

8 Sami Student-Teacher Ratio

Kevin Johansen, MSc. UiT/Universidad de Granada. Senior Advisor at the Office of the County Governor in Nordland

Summary:

There is little quantitative knowledge about the Sami student-teacher ratio in Norway. Many hold that there is a considerable shortage of Sami teachers and others have claimed that Sami teachers lack formal teaching accreditation. This article surveys the number of South, Lule and North Sami teachers there are in Norway at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school levels.

The article also registers the formal competency of each Sami teacher in both pedagogy and Sami language. The survey shows that many Sami teachers lack formal pedagogical qualifications when compared to other teachers in Norway. At the same time, we see that formal competence in the language is at a very high level.

The student-teacher ratio for Lule Sami is high. It is at the same level as for the rest of Nordland and actually higher than that in Bodø. This shows that there is a clear shortage of teachers with competence in Lule Sami.

The lower student-teacher ratio for North and South Sami makes the situation not as precarious in the short term. However, the average age of Sami teachers point to a significant number of them retiring in the next ten years, and the number of applicants to Sami teacher training has been extremely low. Therefore, if recruitment to Sami teacher education does not significantly increase, we risk having much fewer Sami teachers in 10-20 years than today.

8.1 Introduction

Sami education at school and day care is one of the most important initiatives to ensure more Sami speakers in Norway in the future. To achieve this goal, it is crucial to have an adequate teaching work force in Sami so that school owners can offer Sami education to all who have a right to it. Teachers should have competence in pedagogy as well as Sami language at the same level as those teaching other languages at school.

Few surveys have been conducted to find out the number of Sami speaking teachers in Norway. Knowledge about the number of teachers, their competence and the predicted need for Sami speaking teachers in the years to come are essential in order to decide which measures to take so that Sami students' rights to a Sami education are fulfilled.

This article includes every Sami schoolteacher in Norway and his/her competencies in pedagogy and language. In other words, this article gives an overview over all Sami teachers in Norway, in each of the three languages. For Lule and South Sami, we have included teachers who teach Sami as well as accredited teachers who speak Sami but do not currently teach the subject. We did this in order to predict the number of teachers who might be leaving the work force in the near future. Lastly, we have prepared a prognosis on how many Sami teachers we will need to educate in the years to come, as well as made recommendations on necessary measures to ensure adequate recruitment of Sami teachers.

8.1.1 Limitations

The article focuses on teachers *of* Sami, meaning those who teach Sami according to the curriculums in first or second language at the primary and lower secondary level. We do not look at day care teachers nor secondary school teachers with a master's degree, assistant professors or professors at the college or university level. The reason for this limitation is that it is at the primary and lower secondary levels that the right to a Sami education is established and local governments are completely dependent on having an adequate number of Sami teachers to fulfil their legal obligations.

8.2 A Historical Perspective on Teacher Training

Today's Sami teachers have followed various educational paths. Originally, the term *teacher* only referred to those teaching at the primary and lower secondary level (and at former elementary school equivalents such as *folkeskole*, etc.), while those who taught at the gymnasium and upper secondary school levels were called *lektor* or *overlærere* (head teachers). The term *adjunkt* was used for those whose level of education was something in between (Wikipedia.org).

The first teacher training courses were conducted already at the end of the 1700's. These courses increased in scope after the law regarding *allmueskolen* was passed in 1860. The first public course in teacher education, a two-year *seminar*, was established in Trondenes in 1826. The first law about teacher education came in 1890. In 1902, teacher education became a three-year program and in 1938, a four-year program. Then, in 1973, the general teacher-training program (*allmennlærerutdanninga*) reverted to being a three-year program, and in 1992, a four-year program once more (Store Norske leksikon).

Sami teachers today have consequently followed different educational paths. We can assume that the oldest Sami teachers are *allmennlærere* (general teachers) in accordance with the education program that was established in 1973. More recent teacher education programs include *grunnskolelærerutdanning* divided into grades 1-7 and 5-10, *lektorutdanning*, *praktisk-pedagogisk utdanning* (PPU) and *faglærer*, which is a one year pedagogical training program for teaching specific subjects at the primary, lower and upper secondary school levels. From 2017, *grunnskolelærerutdanning* became a five-year master's program. Pilot programs have already been established at certain educational institutions.¹ There will be stricter requirements on quality and competency for teacher training institutions. Several institutions today do not yet comply with the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education's (NOKUT) requirements for teacher training that will go into effect in 2017 (Valle and Nilsen 2016).

In 1999, Professor Jens-Ivar Nergård led a committee that developed an official Norwegian report (NOU) on Sami education, *Samisk lærerutdanning – mellom ulike kunnskapstradisjoner* (Sami Teacher Training – between Various Knowledge Traditions). The committee recommended the development of a separate framework plan for Sami teacher training.

¹ Feature article April 21, 2016 in Avisa Nordland: Det er viktig at det gis lærerutdanning i Nordland by Professor Anne Marit Valle and Docent Nils Ole Nilsen.

8.3 Pedagogical Competence

In this article, we do not distinguish between the different educational programs but collect them all under the term *pedagogical training*. The Sami Parliament has appointed Sami experts to the framework plan committee for all the current teacher-training programs. Recently, a new framework plan for a five-year Sami teacher-training program at the master's level was developed.

8.4 Competence in Sami

The second focus of this article is to survey the extent of formal language competence among Sami teachers. Today, a minimum of 30 credits in Sami (the equivalent of a half-year program) are necessary to teach at the primary school level and 60 credits (the equivalent of a one-year program) at the lower and upper secondary level. Consequently, formal qualifications are required in Sami, in the same way that one could not teach Norwegian simply because one spoke the language. Formal requirements are now changing so that competency requirements do not just apply to newly employed teachers but to all who teach subjects such as Sami, Norwegian, Math and English, cf. Education Act §10-2 and Education Act Regulations chapter 14.

Formerly, it was sufficient to be a general teacher to teach all subjects at the primary and lower secondary level. This meant that one could be a Sami teacher without speaking a word of Sami. Until 2025, it will be possible to receive an exemption from this requirement so that those who were hired before the new law came into effect, have time to acquire the necessary formal accreditation now needed to teach. This exemption is not part of the Education Act but is allowed under the *Lærerløft*, a reform to ensure that students learn more (regjeringen.no).

Sami distance learning teachers have an extra competence requirement related to distance education didactics and use of technical tools for teaching. These requirements are embodied in the *Rammeverk for samisk fjernundervisning* (Framework for Sami Distance Education) and all distance learning teachers must acquire these competencies by 2020 (utdanningsdirektoratet.no).

8.5 Responsibility for Sami in Teacher Training Programs

Several institutions are responsible for ensuring the education of Sami language teachers. Sami University College is extremely important with its Sami teacher training program. Without their program, it would be difficult for school owners to offer quality Sami education to students with the right to it.

UiT The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) has also become an important player in educating Sami teachers. Nord University, an amalgam of the University of Nordland, Nesna University College and Nord-Trøndelag University College, now has responsibility for both Lule and South Sami teacher training (the earlier institutions University of Nordland and Nord-Trøndelag University College had national responsibility for Lule and South Sami respectively). Looking briefly at, for example, the history of Lule Sami teacher education, the first language course was offered at the former Bodø Teacher University College in the 1980's, while the first 30-credit program started in the fall of 1989.

8.5.1 Today's Sami Teacher Education²

Sami University College offers a general teacher-training program and a one-year undergraduate teacher-training program (PPU). UiT offers North Sami as a foreign language in their teacher-training program for grades 5-10 and a master's program for those with Sami as a mother tongue. Nord University offers a primary and lower secondary teacher-training program for grades 1-7 and 5-10 as well as PPU which can be combined with Lule or South Sami.

The number of applicants to Sami teacher-training programs are sometimes quite low. In the 2015-2016 school year, UiT had no applicants for its five-year teacher-training program combined with a master's in Sami (Altaposten, 24.2.16). Sami University College has also struggled with very low numbers in its Sami teacher-training programs over the last few years. Language courses for Lule and South Sami are not integrated with teacher-training programs so data cannot be collected from public statistics providers like *dbh.no*.

8.5.2 Extent of Sami Teacher-Training Programs

It is difficult to ascertain exactly how many North Sami speakers who have completed a teacher-training program are still of working age. As mentioned above, we estimate that most Sami speaking teachers still working have completed the three-year general teacher-training program that was introduced in 1973. Separate Sami teacher-training programs were established much later, and Sami University College was, as mentioned, established in 1989. A number of Sami speakers completed a teacher-training program long before that time however, and some combined the program with Sami language courses at, for example, the University of Oslo when those courses were available.

In addition to those who have recently graduated from teacher-training programs at Sami University College and UiT, candidates may have also completed teacher-training courses at other institutions as described above. It has been difficult to collect data and calculate the size of this group. Therefore, statistics for North Sami are based on how many work as teachers at the primary and lower secondary level today and how many have completed teacher-training

programs at Sami University College and UiT, not the total number of teachers originally educated at the 20 institutions which offer teacher training in Norway.

The number of Lule and South Sami teachers is somewhat lower, and the author is well acquainted with the teaching milieu for these languages. We know exactly how many Lule and South Sami speakers have graduated teacher-training programs and how many work as teachers.

8.4.3 Gender Distribution

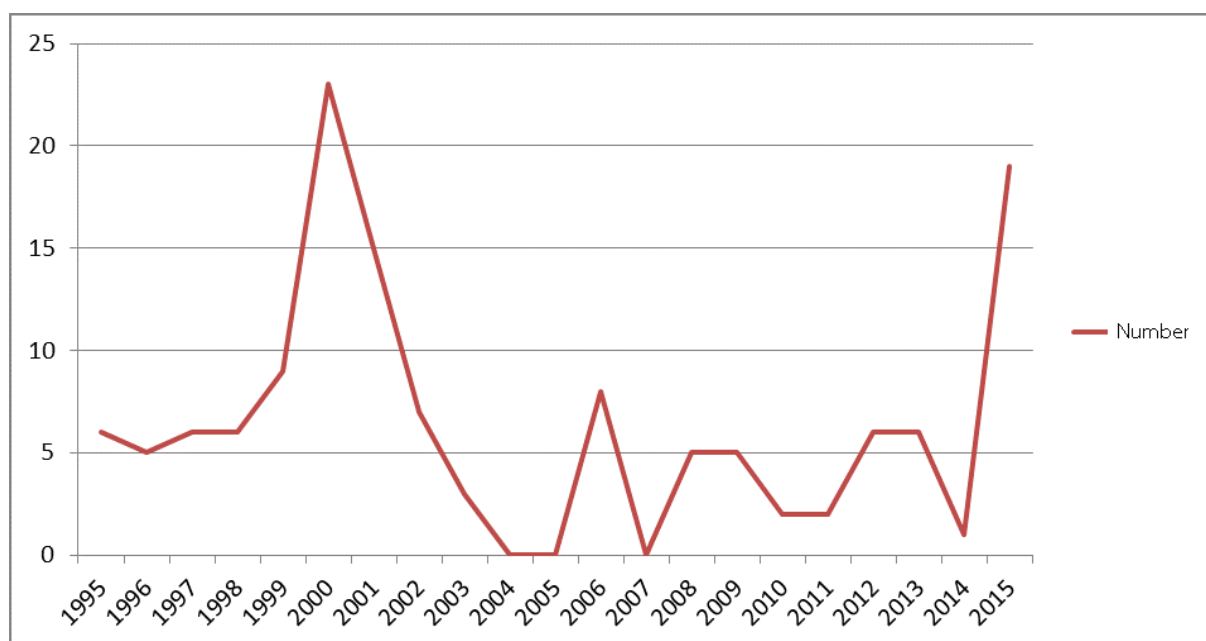
Teaching is a female dominated profession. The lower the grade level, the fewer the number of men taking the educational program and teaching. Nationally, 80% of grade 1-7 teachers are women with a bit lower percentage rate for grades 5-10. ³ The gender distribution for Sami teachers is even more lopsided. 8.5.4 Education of Sami Teachers

Table 8.1 Overview of Candidates who have Completed Teacher Training Programs at Sami University College in the last 21 years.

| Year | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Teacher Training ⁴ | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 23 | 15 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

| 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| 8 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 19 ⁵ |

Figure 8.1 Completed Teacher Training at the Sami University College



² Day-care teacher-training programs are not discussed here.

³ *Lærerutdanningene. Statistiske oversikter og utviklingstrekk*, NIFU-rapport 31, 2014.

Figure 8.1 shows that there are large fluctuations in the number of candidates who have completed Sami teacher-training programs.

UiT does not yet have any candidates who have completed their Sami teacher-training program because the program has not been offered for a sufficient number of years.

Nord University has existed for under one year, and the earlier institutions, University of Nordland, Nesna University College and Nord-Trøndelag University College, have all had teacher-training programs, but not specific to Sami. The number of educated Lule and South Sami teachers will emerge when we look at the different language groups.

8.5.5 Number of Students

In the 2015-2016 school year, 2,164 students had Sami instruction at the primary and lower secondary school level in Norway. Of these, 1,935 had North Sami as a First or Second Language. One hundred and thirteen students had Lule Sami and 116 had South Sami as a First or Second Language. In total, 86 municipalities, four independent schools and three state schools offer instruction in Sami in Norway⁶. This is 21% of Norway's municipalities, and the number of municipalities with students who take Sami has increased continuously.

8.5.6 Teaching Force

In this section, we look at the number of teachers who teach Sami at the primary and lower secondary level, as well as at the upper secondary school level. While a number of teachers work part-time, we do not distinguish between them and those who work full-time. This means that the number of work years is a bit lower than the number of teaching positions. We will also look at how many of the teachers have a pedagogical education and how many lack accreditation.⁷

We will describe teacher competence in Sami, emphasizing how many teachers have continuing education in the language. Continuing education gives formal credit points as opposed to supplementary training which does not so we will focus on that. We know that Sami teachers' competence is in demand in many quarters, and if we are to predict how many Sami teachers we will need in the future, we must also have an estimate of how many leave the profession.

8.5.7 Sources of Error

The statistics commented on in this article have not been published before. The author contacted over 80 municipalities and educational institutions in order to collect data. The number of

⁴ This number includes general teacher-training programs, primary and lower secondary teacher-training programs grades 1-7 and the one-year undergraduate teacher training programs for those who already have a vocational or general academic educational background (PPU).

⁵ Of the 19 who completed teacher training programs at the Sami University College in 2015, 18 were PPU students.

people who have a degree in teaching Sami is sure. This number is based on public statistics from *dbh*, a database for statistics on higher education.

We also know how many municipalities offer Sami classes. This data comes from the three northernmost County Governors. The County Governors in Troms and Nordland have the responsibility of allotting Sami class hours to their respective municipalities while the County Governor in Finnmark allots class hours to the municipality of Finnmark and to the rest of the municipalities outside of northern Norway.

However, there is no reliable way to calculate how many have teacher education from other institutions and Sami courses from one of the institutions named above. For example, a teacher may have taken teacher education in Stavanger and a language course in Tromsø. The author has a full overview for Lule and South Sami because of his personal knowledge of most of the Sami teachers.

The North Sami teacher milieu is much larger and the exact numbers are impossible to ascertain. Therefore, for North Sami, we will look only at those who currently work as teachers and describe their pedagogical and language competence. Percentagewise, it is possible to assume that the number of those who leave the profession is at around the same level as for Lule and South Sami. In addition, there are a number of North Sami-speaking teachers who teach only other subjects. This especially applies to the municipalities of Kautokeino and Karasjok which have 60 Sami speaking teachers who do not teach Sami.

⁶ Students in public schools and private schools follow different legislation in many areas. The Education Act applies to public schools, but the Private School Act applies to private schools. If a private school has not applied for approval to teach the Sami curriculum, students attending the school do not technically have the right to a Sami education.

⁷ The teacher-education programs included here are described above.

8.6 South Sami

Education in South Sami is mainly offered by six schools: Sameskolen for Midt-Norge, Sameskolen i Snåsa, Brekken oppvekst- og lokalsenter, Røyvik skole, Røros Upper Secondary School (Aajege) and Grong Upper Secondary School. Most of these schools have local instruction, distance learning, language gatherings and mobile teachers. Additionally, two schools have local South Sami teachers.

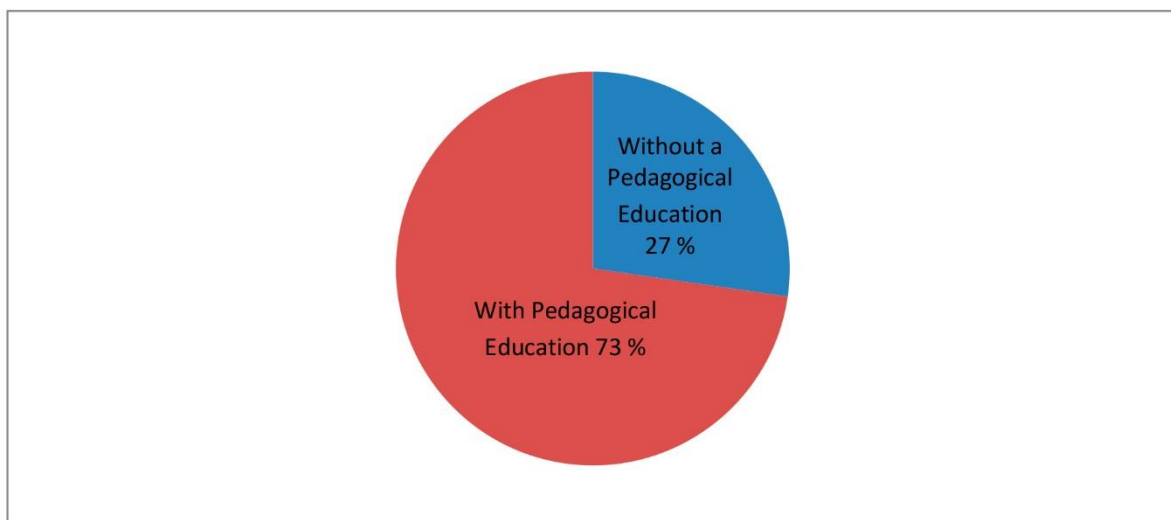
At the primary and lower secondary school level, 22 teachers teach Sami language. Sixteen of these have a pedagogical education while another sixteen have continuing education in Sami.

Beyond these numbers, there are three South Sami speakers who have teacher training but who do not work as teachers today. The average age for South Sami teachers at the primary and lower secondary school level is 44 years.

Table 8.2 South Sami Teachers at Primary and Lower Secondary School

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Total Number | 22 |
| With Pedagogical Competence | 16 |
| Further Education in Sami | 16 |

Figure 8.2 Portion South Sami Teachers in Primary and Lower Secondary School with and without a Pedagogical Education



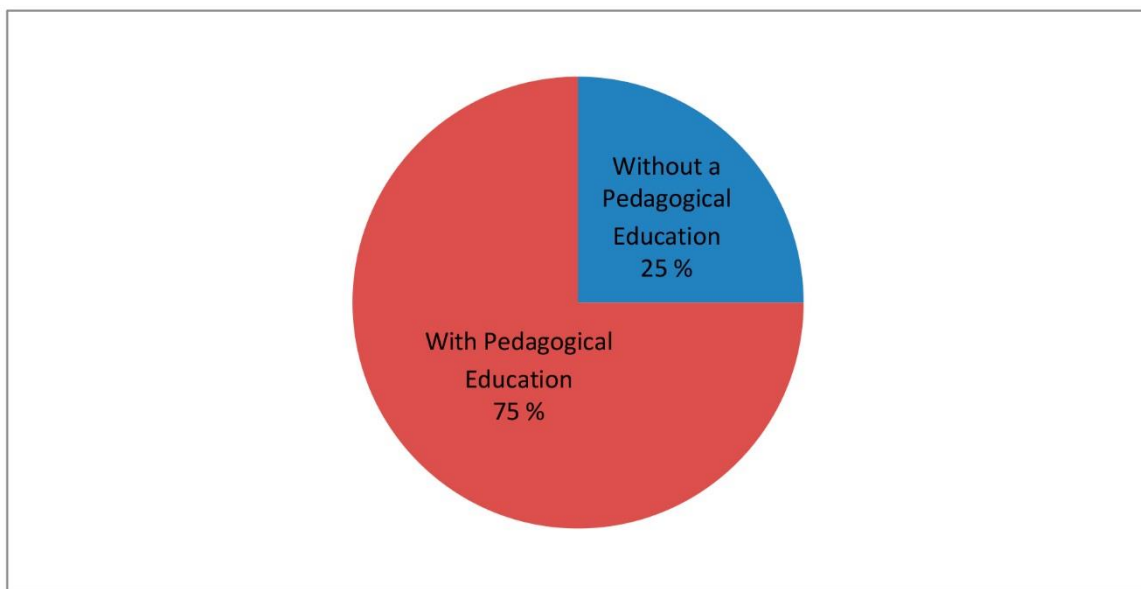
Eight teachers teach South Sami at the upper secondary school level. All have a pedagogical education as well as continuing education in South Sami. In other words, South Sami teachers at the upper secondary level are highly qualified.

The average age of South Sami teachers is 45 years. Few South Sami teachers are going to retire in the next couple of years, but many will retire in the next ten. We will come back to recruitment needs later in this article.

8.7 Lule Sami

Currently, there are eight Lule Sami teachers at the primary and lower secondary school level. Six have a pedagogical education and six have continuing education in Sami language.

Figure 5.3 Distribution of Lule Sami Teachers with and without a Pedagogical Education, Primary and Lower Secondary School



The average age of Lule Sami teachers in primary and lower secondary school is 49 years. There are some newly qualified teachers, but many are over the age of 60. There will therefore be a substantial need for Lule Sami teacher recruitment in coming years.

At the upper secondary level, there are seven Lule Sami language teachers. Three of these are qualified and six have continuing education in Lule Sami.

The average age of Lule Sami teachers in upper secondary schools is 39.25 years. This is significantly lower than for those at primary and lower secondary school and can be explained by the fact that fewer of them are formally qualified teachers.

There are ten Lule Sami speakers who are qualified to teach but do not currently do so. This means that there are more teachers that are qualified not teaching Sami than those who do. We will come back to this later in the article.

8.8 North Sami

In primary and lower secondary school, 189 teachers teach North Sami. Of these, 91% are qualified, while 124 (65%) have continuing education in Sami. In Sami administrative areas, most teachers are both qualified and have continuing education in Sami.

Figure 8.4 Portion of Qualified North Sami Teachers, Primary and Lower Secondary School

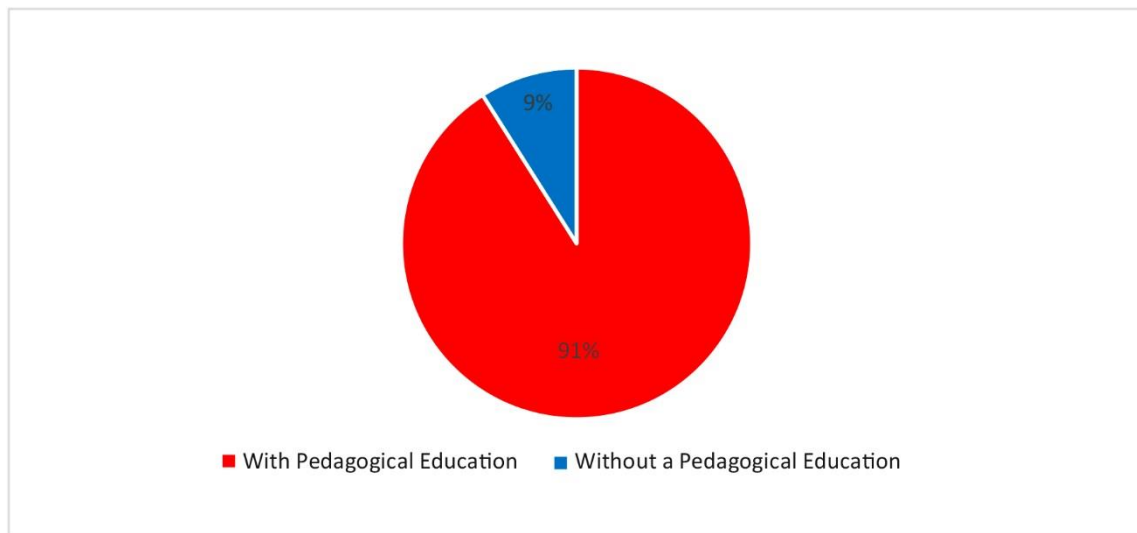
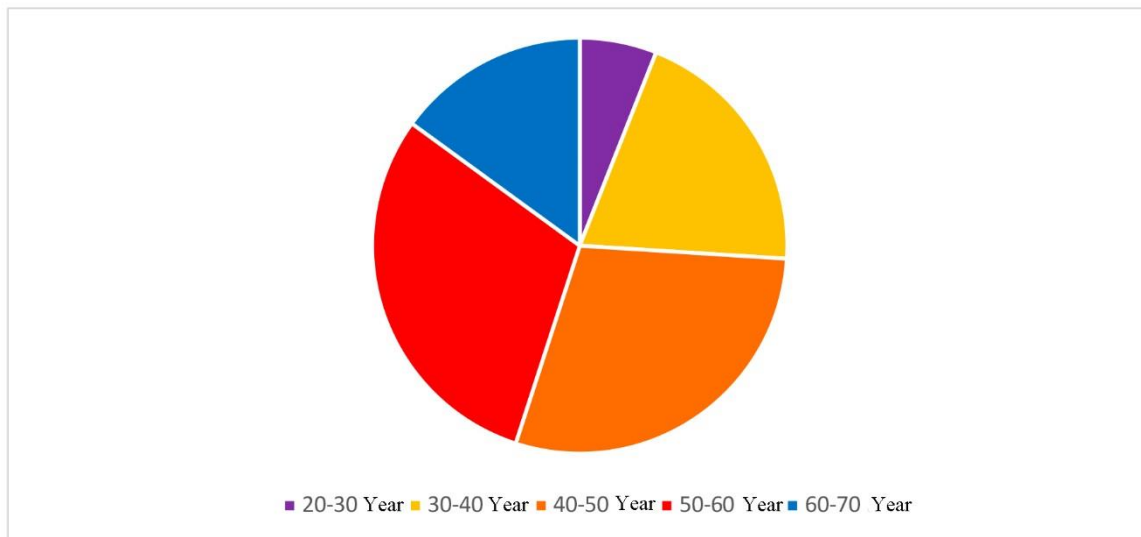


Figure 8.4 illustrates the portion of qualified North Sami teachers at the primary and lower secondary school level.

Table 8.3 Age Distribution of North Sami Teachers, Primary and Lower Secondary School

| Age | 20–30 years | 30–40 years | 40–50 years | 50–60 years | 60–70 years |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percentage | 6 % | 20 % | 29 % | 30 % | 15 % |

Figure 8.5 Age Distribution of North Sami Teachers, Primary and Lower Secondary School



This table shows that there are relatively few young teachers and that 74% of teachers are over the age of 40. One can conclude that few newly qualified North Sami teachers have been educated in the last few years, and that there will be a lag in the recruitment of Sami-speaking teachers.

There are forty-four North Sami teachers at the upper secondary school level. Of these, 38 are qualified while 33 have continuing education in Sami.

Figure 8.6 Portion of Qualified North Sami teachers, Upper Secondary School

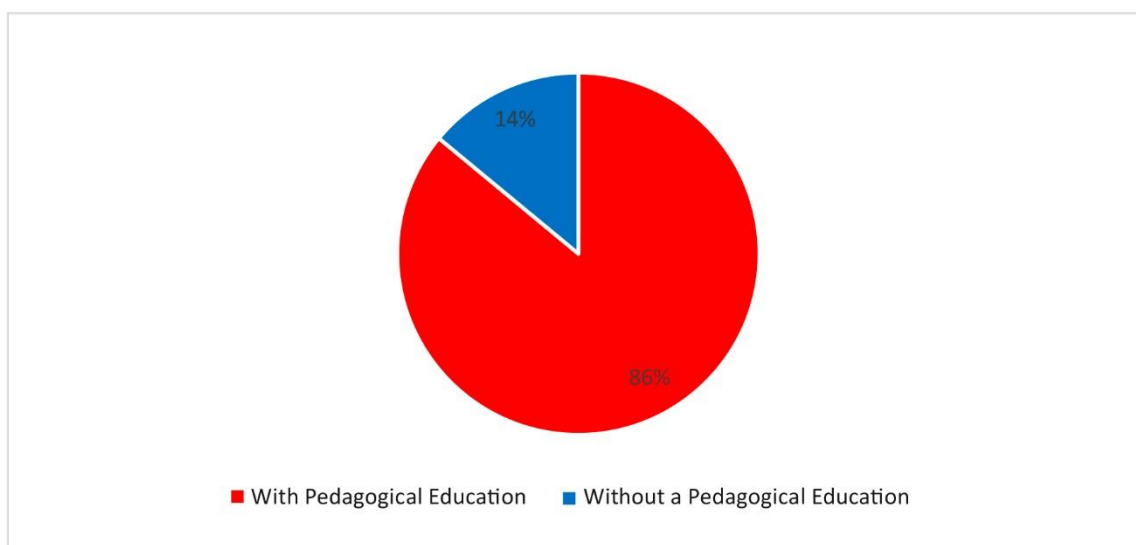
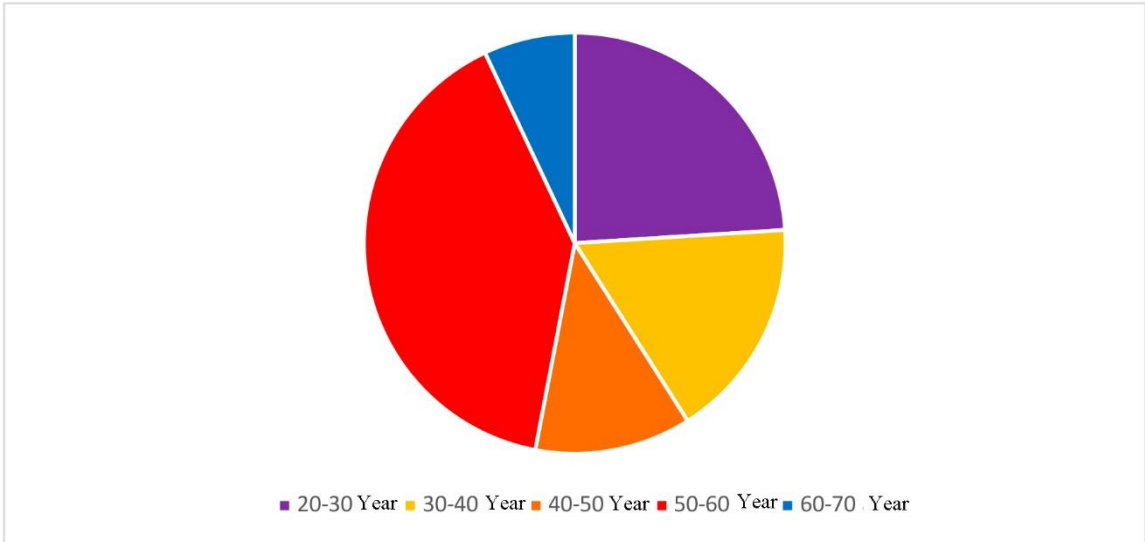


Figure 8.6 shows the portion of qualified North Sami upper secondary school teachers.

Table 8.4 Age Distribution of North Sami Teachers, Upper Secondary School

| Age | 20–30 years | 30–40 years | 40–50 years | 50–60 years | 60–70 years |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percentage | 24 % | 17 % | 12 % | 40 % | 7 % |

Figure 8.7 Age Distribution of North Sami Teachers, Upper Secondary School



At the upper secondary level, we see a much greater number of younger teachers. Over 40% are under 40 years of age, which means that a large portion of teachers probably has many decades left in the profession. At the same time, almost half of the teachers are over the age of 50. This indicates that there will nevertheless be a significant need to recruit new North Sami teachers at the upper secondary level as well. As we see from the figures above, North Sami has the highest portion of qualified teachers. This can be due to various reasons. First, there are many more North Sami speakers in Norway so it is easier to recruit North Sami teachers. Furthermore, North Sami has had a separate teaching program while potential Lule and South Sami teachers have had study Sami in addition to completing a teaching program.

8.9 Big Differences between Municipalities

The various municipalities display a clear difference regarding access to Sami education. Not surprisingly, there are more Sami teachers in Sami administrative areas, and that is natural because that is where there is a greater demand for teachers. It appears that these areas also have fewer challenges in recruiting new teachers than other municipalities. This applies especially to the North Sami area.

The municipalities of Kautokeino and Karasjok have the highest number of Sami teachers, with at least 35 teachers in each. As mentioned earlier, these municipalities also have a number of Sami speaking teachers who do not teach Sami but other subjects. At the other end, there are

16 municipalities which only have one Sami teacher. This is surprising. Sami education would be less vulnerable if most municipalities had more than one Sami teacher.

The further a municipality is from a Sami administrative area, the greater the challenges it faces in recruiting teachers. At the same time, there are communities outside of these areas which have succeeded in recruiting teachers because they have a clear strategy and use various incentives.⁸ Research shows that municipalities which include Sami teachers with other teaching staff at school, keep their Sami teachers more than municipalities in which Sami teachers work on their own.

8.10 Student-Teacher Ratio

Many experts contend that there is a correlation between student-teacher ratio and quality of education. This means that the quality of education increases if more teachers are hired. Reality, however, can be more complicated. Despite Norway having a relatively low student-teacher ratio, it does not show excellent PISA results.

Here, we have also seen that Northern Norway has a higher student-teacher ratio than the national average. In a recent study requested by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Centre for Economic Research at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) looked at the quality of upper secondary schools. The study measured seven indicators such as school points from primary and lower secondary school (*ranking points awarded to students applying to higher levels of education*), graduation rates, grades, etc. Northern Norway scores lower for educational quality than the rest of the country.⁹

Nevertheless, the student-teacher ratio says a lot about the resource situation at school, and without resources, it will be difficult to attain good learning outcomes. Many municipalities, especially outside of Sami administrative areas, say that they struggle with finding Sami teachers.

NOU 2000: 3 Samisk lærerutdanning states:

«...Sami schools must use teachers who lack a formal pedagogical education. The persistence of such situations represent a harmful circle for Sami schools. The attrition rate among qualified teachers may increase because of the additional load of guiding and advising unqualified teachers.” (p. 149)

As seen in this article, Sami schools have a larger portion of unqualified teachers. Nonetheless, one can say that this is less of a problem than before; the number of unqualified teachers is low, especially in North Sami areas. However, there is reason to fear that the portion of unqualified teachers will again increase if not more Sami teachers are educated at a higher rate than have been in recent years.

⁸ It is positive that municipalities work to recruit teachers. At the same time, at least in the short run, there is a *zero-sum game* where this leads to other municipalities losing teachers.

⁹ *Skolekvalitet I videregående opplæring*, SØF-rapport 01/16.

Table 8.5 Student-Teacher Ratios in Norway and Selected Counties, Primary and Lower Secondary School¹⁰

| County | Number of students per teacher |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Finnmark | 12,0 |
| Troms | 14,6 |
| Nordland | 14,2 |
| National Average | 16,8 |

The table shows that Northern Norway has a lower student-teacher ratio than the national average, with Finnmark having the lowest. In Finnmark, student-teacher ratio is 28.6% lower than in the rest of the country.

Table 8.6 Number of Sami Students, Primary and Lower Secondary School 2015-2016

| Language Group | Number of Students |
|----------------|--------------------|
| North Sami | 1935 |
| Lule Sami | 113 |
| South Sami | 116 |
| Total | 2164 |

The table shows the number of students in primary and lower secondary schools in Norway. It includes students who take Sami as a first as well as a second language. Similar statistics are not available for upper secondary schools.

Table 8.7 Student-Teacher Ratio for Sami Students, Primary and Lower Secondary School

| Language Group | Number of Students per Teacher |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| North Sami | 10,2 |
| Lule Sami | 14,1 |
| South Sami | 5,3 |
| Total | 9,9 |

Table 8.7 shows that there are much fewer students per teacher in South Sami areas than in Lule and North Sami areas. To a large extent, the reason for this is that communities are very spread out in South Sami areas, and many more students receive their Sami education through distance learning. Sami distance education is largely taught one-on-one with the student and teacher communicating through programs such as Skype. In addition, more Sami teachers in South Sami areas work part-time, combining teaching with other Sami language work.

Lule Sami has a student-teacher ratio identical to that in the county of Nordland. North Sami lies right in the middle between South and Lule Sami percentwise and a bit under Finnmark's average.

¹⁰This is calculated from so-called "group size 2", which is most representative of real size. This measures ordinary instruction without special education or special language instruction (not Sami).

Figure 8.8 Student Distribution for Distance Learning and Local (classroom) Instruction, South Sami

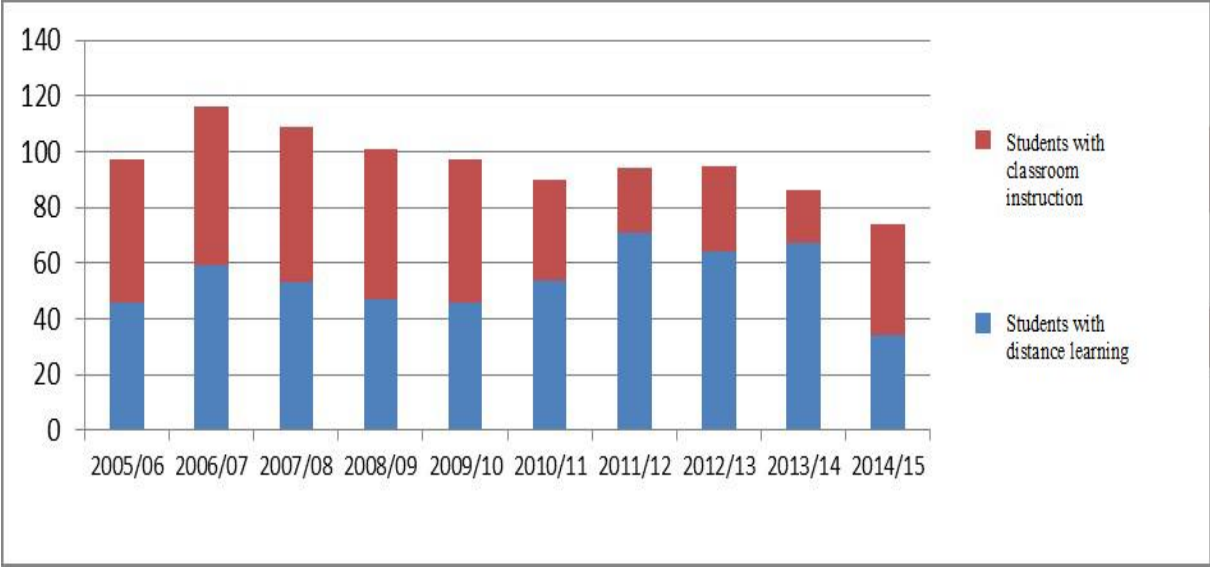
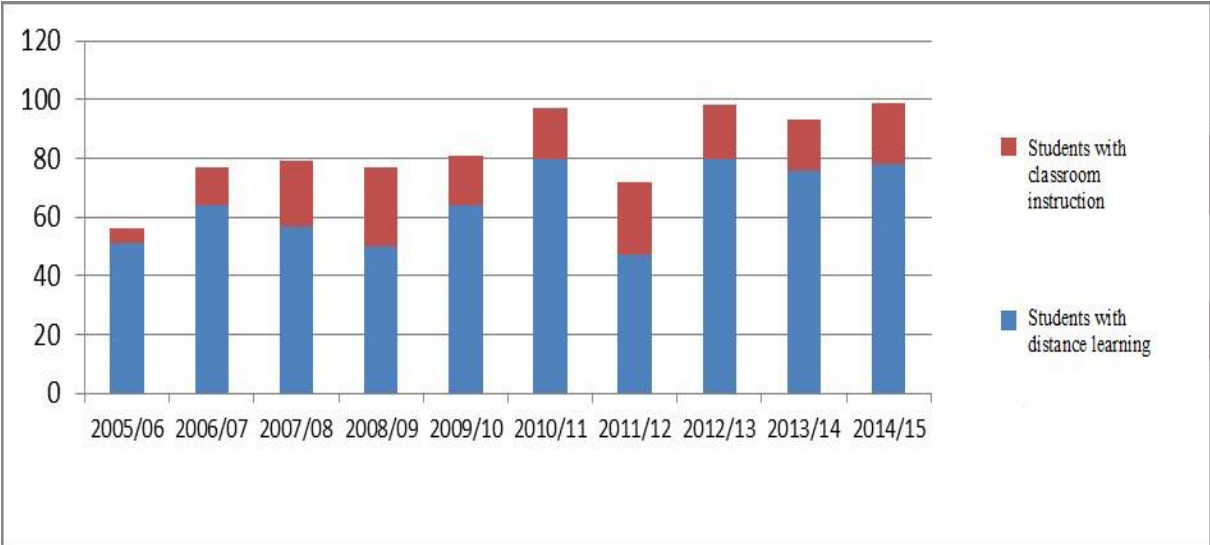


Figure 8.9 Student Distribution for Distance Learning and local Instruction, Lule Sami



Figures 8.8 and 8.9 show the difference between distance learning in Lule and South Sami education. As we see, very few students have distance education in Lule Sami while for many of the years, a large majority of South Sami students received their education through distance learning. This is reflected in the student-teacher ratio for the two language groups.

Table 8.8 Total Number of Sami Teachers

| Language | South Sami | Lule Sami | North Sami | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Primary and Lower Secondary | 22 | 8 | 189 ¹¹ | 219 |
| Upper Secondary | 8 | 7 | 44 | 59 |
| Total | 30 | 15 | 233 | Grand total: 278 |

Table 5.8 shows that the total number of teachers who teach Sami is 278. Of these, 84% teach North Sami. Five percent teach Lule Sami and 11% teach South Sami.

Seventy-nine percent of teachers teach at the primary and lower secondary school level.

8.11 Recruitment Needs

To specify the exact recruitment needs for Sami teachers in the next 10-20 years is an impossible task. An estimate will have to take into account a number of uncertain factors such as trends in the number of students, teacher attrition before retirement age, teacher education, and organization of Sami education in the future. Nevertheless, it is possible to make predictions based on what we see in student numbers and rate of urbanization among Samis today. We also know that *Lærerløftet* (continuing education for teachers) and the framework for Sami distance education will increase the need for the pedagogical education of Sami teachers and continuing education in Sami language. We have also established the rate of attrition among teachers in Lule and South Sami areas and this signals the need to educate even more teachers than the nominal need would indicate. We also have shown the age distribution among Sami teachers. This can indicate whether we will face a generational change among Sami teachers.

Why is recruitment of Sami teachers important?

The Act relating to primary and secondary education and training (Education Act) §6-2 states:

“All primary and lower secondary school students in Sami districts have the right to an education of and in Sami.

Outside Sami districts, 10 or more students in the same municipality who wish to have an education of and in Sami have the right to such an education as long as there are at least six students left in the group.”

§6-3 states:

“Samis at the upper secondary school have the right to an education of Sami. The Ministry can give instructions on alternative forms of education when the education cannot be offered by the teaching personnel at the school.”

¹¹ As mentioned earlier, a significant number of Sami-speaking teachers in some Sami administrative areas teach subjects other than Sami.

As we see, all Sami students have an individual right to an education of Sami, and those who live in Sami districts, also have the right to an education *in* Sami. To ensure that school owners can offer this legally required education to qualifying students, and as such fulfill their legal obligation to Sami students, it is necessary to ensure sufficient recruitment of Sami-speaking teachers.

Looking away from the strictly legal perspective, there are several other arguments to support Sami education. Todal and Øzerk point out that it is important for pedagogical, psychological and historical reasons (Todal and Øzerk 1996 p. 17 ff.¹²). A bilingual education, for example, secures students' cognitive language skills, a positive self-image and cultural development.

It has been challenging to recruit Sami-speaking candidates to teacher-training programs. Sami University College has had no applicants to its Sami teacher-training programs for several admission cycles.¹³ UiT has offered a five-year Sami teacher training at the master's level for three years. They have had no applicants to the program either.¹⁴ If recruitment to Sami teacher-training programs is not strengthened, Sami students' right to a Sami education will be threatened. Under recommendations at the end of the article, we point to measures that can be taken to strengthen Sami teacher training.

There are not enough Sami-speaking teachers to offer a Sami teacher-training program in Lule and South Sami areas, and there would probably be too few applicants to such programs. The framework plans for Sami teacher training has not been especially good at accommodating a potential Lule and South Sami teacher-training program. However, a new framework plan has now been developed for a five-year Sami teacher-training program and it is formulated in a way that is flexible enough to allow for the establishment of a Lule and South Sami teacher-training program:

“The main language used in primary and lower secondary Sami teacher training is Sami. Exceptions can be made for practical or other important reasons.”

This is the wording of the proposed framework¹⁵. This means that in the future, a significant portion of Sami teachers would be able to take their education at other educational institutions. It is therefore positive that the Sami Parliament has had the opportunity to propose Sami representatives to various national committees making the framework plans for teacher training.

From the data we have seen in this article, we can conclude that there is a considerable shortage of Sami teachers in Norway. As the situation stands today, it is actually amazing that all students who wish to have instruction in Sami, as far as we know, receive it in their municipality or through distance learning. There has been a clear lag in recruitment of new Sami teachers. If nothing changes, the shortage of teachers will increase in the years to come. The situation is worst for Lule Sami, where the shortage is already hazardous and can be assumed to get worse. Part of the reason for this is the high attrition rate of teachers in Lule Sami areas.

¹²Todal, Jon and Kamil Øzerk: *Vegar tile in tospråkleg skule. Om utdanning av samiskspråklege medarbeidarar i finnmarksskulane*. SH-rapport nr. 3 1996.

¹³Marie Elise Nystad og Liv Inger Somby: «Ingen samisk læreutdanning i høst», NRK 4.7.2011, og Monica Falao Pettersen og Berit Solveig Gaup: «Hvorfor vil færre og færre studere her?», NRK 13.3.2016.

¹⁴Hanne Larsen: «Ingen vill satse på samisk», i Altaposten 24.2.2016.

If this shortage were the case for another subject at school, large national measures would probably be taken to ensure that recruitment of teachers was strengthened. Today, there is no national strategy to increase recruitment of Sami-speaking teachers. This means that chance and luck decide if there are enough teachers to fulfill Sami students' rights to an education in Sami. It is not likely that authorities will be able to fulfill Sami students' rights to an education in Sami if recruitment of Sami speaking teachers does not significantly increase.

In absolute numbers, in order to maintain the same number of teachers as there are now, 1.5 South Sami teachers would have to be educated each year for the next 10-20 years. For Lule Sami areas, one teacher would have to be educated every other year. However, the shortage of Lule Sami teachers is already precarious so really there would probably have to be about the same number of teachers educated as for South Sami. This is also due to the above-mentioned attrition rate of Lule Sami teachers. For North Sami, 90 primary and lower secondary teachers would have to be educated over the next 20 years. Approximately 25 upper secondary North Sami teachers would have to be educated to maintain current numbers.

It is important to point out that these predictions are based on stable Sami student numbers. It is very possible that the number of Sami students will increase in the years to come, which will lead to a corresponding increase in need of Sami teachers. Additionally, the Education Act may change. Some municipalities and counties are also considering giving all students access to Sami education and the Sami language committee suggests that Sami education be granted if three students outside a Sami administrative area request it. All this could also lead to an increased need of Sami-speaking teachers.¹⁶

8.12 Vision of Lule and South Sami Teacher Education

The basis for a possible Lule and South Sami teacher education program is proposed above. For many years, people have called for a separate teacher-training program, especially for South Sami. This has not yet been possible for various reasons. The merging of the University of Nordland and Nesna and Nord-Trøndelag University Colleges has strengthened the pedagogical milieu in these regions and the new institution has been awarded national responsibility for both Lule and South Sami teacher training.

The wording of the new framework plan for the five-year Sami primary and lower secondary teacher training program allows for the establishment of a separate Lule and South Sami program at Nord University. Such a program could start by offering course work in Norwegian and then 30-60 credits in Lule or South Sami, depending on whether one wanted to teach at the primary or lower secondary level. In addition, the program could include courses on Sami culture as well as emphasize Sami pedagogy and didactics.

¹⁵Proposal for Regulations of Sami framework plan for primary and secondary school education grades 1-7.

¹⁶NOU 2016:18

Sami-speaking teachers have competencies that are in high demand in many arenas outside of the educational system. Sami teacher training lasts five years and when we check the number of Sami speakers in teacher-training programs today, we see that we have nowhere near the number of students needed to cover even out current needs. Therefore, along with prioritizing recruitment of Sami-speaking candidates for teacher education, we must also provide the opportunity for other qualified teachers to acquire sufficient competency in Sami in order to be able to teach it.

There is little doubt in that such a program would strengthen Lule and South Sami education both qualitatively and quantitatively. Yearly admissions would be difficult, but one can imagine a three-year cycle where Sami language availability will be synchronized with teacher training to ensure standard progression. We come back to this in section 5.14.

8.13 Conclusion

In this article, we have looked at the student-teacher ratio for Sami education and surveyed the pedagogical and linguistic qualifications of Sami teachers. We have also made predictions about student-teacher ratios for the coming years and discussed measures to strengthen and develop Sami education.

Overall, the student-teacher ratio is lower in Sami education than in other subjects in Norway, but there is significant variation between the Sami language groups. A large majority of Sami teachers are highly qualified both in terms of pedagogy and language skills, but there are still lower pedagogical qualifications among Sami teachers compared to those who teach other subjects. A significant portion of Sami teachers has continuing education in Sami. In the short run, we cannot say that the average age of teachers is dangerously high, but at the same time, the level of recruitment to teaching programs has been far too low for too long. Without improvement, there will be a dangerous shortage of Sami teachers which will, in turn, lead to difficulties in honouring Sami students' rights to Sami instruction.

8.14 Recommendations

- Higher levels of applicants to Sami teacher training programs should be initiated
- Universities and university colleges should be better rewarded for graduation of Sami speaking teachers
- The opportunity of accredited teachers to acquire qualifications to teach Sami should be strengthened
- More favourable stipend schemes should be assessed for Sami-speaking education students
- Nord University should establish a Lule and South Sami teacher-training program

Sami distance education teachers should receive the opportunity to upgrade their skills in multi-party learning so that all Sami students receive Sami education even if there is a shortage of Sami teachers. School owners and County Governors should develop strategic plans to ensure that all Sami teachers fulfill formal competency requirement within 2025 (within 2020 for distance learning teachers - the Framework plan for Sami distance education).

Sami teaching aids must become easily available so that Sami teachers have the resources to offer the best possible language education.

The possibility of having two curriculums in Sami as a First Language should be assessed. Today's curriculum does not necessarily suit all students and the establishment of different

curriculums for students living within and outside Sami administrative areas should be explored.

The reimbursement scheme for Sami education should increase to a level that reflects the actual expenditures of the education. Then municipalities will be able to make long-term plans the education of Sami teachers in the municipality.

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