kautokeino and other higher education institutions offering media and film education in the Nordic countries.

International Sámi Film Institute – pioneer and major supporter

The International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI) located in Kautokeino, Norway, has been building a sustainable, innovative and international Sámi film industry since 2009. During its 12



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years of operation, ISFI has supported more than 80 Sámi and Indigenous films all the way to their premieres. ISFI provides support for Sámi film professionals and aspiring ones in many ways, providing opportunities to develop, produce and distribute Sámi films in the Sámi languages. ISFI's vision is to build a sustainable and innovative Sámi film industry that is globally visible and attractive. Values guiding their operations include respecting and connecting with nature and all living things, cooperating and networking both locally and globally as well as borderless thinking across all four countries. As Sámi people are spread out across four countries, borderless thinking forms the backbone of the operations.

ISFI raises funding for Sámi film to support larger productions, such as feature films and TV series. The current funding is around €3 million per year and the aim is to double it to €6 million. This increase in funding will allow production grants to be awarded to larger productions, which will allow the Sámi film industry to grow. The increase in funding will also allow Sámi production companies to grow their operations. Larger productions will provide work for more people in the production process, which will create much needed continuity in the industry. Capacity can also be built by creating traineeship positions in larger productions and providing more opportunities for Sámi filmmakers.

"We really need to be present, especially for young people and for children."

ISFI also provides support for children and young people and wants to be present in the digital world through identifiable stories. Films reflect the beliefs and values of the cultures they stem from, but also shape and reinforce cultural beliefs. Modern life is in many ways digital, and ISFI wants to be present for young people and children through these identifiable stories. Therefore, one of ISFI's main goals is to produce stories in Sámi languages for Sámi children and youth. The importance of the Sámi languages is emphasised in ISFI's training programmes and workshops, which are currently held in Northern Sámi, English and the Nordic languages.



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In its 12 years of operation, ISFI has organised a wide range of workshops and courses both independently and in partnership with other organisations, and it also supports film productions through mentoring. Partners have included institutions such as the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, the Sámi Filmmakers' Association (Sámi Filbmabargiid Searvi, SFS), the European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE) and, most recently, the production company and streaming service Netflix. The cooperation with other organisers has included raising awareness on acute needs in the industry, recruiting teachers and coordinating the training programmes. ISFI has a strong culture of dialogue with Sámi filmmakers and first-hand knowledge of the industry's needs. ISFI disseminates this important information to educational organisations and also assists in the planning and organisation of education. Planning and implementing education programmes is time-consuming, and the film and media industry is in constant change. The high turnover of people makes it difficult to establish long-term cooperation. Course and project-based programmes start and come to an end, and there's no continuity as people come and go. When developing film education, it's essential to be able to take a long-term approach to development and to look further into the future.

Sámi film education is not well established. ISFI has the most extensive expertise, professional ability and networks to organise education. The interviewees working in the Sámi film industry felt that ISFI's role in their own careers and in the development of the industry as a whole is very important. The training programmes organised by ISFI allowed them to network with other Sámi film professionals across borders. The interviewees also highlighted the importance of discussing Sámi film and related issues internally, among the Sámi.

ISFI must be involved, and they must negotiate, push forward and provide funding to keep the film education alive. ISFI is an agile organisation, and it can respond quickly to education needs. The institution plays a key role in the industry, and it's active in all stages of the education and career paths. ISFI's prestige and visibility enable it to act as a pioneer. In the future, it's essential to focus resources on the most important educational aspects. These

include ensuring the stability and continuity of education, raising awareness and creating opportunities for children and young people in the film industry, deepening existing professional skills and enabling networking throughout the Sámi region.

Sámi University of Applied Sciences' film and media education

In the Sámi region, in addition to the Sámi Education Institute and ISFI, filmmaking can also be studied at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences (Sámi allaskuvla) in Kautokeino. From 2018 to 2021, a 25-credit filmmaking studies programme was available, and it could be included as part of a Bachelor's Programme in Indigenous Journalism. At that time, the filmmaking and journalism studies were led by Liv Inger Somby. She has decades of experience in the film and media industry, especially when it comes to the Sámi and other Indigenous peoples. Currently, the Sámi University of Applied Sciences offers two 10-credit courses on filmmaking per academic year in cooperation with ISFI. The autumn course focuses on screenwriting and storytelling, while the spring course focuses on creating and producing a short film. The courses can be integrated into different bachelor degree programmes as elective or supportive courses. They are particularly suitable for journalism and media students.

A renewed journalism programme will kick off at the university in the autumn of 2023. The Bachelor's Programme in Sámi Journalism will be more practical, and the studies will largely be conducted as work-based learning. NRK Sápmi, SVT Sápmi and Yle Sápmi are working in cooperation with the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. The Master's Programme in Sámi Journalism from an Indigenous Perspective is a two-year programme held in English. The journalism programmes will no longer include filmmaking studies as separate courses or as course modules.



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Developing and constructing film education is more expensive than many other study modules. Developing Indigenous or Sámi studies requires the involvement of institutions with specific expertise in the field. The film and media industry is developing at a swift pace and keeping up requires planning well into the future.

In 2021, NRK Sápmi launched a talent and recruitment programme for Sámi-speaking people called Taleantaprográmma. In the first year, six people were selected for the programme. The programme was specifically looking for participants who spoke Southern or Lule Sámi, in addition to those who spoke Northern Sámi. From August to June, the participants develop and become more familiar with both the media industry and the Sámi languages. This year, six new talents representing the Southern, Lule and Northern Sámi languages participated in the programme. The programme, led by Mona Solbakk, has been successful in recruiting young Sámi people with language skills to the media industry. Yle Sápmi has also organised similar traineeship programmes for young Sámi-speaking people. According to the Head of Yle Sápmi Maiju Saijets, it's important for the development of Sámi journalism to have people of different ages and backgrounds working in the field. For example, the world's first Skolt Sámi podcast was created through Yle's trainee programme. Journalist Janica Gauriloff will start hosting the show after she was introduced to Sámi journalism through the programme. Similar talent and recruitment programmes would also benefit the Sámi film industry.

Film education is concentrated in the Kautokeino and Inari regions. The Southern Sámi region in particular is underdeveloped in this respect, although they carry a lot of knowledge that could be transferred to the Sámi film industry. Young people should also be inspired and encouraged to take their first steps into the industry. The Sámi Filmmakers' Association (SFS) has taken the initiative to address this issue. Just before the pandemic, the association mapped out aspects relating to young people's media education. Funding and implementation are in the works, but they've been delayed due to the pandemic. The idea is to have a media bus touring the Sámi regions in Norway and Sweden, and media and film



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workshops could be conducted as part of it. This would also employ local people who have knowledge and language skills and can relate to the young people's stories.

Education and career paths of Sámi film professionals

"Without a foundation there is no film."

A common factor among the film professionals interviewed was that they had learned the basics of filmmaking before attending higher education. This had been done through basic level education in vocational institutions or education centres, media workshops or personal hobbies. They established important networks and connections with people in the film industry early in their careers. Through these first connections, many gained work experience, funding and/or encouragement and support for working in the industry, which was important for the development of their careers. Many of the interviewees highlighted these early connections as a turning point in their careers.

Learning the basics at an early stage of a career and often at a young age was also seen as important because it was an opportunity to confirm one's own ability and motivation to work in the industry. After learning the basics, many interviewees went on to work in the film industry, progressing very quickly from assisting roles to more demanding ones. They got used to utilising multiple skills early on. Some interviewees went on to work in film or media, some applied for further education and some started a company and/or continued to work as freelancers. It's noteworthy that these options were not mutually exclusive. The education and career paths overlapped, forming a personal career path for each of them in becoming film professionals.

A common feature among all interviewees working in the Sámi film industry was that they had studied filmmaking or media at national film and media institutions in Sweden, Norway



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or Finland. The rationale for applying to national higher education institutions was that Sámi filmmakers can't work in isolation from the rest of the world. The tools and methods of filmmaking are based on Western concepts. Competition is fierce and the standard of filmmaking is high. The best education and skills are obtained from the best schools, with the best and most talented filmmakers. On the other hand, it hasn't been possible to study Sámi filmmaking in any higher education institutions at a degree level, only as individual courses and modules offered by the Sámi University of Applied Sciences.

"Filmmaking has been the best education and teacher"

There are numerous festivals in the film industry in which workshops, pitch and networking events, seminars and lectures are organised. From all the different film industry events, Indigenous film festivals around the world and Nordic film festivals were highlighted by the interviewees. In addition to film festivals, all the film professionals interviewed had taken part in workshops, seminars or production development workshops arranged by different organisations. In the film industry, skills need to be constantly updated and workshops allow people to immerse themselves in topics they are interested in. Education and work were not seen as separate activities, instead film projects built up professional skills throughout the different education and career stages. The film professionals began making their own films early in their career through short films created in schools or workshops.

Education needs in the Sámi film industry

Currently, Sámi film education is offered by the Sámi Education Institute with its media education programme, the Sámi University of Applied Sciences with its 20 credits worth of

elective courses and ISFI with its workshops and courses. When it comes to education, the growing Sámi film industry needs stability and continuity.

Projects addressing the low number of Sámi filmmakers have required work and effort from the Sámi themselves, and Finnish film and media institutions haven't seen the need to train the Sámi or other minorities (West, 2022). This is an unfortunate reality. Currently, there are quotas for Sámi-speaking students in the Faculties of Law, Education and Art and Design at the University of Lapland and in the Faculties of Medicine, Science and Education at the University of Oulu. In 2020, news broke about the University of Lapland's decision to abolish these quotas, but the decision was overturned by the University of Lapland's Board of Directors. Responsibility for the education and availability of Sámi-speaking workers rests largely with the state. Key issues are the financing of education and cooperation with educational organisations. The Sámi film industry requires specific skills as well as knowledge of the Sámi language, culture and the film industry. Cooperation with educational organisations in the Sámi region is needed, but the responsibility for providing education cannot rest on them alone.

The education currently provided is inadequate, and its amount and content vary from year to year. The Sámi University of Applied Sciences is increasingly focusing on journalism in its bachelor's and master's degree programmes, with film education being a marginal part of it. Many different options for organising film education in the future emerged from the interviews. These solutions are not mutually exclusive, and education should be looked at broadly from the development of media skills and raising awareness in comprehensive school all the way to higher education. Education leading to a qualification or a degree should be provided by well-known, high-quality educational organisations and also educational organisations who are authorised to provide education.



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"And then you realise, ah! I don't have to do like they do. I can follow my heart. That's what it's like to be a film artist."

In the interviews, the possibility to study the basics of film in one's own language and culture in the Sámi region was deemed important. The inclusion of southern and peripheral areas of the Sámi region should also be improved when it comes to education. Identity and artistic expression should be strengthened in the early stages of a career, so that people learn to be proud of their own way of making films from the very beginning. Young people should be supported in finding their own voice and in doing things from their perspective. The film industry needs skilled, brave people with stories to tell. The interviewees felt that it was important to raise awareness among children and young people of the film and media industry as a career option. The development of high-quality basic education in the Sámi region could also increase the number of students in higher film education.

When film education is organised in the Sámi region, students learn how to make films in the northern weather and nature, among the Sámi people and culture. During education programmes, networks with Sámi film professionals and partners would naturally develop. The possibility of combining studies and work should be taken into account when planning the programmes. Many young people are also working in the traditional trades, and they should have equal access to education. Attention should be paid to recruiting students and informing them about educational opportunities, so that students would apply from all over the Sámi region.

The question regarding the language of instruction in education is a complex one. The bachelor's degrees at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences are conducted in Northern Sámi and the master's degrees in English. The language of instruction for the 25-credit filmmaking studies programme was English, but other languages were also used by visiting teachers. Interpretation services were also used when necessary, which increased costs significantly. The language used in the films was always Sámi. The language of instruction in the Sámi Education Institute's media education is Finnish. If the language of instruction was



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English, Sámi-speaking people from all over the Sámi region could apply and then use the Sámi language they know in their work. Organising studies in Northern Sámi would pose problems, since it would make it more difficult for people who speak other Sámi languages to apply. The differences between the Sámi languages are quite extensive, and it might not be possible to teach students who don't know Northern Sámi. In the film and media industry, the use of English is common and its terminology well developed. Therefore, English as a language of instruction could be a natural choice. Young people in particular have a good language proficiency in English. One of ISFI's definitions of a Sámi film is that one of the Sámi languages must be used as the main language. The visibility and inclusion of different Sámi languages in the Sámi film and media industry is important. NRK Sápmi's talent programme discussed earlier and Yle Sápmi's youth programme Sohkaršohkka are great examples of this.

The majority of Sámi film and media professionals have been trained outside the Sámi region. There are several renowned national film schools in the Nordic countries. In Finland, film education can be studied at a higher education level at Aalto University's Department of Film and Stage Design and at Tampere University of Applied Sciences' Department of Media and Arts (formerly Art and Communication, TTVO), among others. Media education can be studied at several universities and film education is often available as a minor study. The northernmost place where media education is available in Finland is at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, where the Faculty of Art and Design offers a Degree Programme in Audiovisual Media Culture. There are several prestigious higher education institutions in the Nordics, the northernmost being the Nordland School of Arts and Film in Lofoten, Norway.

There is a clear need for Sámi film education at a higher education level. It's worth considering whether filmmaking should be studied at Western higher education institutions or in Indigenous film schools. The Sámi region is directly linked to Canada and Alaska, where Indigenous perspectives prevail unlike in Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo, for example. Western film schools often teach that there's only one right way to make films. Filmmaking would not be so dependent on national policies and prevailing perspectives if Sámi or



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Indigenous film education existed as a formal educational option. The Sámi film community is part of a larger global Indigenous film community, and thus cooperation in developing film education would come naturally. Students could specialise in production, screenwriting or directing, for example. They would also learn practical skills during productions, such as filming and editing. In developing film education at a higher education level, the aim should be to reach the same standards as in the best Western film schools. Funding should allow the best teachers to be hired. Working in the Western film industry can also raise some questions, as the tools and methods of filmmaking are based on Western concepts. However, working in isolation is not a good option either, since we operate in a world where networking and competition are a natural part of the film industry.

The interviewees also called for internal discussion among Sámi filmmakers about Sámi film, its values and ethics. In the film industry, the focus has been on having the Sámi tell their own stories. In journalism, for example, the debate on what constitutes Indigenous journalism is much further advanced than in the film industry. This is not at the heart of the discussion when talking about education and it's not necessarily suitable to have ethical discussions in basic education. Covering these issues too soon can be paralysing when talking about young, novice filmmakers. The issues are also not addressed in basic film education in the West, however. The need to discuss Sámi filmmaking and related issues internally, among Sámi filmmakers, exists and became evident in the interviews as well.

When planning education, we should look further into the future, taking into account both the Sámi region and the global Indigenous community. There is a need for different levels of education. Cooperation should be established with the best educational organisations well-suited for partnerships. The Sámi Education Institute's role as a provider of Sámi film education and ISFI's expertise and networks are invaluable. Education should be developed to better support the rapidly growing Sámi film industry and Sámi filmmakers. Sámi film education should be available from basic to higher education level. The education programmes should also provide support for Sámi film professionals in networking and in learning new skills.

Employment needs in the Sámi film industry

"You have to be everything when you live here. You have to know every step of the film production."

Sámi film is at a crossroads. The number of productions is growing rapidly, with a dozen feature films and five series currently in production or development. The biggest challenge facing the Sámi film industry today is the labour shortage. The Sámi film industry is not able to respond to the growing interest and needs with sufficient volume and speed due to the lack of Sámi film professionals.

This view was also supported by the interviewees' experiences. There is a shortage of producers, especially from larger production companies. There is a shortage of cinematographers, photographers, editors, sound professionals, script supervisors, location managers and scouts, set designers, costume designers and actors. West (2022) also describes the issue in her master's thesis, saying it's clear there's a desperate shortage of Sámi screenwriters as well as producers, editors, cinematographers and sound professionals. There are often only one or two members of each profession, or none at all. West, for example, doesn't know a single Sámi film editor.

"Sámi film industry is bleeding money."

Producers and Sámi-owned production companies are needed since the producer owns the rights to the film and its revenue. If there are more Sámi producers, a greater share of the film revenue will remain in the Sámi region, which will benefit the Sámi film industry in the long run. The Sámi film industry bleeds money when non-Sámi production companies act as producers.



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Sámi film professionals are also urgently needed for other than the main functions (producer, screenwriter, director). The more people who don't speak Sámi or are unfamiliar with the culture are involved in film productions, the more additional work it requires from the Sámi professionals. At present, many professionals handle many different tasks themselves, because there is neither time nor resources to teach outsiders. Without knowing the language, it's also difficult if not impossible to manage many of the professional roles. The work of a cinematographer, for example, is artistic, and they need to sense the actors' emotional states. If the cinematographer doesn't know the language and doesn't have the sensitivity to understand what's happening, they can easily give up on the artistic standard. The small number of Sámi professionals poses another challenge. Professionals need to be used when creating a demanding film, because the risk of the material being damaged, for example, is too high. If a whole day's footage is damaged, for example, there's no budget or time to fix it. Many jobs require years of experience. An experienced editor, for example, has a profound knowledge of dramaturgy and screenwriting. Sámi film productions also need to consult outsiders on cultural matters regarding costume design and animation, for example.

On the other hand, not all jobs require years of experience or higher education, and people could be trained for these jobs through traineeship programmes, for example. In small productions, teams and budgets are so small that paid traineeships are not feasible. Involving a trainee also requires plenty of human and time resources, and many filmmakers are overworked as is. The increase in production traineeships should be financially supported. This would allow people to gain work experience and to network in the Sámi film industry early in their careers.

Competition for the funding of Sámi films remains fierce, although access to funding has become easier in recent years. Funding from the Finnish Film Foundation allows for the production of 20 films per year, which means that 1–2 Sámi films receive funding every year. The Swedish Film Institute currently funds minority films annually, which include Sámi films. There are also regional funds operating in Sweden, such as Filmpool Nord, which co-



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produces minority films in a number of languages, including Sámi, Romani and Meänkieli. The Norwegian Film Institute also funds Sámi film productions and supports the industry by funding ISFI, for example.

ISFI plays a key role in the funding of Sámi films. It constantly builds connections with Nordic and international funders. ISFI's role is important also because it makes it easier to obtain funding from elsewhere. Sámi films are difficult to fund especially when it comes to smaller languages and for them, the funding ISFI provides is vital. The Sámi film industry is increasingly making its voice heard in terms of filmmakers and funding, but funding is still needed to meet the needs of the growing industry.

Strengthening cooperation and international networks

"We have to think about film and how to strengthen Indigenous networking and the Indigenous way of telling stories."

The Sámi people are one nation divided into four countries. When planning and establishing Sámi film education, cooperation must cover the entire Sámi region. ISFI's vision is to build a sustainable and innovative Sámi film industry that is globally visible and attractive. ISFI works globally with the Indigenous film community and these connections have been important from the very beginning. The first Indigenous Film Conference was held in Kautokeino in 2011. The next conference was held in 2018 and a third one is planned for 2023. Global networks, seminars and collaborations strengthen the Sámi film industry and enable the entire Indigenous film industry to develop at an international level in the future.

To fund and support filmmakers across the Arctic region, ISFI has set up the Arctic Indigenous Film Fund (AIFF). It has established partnerships throughout the Circumpolar Arctic, including Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. AIFF's



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mission is to provide inclusiveness, a platform and job opportunities for Indigenous youth, as well as to reach out to young people from the most remote communities and offer them new ways to be seen and heard.

The Sámi Education Institute's collaborative networks extend beyond the Sámi to the northern Indigenous peoples. Global cooperation is particularly important when planning higher education. If the film education would focus more broadly on Indigenous film, it would allow people from all over to apply to the programmes.

In Sweden, for example, where the film industry is more developed compared to Finland, municipalities actively cooperate with film professionals. In Norrbotten County, film professionals cooperate with education providers and they in turn cooperate with each other. The states and local municipalities should also be involved more closely in developing the Sámi film industry. In Finland, this would include the municipalities in the Sámi region, meaning Inari, Utsjoki, Enontekiö and Sodankylä. There are also encouraging examples from around the world of state involvement in supporting the Indigenous film industry. In Canada, the Indigenous Screen Office was founded with an annual budget as big as the Finnish Film Foundation's. A percentage of the annual budget of the National Film Board of Canada also goes to the Indigenous film industry. As was established before, Sweden has organised funding for minority films better compared to Finland.

When developing Sámi film education, it would be important to emphasise Nordic and international cooperation and to develop programmes for different education levels. It's important that partners have expertise in Sámi issues as well as in the film and media industry. In addition to educational organisations, other institutions can also act as partners. We have already discussed partners such as the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, NRK Sápmi, SVT Sápmi and Yle Sápmi. Next, we'll go through some possible partners for developing Sámi film education in the future.



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University of Lapland

The mission of the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi is to be a creative pioneer and a responsible Arctic University Community by 2030. The University of the Arctic, UArctic, is one of their strategic partners. Through cooperation in education, research and outreach, the UArctic network enhances human capacity in the North, promotes viable communities and sustainable economies, and forges global partnerships. Multidisciplinary Sámi studies are part of the research activities of all faculties in the University of Lapland. In its research and teaching activities, the university approaches Sámi issues from the perspective of the Sámi society's own structures and viewpoints, and more broadly as part of national, international and Indigenous scientific discussions.

The University of Lapland's Faculty of Art and Design has a Degree Programme in Audiovisual Media Culture, taught by Timo Haanpää. The students major in Media Science, and the minor studies are comprised of multimedia, moving image and game design and technology. Cooperation with various institutions takes place in the form of projects. The Education and Development Services unit of the University of Lapland is an experienced project operator. In addition to successful regional development projects, the unit has implemented several international projects. The development of education export in cooperation with other educational institutions in the region is also a topical issue at present.

Higher education is needed in the Sámi film and media industry in the future. The University of Lapland plans to apply for project funding in order to create a master's degree in film and media education with Indigenous storytelling and digital media as central themes. The language of instruction would be English, and the programme would be international and strongly based on media science. ISFI and the Sámi Education Institute would act as partners in the programme, as they both have specific expertise in Sámi and Indigenous education.



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Kalix folkshögskola

The school system in Sweden and Norway is similar to that in Finland, although there are some differences as well. All countries have extensive education systems regarding folk high schools. The study programmes of these schools (folkshögskola, folkehøgskole) mainly correspond with the Sámi Education Institute's media education programme. In Northern Sweden and Northern Norway (Norrbotten, Troms og Finnmark, Nordland), there aren't many media programmes taught in folk high schools. In Northern Norway, the programmes deal with performing arts, acting and photography. In Norrbotten county in Sweden, the film and series production programme at Kalix folkhögskola is very similar to the Sámi Education Institute's media education. Anders Durvall has taught the programme since 1998, and he has decades of experience in the film and media industry. The programme lasts for a year, and the language of instruction is Swedish. The maximum number of students per year is 16, ranging from the young to the over 50-year-olds. In the past, the programmes were taught face-to-face at Kalix. For the last few years, however, they've been organised as blended studies, with six weeks of face-to-face study per year. This has increased the number of applicants to the programme.

The programme has also hosted students who speak Meänkieli and Sámi. They often use their own language in assignments, although the teaching is mainly in Swedish. Visiting teachers have an opportunity to get to know the students and to meet future professionals. The students in turn create valuable contacts in the film and TV industry especially with regard to traineeships and jobs. The school also works closely with Filmpool Nord. There's a large film industry cluster in Norrbotten, and the shift in productions from making films to making more series has increased the duration of productions and the need for labour. During the year-long programme, students complete a ten-week traineeship. Study programmes at Kalix folkhögskola don't lead to a degree, but students receive a certificate of their studies. Attention is also be paid to distributing the students' films. For example, students participate in a short film competition at the Minutfilmsfestivalen and visit the



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Novemberfestivalen in Trollhättan, where they can meet other newcomers in the film industry.

Kalix folkhögskola has collaborated with local schools and worked with the acting students at Luleå University of Technology and composition students at the School of Music in Piteå, for example. They have also visited local schools in Tornio and Rovaniemi.

Filmpool Nord

Filmpool Nord (FPN) is Sweden's second largest regional centre for film and television production and a pioneer in regional film production. FPN develops, co-produces and funds feature films, TV series, documentaries and short films. In addition, FPN is a resource centre for film, which means that they are actively involved in children and youth work in the region as well as in screening and distributing films. Katja Härkönen acts as a script consultant and production advisor for FPN, and she is responsible for fictitious short films and documentaries of all lengths. Härkönen is originally from Finland and prior to her current job, she's worked in television, as a documentary director and as a script consultant in Oulu, among other places. Almost all of Sweden's national minorities are present in Norrbotten: Sámis, Swedish Finns, Meänkieli speakers and Romani people. FPN has always co-produced films in minority languages, and when it comes to minority films, it is clear that the point of view must come from within the community. FPN organises and participates in many film events and festivals as a funder and producer. There is a large film industry cluster in Norrbotten, and FPN maintains a list of film professionals, which includes about 200 individuals. This listing could also serve as a benchmark for better coordination of Sámi film professionals.



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Skábma Film Centre and Sámi language and cultural centres

The Indigenous Peoples' Film Centre Skábma is a regional resource centre for the film and audiovisual industry operating within the Finnish Sámi Parliament in Inari. Developed around the Skábmagovat film festival, the Skábma Film Centre was established in 2009 and that's when its operations were first mentioned in the Finnish Sámi Parliament's annual report. In 2009, the Ministry of Education granted €30,000 for a media education project targeting Sámi children and €18,000 for the development and marketing of Sámi film production. In addition, the National Council for Audiovisual Art presented a special grant of €14,000 for regional film activities. During the first year of operation, the film centre focused on film education for children and young people, education of Sámi filmmakers, distributing Sámi films and building international relations.

Currently, their operations are funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The film centre's mission is to support Sámi film and TV productions, organise film education and organise screenings and distributions. The Skábma Film Centre continues to be involved in the organisation and development of the Skábmagovat film festival. Since 2005, the festival has put together a day for children and youth, which has become an established feature of the event.

Several municipalities have Sámi language and cultural centres in the Sámi region. The Sámi Cultural Centre Sajos in Inari is the Parliament House of the Finnish Sámi as well as a cultural, educational and competence centre. Giellagárdi is a Sámi language centre established during the Deanuleagis sámástit project in Utsjoki in the spring of 2022. Several Sámi language and cultural centres also operate in Norway and Sweden. Oskar Östegren, who has worked as a producer, screenwriter and director in the Sámi film industry, works at the Sámi centres Aejlies in Tärnaby and Sijti Jarnge in Hattfjelldal. These cultural centres focus on language, but also more broadly on art. There is a need to focus especially on young people in the future. Due to geographical locations, cooperation between the Norwegian and Swedish Sámi regions works well. Through the Sámi language and cultural



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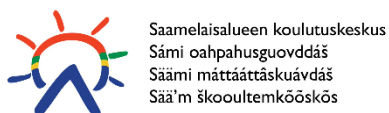
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centres, it would be possible to reach vast amounts of young Sámi people in the Sámi regions when developing Sámi film and media education.

Strengthening networks of Sámi filmmakers

The Sámi people are one nation divided into four countries, and the Sámi film industry should increasingly strengthen its transnational activities. The film industry in Sweden is more developed than in the other countries of the Sámi region. In Norway, however, ISFI is a more visible and respected institution, and there is better support for Sámi films compared to Sweden and Finland. In Russia, the situation is the weakest of all. The different Sámi languages also make cooperation challenging, since the smaller ones are often only spoken locally.

The number of Sámi filmmakers is small, and there is a great need for cooperation and networking. Indigenous film conferences have, therefore, focused on global networking. There is also a need for networking within the Sámi film industry, however. Many events also focus on fundraising, but there is a need for an internal platform where the demands and perspectives of others can be momentarily forgotten. The Sámi Filmmakers' Association (Sámi Filbmabargiid Searvi, SFS) has put effort into improving networking, but the pandemic period has brought its own challenges. SFS has worked with ISFI and also more broadly with Sámi artists in various fields. SFS is part of the Sámi Artist Council (Sámi Dáiddárráđđi, SDR), which was established in 1987 and acts as a general secretariat for Sámi art organisations. SDR also promotes and financially supports the professional development of individual artists. To achieve this, the council manages the Sámi Parliaments' artist grants, for example. In addition to these associations, an active player in the Sámi film and media industry is the Sámi Journalist Association (Sámi Journalisttaid Searvi, SJS), which organised the first ever Sámi Media Festival (Sámi Media Festivála) in Kautokeino in 2021.



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The goal of the Sámi Media Festival is to provide a platform for increasing cooperation and promoting media development from a Sámi perspective. SJS is the only Sámi-speaking organisation that aims to bring together Sámi journalists and media professionals from across the Sámi region. Many Sámi film professionals also work or have worked in Sámi media. SFS is an association for Sámi filmmakers, while SJS is an association for all media professionals. The relationship between the two is an interesting one, and merging operations might give filmmakers better opportunities to network with each other.

The interviews revealed the need for networking among professionals, but also among young people and newcomers to the Sámi film industry. As the labour shortage extends to almost all roles, there's a need for grass-root events where directors could meet with actors, cinematographers or editors, for example. There is a particularly vast shortage of Sámi-speaking actors in the industry. It would be important to attract people from all over the Sámi region to these events, and associations and other organisations could play an important role when it comes to recruitment and marketing. The events could be quite relaxed in nature, as it would work better than hosting a seminar where the formal programme is time-consuming. Workshops could be organised in connection with the events, although time should be left for people to get to know each other.

There are good examples of such events. In 2022, the Tampere Film Festival organised a speed dating segment for actors and professionals. The event required pre-registration, and each director/producer/casting director had a couple of minutes to talk to each actor. The event was organised by the Association of Finnish Film Directors (SELO) and the Actors in Tampere association. A similar segment could be organised in the Skábmagovat film festival or the Sámi Media Festival. Pitch events are also a common occurrence in the film industry. For example, the North Pitch - Below Zero, organised in conjunction with the Tromsø International Film Festival, is an international pitch event for documentary projects focusing on life above the Arctic Circle. PITCH 22 is another example, and it was organised for the fourth time this year. PITCH is a meeting place for aspiring film professionals, funders, production companies and other industry operators. The event showcases film schools'



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diploma films and introduces filmmakers transitioning to the industry. There is a particular need in the Sámi film industry for an event where newcomers could meet professionals already working in the industry.

Conclusions

Earlier, I referred to West's (2022) description of the historic waves of Sámi film, the first one being in the late 80s with the huge success of Nils Gaup's *Ofelaš - Pathfinder*. The second wave of Sámi film can be thought to have been born in 2003, with Liisa Holmberg establishing film education at the Sámi Education Institute in Inari. West (2022) sees the third wave as having emerged with the establishment of ISFI ten years ago, as they started to organise film courses and filmmaking education. The second and third waves also saw the arrival of filmmakers trained outside the Sámi region.

Liisa Holmberg (2019), in an article for Shared Voices Magazine 2019, states that the film industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. One of the main issues facing Indigenous communities is the lack of opportunities for young people to study or work in their home regions. The key to building a sustainable professional foundation for the film industry lies in education.

I dare say that the fourth wave of Sámi film is close at hand. This is indicated by the rapid growth of the Sámi film industry, the increasing international interest, the growth of funding and the emergence of new partnerships, such as the creation of AIFF in 2018. There is a desire to develop permanent and high-quality Sámi film education, taking into account the Sámi region as a whole. Networks of Sámi filmmakers need to be strengthened across borders, and more opportunities should be created for discussing Sámi filmmaking and related issues internally, among Sámi filmmakers. Important platforms for networking are the Sámi Media Festival, held for the first time in 2021, and the Indigenous Film Conference,



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which is planned to be held for the third time in 2023. Hopefully, we can look back and see that the educational solutions of the coming years were key factors to the emergence of the fourth wave of Sámi film and the growth of the film industry in line with the values and ethics of the Sámi community.

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25.5.2022 Timo Haanpää, University of Lapland

31.5.2022 Lisa-Marie Kristensen

2.6.2022 Liisa Holmberg, ISFI

10.6.2022 Suvi West

14.6.2022 Katja Härkönen, Film pool Nord

15.6.2022 Ken Are Bongo

16.6.2022 Oskar Östergren Njajta

20.6.2022 Inker Anni Sara, Sámi allaskuvla

27.6.2022 Anne Lajla Utsi, ISFI

30.6.2022 Liv Inger Somby, Sámi allaskuvla

1.9.2022 Erkki Feodoroff, Sámi Education Institute

13.9.2022 Anders Durvall, Kalix folkhögskola

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