

# North Sámi in Norway

University of Oulu, Department of Finnish

## Short facts

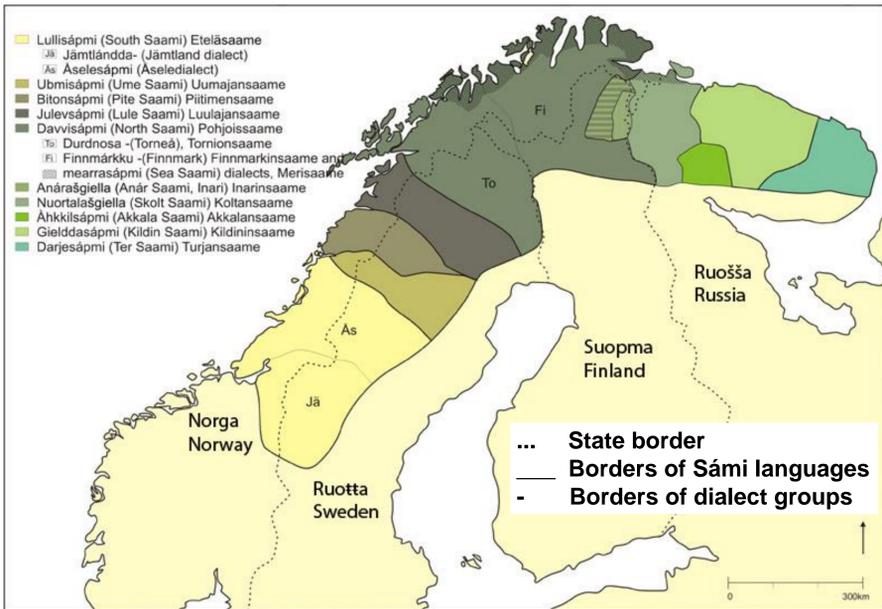
**North Sámi:** estimated number of speakers ca. 20.000 (Additionally, there are ca. 2.000 speakers in Finland and 5.000 in Sweden).

**Region:** North Sámi is spoken in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland. The core areas in Norway are inner parts in the county of Finnmark (Finnmark).

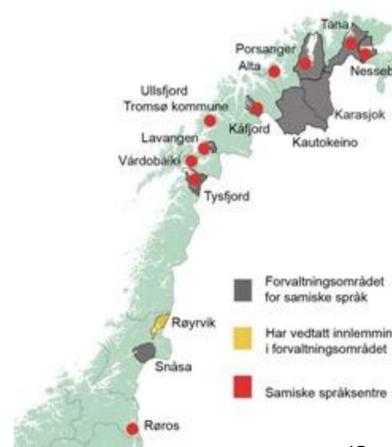
**Classification:** North Sámi is an indigenous language, which belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of the Uralic family of languages.

**Legal status:** The Sámi have been recognised as indigenous people in Norway and in European Union.

**Research area:** all municipalities of administration area for Sámi language (marked grey) except Tysfjord and Snåsa, which do not belong to the speaking area of North Sámi.



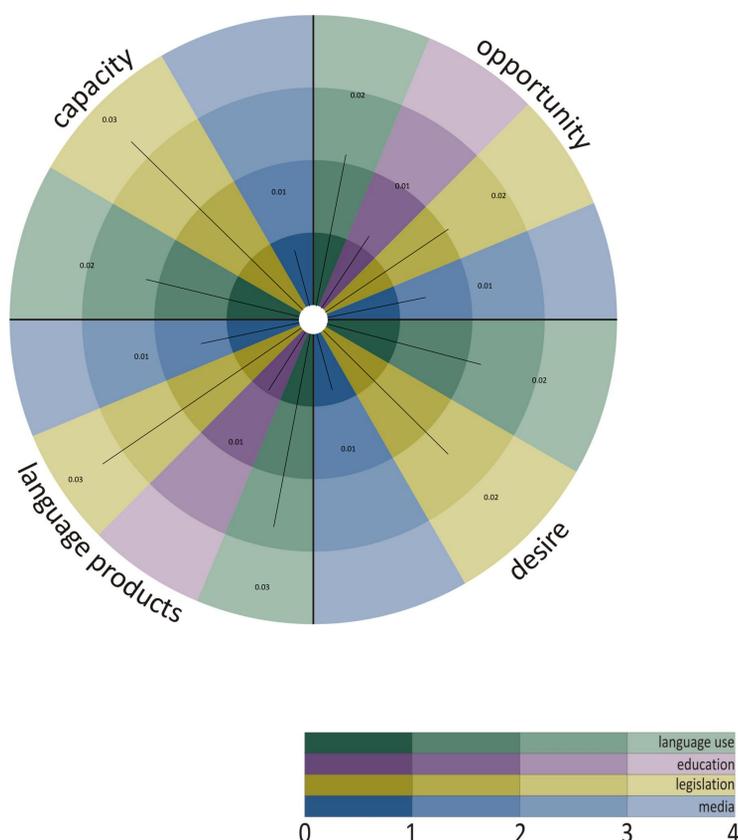
Map of the Sámi languages and their main dialect areas. (Source: Sámi kultuurra ensyklopediija 2012, names of the states added by Marko Marjomaa).



(Source: Fornyings-, og administrasjons- og kirke departementet)

## ELDIA's results

- Majority of the respondents named North Sámi as their mother tongue and majority of the respondents use North Sámi in cross- and intragenerational use.
- Respondents reported to have clearly lower skill level in writing and reading skills in North Sámi than in Norwegian.
- North Sámi is used more in informal domains than in formal domains.
- North Sámi is used clearly more often in traditional media, e.g. newspapers and radio than in new media, e.g. internet or social media.
- Vast majority of the parents try to make children to learn and use North Sámi.



## EuLaViBar

According to the results of EulaViBar scores, the position of North Sámi is not secured in the administrative area for Sámi language.

The grading of focus areas Opportunity (mean 1.85) and Language products (mean 1.58) is 1, which indicates that signs and criteria exist that the language is severely threatened. The grading of Desire (mean 2.12) and Capacity (mean 2.02) in turn indicates that signs and criteria show that language use and transmission are diminishing or seem to be ceasing at least in some contexts or with some speaker groups.

The results can be interpreted so that the North Sámi speakers in the Administrative Area for Sámi language have greater desire and capacity to use language, than what they have opportunities and language products to use language. However, the situation was not so consistent in the level of dimensions. The lowest grade 0.80 had Media in the focus areas Capacity and Desire, while the Legislation had the grade 3.32 in focus areas Capacity and Language products.