



Report of the Skolt Saami community day at Sámi Museum Siida 6.9.2025

Contents

1 Event description

- 1.1 Event objectives
- 1.2 Organizing parties
- 1.3 Event implementation

2 Budget

3 Feedback

- 3.1 Description of the feedback survey
- 3.2 Results

4 Conclusion

5 Acknowledgement

Event organizers: Oummu rââst raaj, MÁHTUT and SÁMIPOLITY projects in cooperation with Sámi Museum Siida and Ä'vv Skolt Saami Museum

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union



LAPIN LIITTO

Aurora



MÁHTUT

SÁMIPOLITY



1 Event description

1.1 Event objectives

The Skolt Saami Community Day aimed to support the revitalization of the endangered Skolt Saami language and culture, to strengthen intergenerational transmission of heritage, and to foster a positive and confident relationship towards one's Skolt Saami identity. Main objectives of the event were to bring Skolt Saami community members from both Finland and Norway together and to create a safe and inclusive atmosphere where participants could connect with items belonging to the Skolt Saami cultural heritage in the Collections of Sámi Museum Siida selected for this event according to the wishes of the skolt Saami community. Event aimed to strengthen the sense of identity and to give a low threshold opportunity to relearn Skolt Saami traditions, practices and cultural heritage in a safe environment.

1.2 Organizing parties

The Skolt Saami Community Day was organized jointly by Interreg Aurora funded projects Oummu ráást raaj – People Cross the Borders and MÁHTUT – Sámi Knowledge and Practices In the Era of the Green Transition, and the Research Council of Finland funded SÁMIPOLITY – Sámi Political Traditions and Thought in Co-becoming with the Environment project, in cooperation with Sámi Museum Siida and Ávv Skolt Saami Museum. Sámi psychosocial support unit Uvjj - Uvjâ - Uvja participated in the event by attending the program and offering their support services to the participants during the whole event.



Picture: Representatives of projects Oummu ráást raaj, SÁMIPOLITY and MÁHTUT, and Ávv Skolt Saami Museum

Oummu ráást raaj – People cross the borders project is a cooperation project between Municipality of Inari and Sør-Varanger Municipality. The project focuses on strengthening Skolt Saami language, culture and identity by creating new learning opportunities as well as communal spaces and events focusing on Skolt Saami culture and tradition for the Skolt Saami community in Norway and Finland. The project also aims to raise awareness on Skolt Saami matters outside the community. The Community Day formed part of

SÁMIPOLITY



MÁHTUT

SIIDA
SÁMI MUSEA | SAAMEAISHUSEO | SÁMI MUSEUM

Interreg  Co-funded by the European Union
Aurora

the Oummu rääst raaj projects Work Package 3 *Enhancing culture: measures for continuation of Skolt Saami traditions and rediscovering Skolt Saami culture and identity.*



Picture: Presentation of Oummu rääst raaj - People cross the borders project

MÁHTUT - Sámi knowledge and practices in the era of the green transition is a three-year project funded by Interreg Aurora. The lead partner of the project is the University of Lapland (The Faculty of Social Sciences, in particular Sámi Studies, and the Faculty of Law). The project's main partner in Norway is the Arctic University Museum of Norway of the UiT The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø. The other partners are the Sámi Education Institute from Inari and Várdduo - Centre for Sámi Research at the Umeå University in Sweden.

The project focuses on Sámi expertise in self-sufficiency and aims to strengthen knowledge and skills related to Sámi subsistence practices. The objective is to support traditional livelihoods and the preservation and transfer of traditional knowledge, including through relearning and repatriating knowledge, and by producing knowledge about these for Sámi communities, authorities and other actors. MÁHTUT also aims to build and strengthen cooperation between Sámi communities, institutions and authorities in national and cross-border settings.



Picture: Presentation of MÁHTUT project

The SÁMIPOLITY project (2023–2027), funded by the Research Council of Finland, investigates Sámi political traditions and political thought as a coexistence of human and the environment. The project challenges the state- and human-centered tradition of political science where Indigenous peoples and nature have historically been categorized in a subordinate position, even outside of an organized society. In a methodologically innovative project, researchers trace Sámi political thought by practicing multispecies, land-based practices, such as reindeer herding, seasonal subsistence activities, and making handicrafts (duodji).

The key objective of the SÁMIPOLITY is to advance a relational and decolonial multispecies Sámi political theory based on Sámi knowledge and to rethink the central conceptions of western political theory from the Sámi and more-than-human standpoints. The main foci of research are Sámi political community, investigating multispecies political traditions, tracing more-than-human political agency, and challenging western political theory. Through these SÁMIPOLITY produces new understanding of Indigenous political thought and traditions as well as relational formation of multispecies political communities and non-human political agency.

Sámi Museum Siida, which in 2024 received the European Museum of the Year Award hosted the event and provided access to its Skolt Saami collections and expert guidance. The Museum is a national museum responsible for its special field, Sámi culture, and a regional museum responsible for tasks concerning cultural environments in the Sámi Area. Ävv Skolt Saami museum in Neiden, Norway, participated as the key partner for cultural heritage from the Norwegian side. Together these institutions ensured a balance between academic knowledge, museum expertise and community engagement.



Picture: Presentation of Sámi Museum Siida

SÁMIPOLITY



MÁHTUT

SIIDA
SÁMI MUSEA | SAAMEAISMUSEO | SÁMI MUSEUM

Interreg
Aurora



Co-funded by
the European Union



Picture: Siida's main exhibition *Enâneh láá mii párnááh* – *These lands are our children*

Organizers' webpages:

MÁHTUT project:

<https://mahtutproject.com/>

SÁMIPOLITY project:

<https://samiontologies.com/>

Oummu rââst raaj project:

<https://inari.fi/oummu>

Sámi Museum Siida:

<https://siida.fi/>

Ä'vv Skolt Saami Museum:

<https://dvmv.no/en/vv-skoltesamisk-muse/avv-skoltesami-museum/>

Uvja:

<https://uvja.fi/>

1.3 Event implementation

The Community Day took place on 6th of September 2025 at Sámi Museum Siida in Inari, Finland, and the program was carried out between 11am and 5pm. Food and coffee were offered to all participants provided by restaurant Sarrit in Siida. The key activity of the event was engaging with Skolt Saami objects selected from Siida's collections according to the wishes of the community.

In addition to the possibility to engage with the objects made, used and owned by the skolt saami ancestors, the community members had a possibility to learn more about the objects and the information stored to the museum catalogues and ask for more information from the museum experts that were there to help. Here the information to which area or family the objects belonged to and the names of the persons and places connected to the objects was most interesting when building connections to one's Skolt Saami heritage. The event gathered over 70 participants and a third were Skolt Saami living in Norway.



Picture: Collection object

Communication

First save the date materials were published on 1st of July as posters and posts on social media by all organizing parties. On 13th of August a Facebook event page was published by Oummu rãâst raaj, and on 14th of August registration was opened. During registration participants could also enroll in a vote where they could vote which object groups was going to be on display during the event. The registration information and new posters about the event were shared by all organizing parties. The event was also published in tapahtumienlappi.fi, a joint event calendar in northern Finland. Registration closed on 1st of September with 73 registrations.

Transportation

Free transportation was offered from Kirkenes, Norway and Nellim, Finland to ensure accessible and low threshold participation opportunities for everyone. Transportation from Kirkenes was provided by Eskelisen Lapin Linjat Oy and it left at 7am Norwegian time including 17 participants. Transportation from Nellim was provided by Kukkolan Bussit Oy and it left at 9am Finnish time including 7 participants. Return transportation to Nellim and Kirkenes left at 5pm from Siida, Inari.

Interpretation

Interpretation from Finnish to Norwegian was provided during the whole event. People needing interpretation were given earpieces receiving interpretation of the speeches and museum tour guidance in real time.

SÁMIPOLITY



MÁHTUT

SIIDA
SÁMIMUSEA | SAAMEAISMUSEO | SAMI MUSEUM

Interreg
Aurora

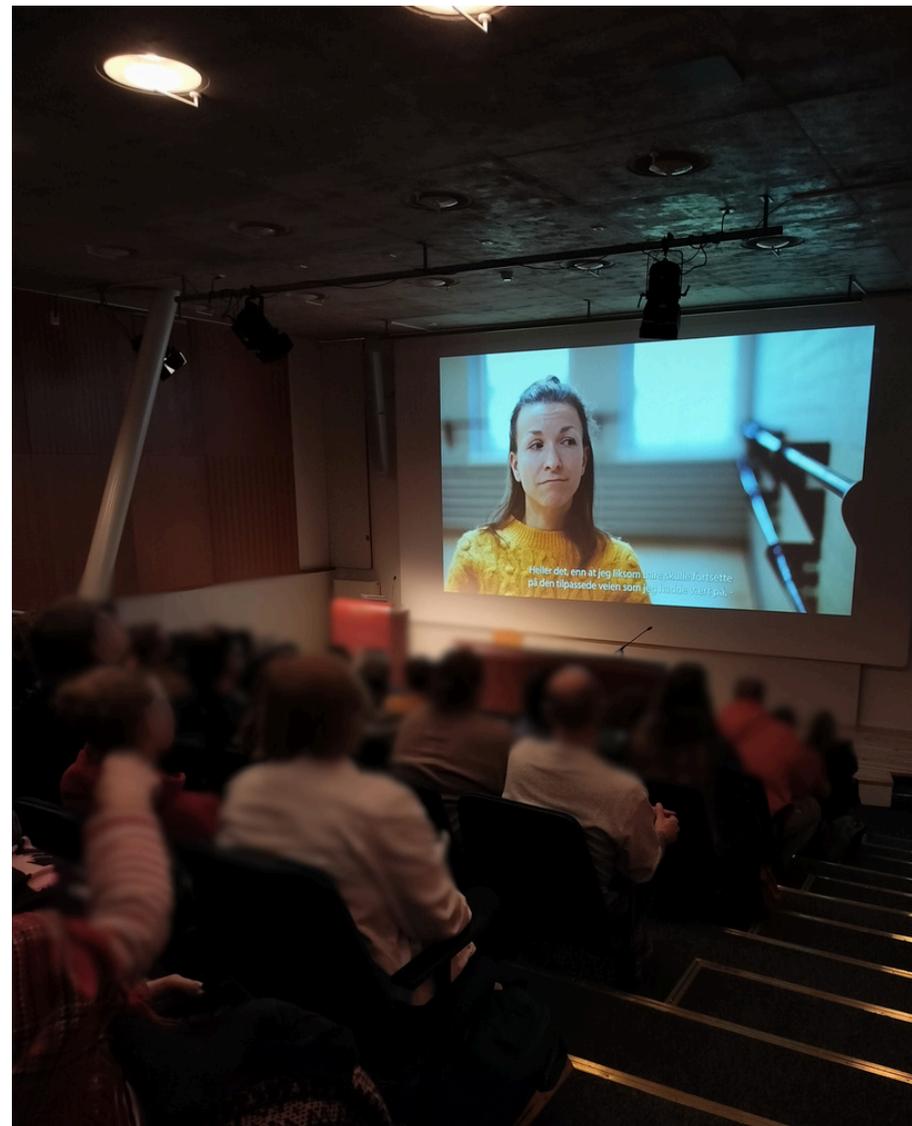


Program

The program started with free lunch to all participants and continued with opening of the event at Siida's auditorium. Opening included introduction of the organizing entities and screening of *Mon leäm sä'mmlaž – I am a Skolt Saami* movie by Oummu rääst raaj project, followed by introduction of Skolt Saami Cultural Foundation's project Sää'mpää'ljes. During introductions Sámi Museum Siida presented museum's Skolt Saami collections and their guidelines, including principles for a safer space and practises on handling the historical objects to be engaged with.

People were divided into two groups for the main activities of the day, one group including interpretation from Finnish to Norwegian. Group 1 had guided tour to Siida's main exhibition *Enâmeh láá mii párnááh – These lands are our children* and group 2 had private viewing of Skolt Saami objects gathered from Siida's collection. After a coffee break which included a dish inspired by traditional Skolt Saami dish kurnikka, the groups changed activities between each other.

During the coffee break and after the main activities participants had time for discussion, networking and shopping at the Siida Museum's souvenir shop. The event ended at 5pm and transportation departed from Inari to Kirkenes and Nellim.



Picture: *Mon leäm sä'mmlaž* movie screening

2 Budget

Skolt Saami Community Day was combined effort of 3 projects and Sámi Museum Siida. Expenses from the event between the projects Oummu râást raaj and MÁHTUT are sorted into different budget posts: Catering includes lunch and coffee served during the community day, bus connections include bus connections from both Finland and Norway for the participants, miscellaneous expenses

include interpretation, fuel costs, travel and accommodation costs for the organizers, small purchases for the event, gift cards for the survey participants etc. This budget table does not include personnel costs of the organizers. Costs for the invoices do not include taxes.

Total combined expenses for the implementation of the event were 5342 €.

Budget post	Oummu râást raaj	MÁHTUT
Catering	970	970
Bus connection	474	1370
Misc. expences	1458	100
Total €	2902 €	2440 €

SÁMIPOLITY



MÁHTUT

SIIDA
SÁMIMUSEA | SAAMEAISMUSEO | SAMI MUSEUM

Interreg
Aurora



3 Feedback

3.1 Description of the feedback survey

A fully anonymous and confidential feedback survey was conducted collecting a total of 32 answers.

One of the organizers' top priorities was to get feedback to develop their operations including improvement of event planning, service design and creating experiences in the future. To encourage participants to give feedback, there was a possibility to enroll in a draw where 4 people were randomly selected to receive €50 gift cards to Siida Shop.

The purpose of the feedback was to find out how participants experienced the event and the functions around it, their opinions of the day as a whole, what worked and what didn't, and hopes for future activities. The feedback was an important tool for the organizers to determine successes and areas for improvement. The feedback was analyzed by the organizing projects Oummu rääst raaj, MÁHTUT and SÁMIPOLITY to further improve their performance.

The feedback survey was in online format carried out by Oummu rääst raaj project, and it was provided in Finnish, English and Norwegian. The survey was conducted anonymously, without collecting names or other identifying information, which ensured that participants could provide open and honest feedback. The survey was divided into three main areas: program and activities, organizational matters and practicalities, and personal experience.

3.2 Results

Overall satisfaction of the Community Day received an average rating of 4.29 out of 5. Feedback was very positive, and according to it the

program and organizational matters were successful with some minor development areas in for example interpretation and lunch options.

One development item mentioned was a common ending that would have tied the event together. Main course option at lunch was criticised, but consideration for special diets was praised.

The feedback shows that the event succeeded in its purpose to create a safe and inclusive environment for the community members. One comment stated:

"Oli turvallinen ja rento ilmapiiri ja kiva kun tultiin heti ovella tervehtimään. Hyvä kun Uvva oli paikalla."

"It was a safe and relaxed atmosphere and it was nice to be greeted right at the door. It was good that Uvva was there."

The most important aspect of the event according to the feedback was engaging with the Skolt Saami objects. It was a meaningful and touching moment for many. People from Norway got a greater view of their own, lost culture and traditional handicraft practices as a part of it. Some participants found their own family's objects, and one commented:

"Kokoelmiin tutustuminen oli sykähdyttävää. Upeaa nähdä niin paljon oman kulttuurin esineitä."

"Exploring the collections was rousing. It was wonderful to see so many objects from our own culture."

Another largely significant thing for the participants was gathering and spending time with the community. Gathering community members from both Finland and Norway was seen as one of the biggest strengths of the event. Some commented their personal highlights of the event to be:

"Yhteisön kanssa kokoontuminen ja yhdessäolo, Siidan kokoelmiin tutustuminen."

"Gathering and spending time with the community, getting to know Siida's collections."

"...kun Norjan puoleltakin oli saapunut ihmisiä paikalle ja heille oli annettu mahdollisuus tapahtumaan."

"...that people from Norway had also arrived and they had been given the opportunity to participate."

Another commented about their experience:

"Det var interessant å få et innblikk i det som skjer i det skoltesamiske samfunnet"

"It was interesting to get an insight into what is happening in the Skolt Saami community"

Picture: Collection objects

SÁMIPOLITY



MÁHTUT

SIIDA
SÁMI MUSEA | SAAMEAISMUSEO | SAMI MUSEUM

Interreg
Aurora



4 Conclusion

As a whole the event was seen as a success, and opportunities like this for the whole Skolt Saami community was seen as necessary and wanted. The opportunity for psychosocial support was considered a success, and it was seen as important by the participants. Based on the feedback, it can be stated that investing in better solutions to improve the quality of the interpretation is of utmost importance for future cross-border events. Solutions, such as having the presentation materials in English, need to be further investigated. One development area detected was the lack of a common ending of the event, and it was seen as necessary and needed by both the organizers and participants to bring the event together.

From the feedback and how the event was received, a conclusion can be made that creating these types of low threshold opportunities for people to reconnect with their own roots and cultural heritage as well as to create and strengthen bonds within the community is a great way to ensure and support the revitalization of the endangered Skolt Saami culture and language, and to strengthen the identity and sense of belonging of Skolt Saami people.



LAPIN LIITTO



5 Acknowledgement

The organizers wish to express their sincere gratitude to all institutions, partners and individuals who made the Skolt Saami Community Day possible. The event was a product of genuine cross-border cooperation and shared commitment to strengthen the Skolt Saami language, culture and identity.

Special thanks are extended to Interreg Aurora programme for their financial support which enables the implementation of Oummu rääst raaj and Máhtut projects. The organizers also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the Research Council of Finland, whose support to the SÁMIPOLITY project made it possible to combine research-based knowledge with community participation.

Lapin Liitto provided essential national co-financing for the event and for the broader framework of the Oummu rääst raaj and Máhtut projects. Warm appreciation is extended to Sámi Museum Siida for hosting the Community Day and providing access to its Skolt Saami collections and expertise, and to Ávv Skolt Saami Museum for its ongoing partnership in cultural cooperation across the Finland-Norway border.

Back cover picture:

From exhibition *Vääim ħiõj – Traces of innermost* by Matleena Fofonoff, Venke Tørmænen, Kjellaug Isaksen and Irene Rasmussen
Photographer: Alexey Tsalko

Content of the report:

Joni Gauriloff, Lempi Lehtinen, Áile Aikio, Mari Viinikainen

Design:

Lempi Lehtinen



SÁMIPOLITY



OUMMU RÁÁST RAAJ
People cross the borders

MÁHTUT

SIIDA
SÁHEMUSEA | SAAMELAISHUSEO | SÁMI MUSEUM

Interreg
Aurora

