
COLLABORATION AND LEARNING THROUGH FILM AND MEDIA

BEST PRACTICES FOR FILM AND MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE SÁMI REGION



ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME



SUMMARY

The report identifies and compares best practices in two educational institutions: the Sámi Education Institute (*Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus, Sámi oahpahusguovddáš, SAKK*) in Finland and the folk high school Kalix folkhögskola in Sweden. Both institutions emphasise hands-on and project-based learning, small group sizes and strong ties to local industries. The Sámi Education Institute incorporates Sámi culture and languages extensively into its curriculum, while Kalix folkhögskola offers a multiform learning model and maintains strong industry connections across Northern Sweden.

Key challenges include the mismatch between education and labour market needs as well as the limited extent of cross-border collaboration. International mobility, cultural awareness and continuous learning are highlighted as essential, particularly in the context of the changing audiovisual industry and the growing Sámi film industry. Two international study trips facilitated student collaboration, cultural exchange and networking. Feedback from participants showed increased understanding of the Sámi film industry as well as improved teamwork and communication skills.

Recommendations focus on expanding cross-border mobility, promoting the inclusion of Sámi cultural content in education and fostering stronger partnerships with the film industry. This report serves as a roadmap for developing inclusive, culturally grounded and future-oriented film and media education in the Sámi region.

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INTRODUCTION

Project background and objectives

The ‘Best practices for film and media education in the Sámi region’ report is part of a project called ‘Creating cross-border collaboration in film education in the Sámi region and piloting an innovative traineeship programme model for Sámi film productions’. It’s a two-year Erasmus+ partnership project (KA220) that started in September 2023 and is co-funded by the European Union. The Sámi Education Institute coordinates the project, while Kalix folkhögskola and the International Sámi Film Institute (*Internášunála Sámi Filbmainstituhtta, ISFI*) act as partners. The objective of the project is to develop film and media education in the Sámi region in cooperation with the Sámi Education Institute, Kalix folkhögskola and the International Sámi Film Institute. We want to ensure that film and media education better meets the needs of the rapidly changing and evolving film industry, and particularly the Sámi film industry. Our objective is to adapt the film and media education to meet the needs of the labour market and to create more flexible opportunities for young people in the Sámi region.

One of the objectives for the project was to establish and strengthen collaboration between the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola, especially in terms of film and media education. Our goal was to understand the content and teaching methods of other film and media education programmes and to share best practices, paying particular attention to working life, the needs of the Sámi film industry and how these needs have been taken into consideration in education. Another goal was to increase understanding of Sámi culture and languages within the context of film and media education and, more broadly, to look at how other minority languages and cultures could be taken into account in teaching.

Report structure and collection of feedback

This report on best practices is based on research measures carried out as part of the project. The report was compiled using data collected from both feedback surveys and interviews. Written sources have also been utilised when deemed necessary for the research. Some sections of this report were edited and clarified using OpenAI’s ChatGPT (*GPT-4*) to support language and structure. All content is based on original project data and analysis.

Two study visits were organised during the programme, during which film and media students and teachers had the opportunity to observe film and media

education in another country as well as visit related companies and events. A workshop was organised during both study visits, where students got to work together. Project manager Tiina Jäppinen has been responsible for collecting all data and compiling this report. The report was translated into English by Silvia Sarre. The project's logo and visual identity was designed by Káren-Ann Hurri. The report's layout and visual styling were created by Katja Lettinen.

The number of people who attended the study visits and participated in the feedback surveys, as well as the names of those who took part in the interviews, are listed at the end of the report in Appendix A. The collected data is not linked to individuals, and the aim has been to provide a reliable picture of best practice in film and media education at two educational institutions in the Sámi region.

The report examines the content of media and film education, teaching methods and how collaboration with working life is carried out within the two institutions involved in the project. This will be followed by a comparison of best practices in the education programmes, along with development ideas and recommendations for organising film and media education in the Sámi region in the future. This project is a continuation of the previous Erasmus+ project, which ended in February 2023, called 'Capacity building in the Indigenous Sámi film industry and media education in a context of new digital media technologies'. This report is also a continuation of the mapping conducted in the previous project, which focused on the education and employment needs in the Sámi film industry and study paths to becoming a professional. We hope that this report will be useful for other educational institutions providing film and media education in the Sámi region, and especially for upper secondary schools. We also hope that it will encourage internationalisation of film and media education in the Sámi region and fostering closer ties between the educational institutions in the area. We provide education in a northern setting and have a unique way of doing things.

We would like to thank all of the teachers and students who took part in the study visits and provided valuable feedback through our surveys and interviews.

UPPER SECONDARY FILM AND MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE SÁMI REGION

Film and media education in the Nordic and Sámi contexts

When talking about the audiovisual (AV) industry, we use the definition outlined in the 'AV UP – New Skills for the AV Industry' project. The definition views the audiovisual industry through a broad lens, and it includes all companies, communities and individuals in Finland that are involved in content production, development, production services and distribution of moving image and audio (Hatakka, Luukkonen & Syrjänen 2025, 11).

In this report, we focus on educational institutions providing upper secondary vocational education and training in the audiovisual field in the Sámi region. We describe best practices in film and media education in the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola. In this report, we use the official names of the education programmes: 'Media studies' at the Sámi Education Institute and 'Film and series production' (*film- och serieproduktion*) at Kalix folkhögskola. The content of these programmes is explained in more detail in the section dealing with best practices. When referring to the education programmes collectively, we use the term 'film and media education'.

The Sámi region, or Sápmi, is a vast area inhabited by the Sámi people, and it stretches across Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. In Finland, the Sámi region includes the municipalities of Enontekiö, Inari and Utsjoki as well as the Vuotso area located in Northern Sodankylä (*Finnish Sámi Parliament's Educational Office 2025*). There are also other educational institutions that provide upper secondary education in film and media in the Sámi regions of Sweden and Norway. In addition to Kalix folkhögskola, film and media education is provided in Sweden by Kalix's upper secondary school Furuhedsskolan as well as Lapplands Gymnasium, which provides general upper secondary education in Gällivare, Kiruna, Jokkmokk and Pajala. The content and scope of film and media education vary between these institutions. In Norway, upper secondary education in film and media is organised by the Sámisk videregående skole in Karasjok and the folk high school Lofoten folkehøgskole located in the Lofoten Islands. In Sweden and Norway, upper secondary schools offer both higher education preparatory programmes and vocational programmes (*Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers 2025a, 2025b*). Film and media studies are typically included in the higher education preparatory programmes in these countries. The proportion of film and media studies varies depending on the country and the curriculum.

In Sweden and Norway, all pupils who have finished comprehensive school are entitled to upper secondary education. In Finland, all students under 18 who have completed comprehensive and preparatory education are obliged to apply for either preparatory education, vocational education and training or general upper secondary education (*Finnish National Agency for Education 2025*). Nordic citizens have the right to complete their upper secondary education in another Nordic country. This right is ensured by the Nordic Agreement on Co-operation on Upper Secondary School Education, which mandates mutual recognition of upper secondary qualifications between the countries. Under the agreement, Nordic citizens can apply for upper secondary education in another Nordic country under the same conditions as nationals of that country (*Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers 2025a, 2025b*).

In this report, however, we do not focus on the differences in upper secondary education in Finland, Sweden and Norway, nor on the effect these differences have on enrolment in the Sámi region. Generally speaking, there is very little cross-border collaboration between upper secondary schools providing film and media education. The operational environments as well as challenges and strengths of the regions' audiovisual industries are nonetheless very similar, and there is a general willingness among teachers to enhance collaboration. Through this project, we've taken the first steps in this development by networking with upper secondary educational institutions in other countries. We hope to build on this existing collaboration in the future.

Current situation and challenges

There has been strong growth in the number of productions in the Sámi film industry over the past few years, and there's now a shortage of skilled workers with knowledge of the Sámi languages and culture. Meanwhile in Finland, the period of strong growth and a shortage of skilled workers in the audiovisual industry has, in recent years, given way to collapsing production volumes, reduced international funding, a general economic downturn and widespread unemployment among AV professionals (*Hatakka, Luukkonen & Syrjänen 2025, 11*). Educational institutions providing film and media education in the Sámi region should take into account the prospects and changes in both the Sámi film industry and the Finnish audiovisual industry. The creative and audiovisual sectors have long been in a state of constant change as digitalisation, global markets and evolving professional requirements reshape their operational environment. Challenges include, in particular, the mismatch between the demands of education and working life as well as barriers to internationalisation. (*Hatakka 2025, 14*)

The film industry is highly international, and its professionals form close-knit networks. Relationships and reputation thus go a long way in the industry. Many domestic professionals already work seamlessly in Norway, Sweden or Estonia, so Nordic cooperation is a particularly worthwhile way to ensure that there will be enough work in the future as well. (*Louhelainen 2025, S-R, 25*)

International cooperation within the Nordic film industry is crucial already during studies, both between different educational institutions and between educational institutions and working life. The intake of students is 10 per year in Inari and 16 per year at Kalix folkhögskola. It would be important for students to network with future film and media professionals already during their studies and to gain experience of working abroad through traineeships. The two study visits we organised during the project benefited the students in many ways. Held in a foreign language and in a new environment, the workshop provided students with an opportunity to put what they had learned into practice, and it also developed their ability to work in a foreign language. This strengthened their problem-solving and teamwork skills as well as creative thinking.

The challenges in film and media education are often similar across Finland, Sweden and Norway. Younger generations are diminishing in size, which contributes to the number of people enrolling in film and media education programmes. In addition to the declining number of enrolling students, other challenges include diminishing financial resources and the Compulsory Education Act, which reduces the enrolment of non-Sámi students under the age of 18 in media education as it's a one-year programme that doesn't lead to a qualification or a degree. Professionals in the Sámi region are also concerned about how the abolition of the adult education allowance will impact the situation, as the allowance has made it possible to train Sámi-speaking professionals in various fields. There is a fear that the number of Sámi-speaking professionals will collapse (*Koskinen & Lappalainen 2025*).

The rapid changes within the audiovisual industry coupled with the irregularity of working hours and work periods most certainly don't increase young people's interest in the sector. The pandemic also left its mark on the social skills and abilities of young people now enrolling in education. In the AV sector, the emphasis is on motivation and the ability to work independently and precisely. The need for multidisciplinary support will only grow in the future. A report published by the Finnish National Agency for Education via their reporting portal Vipunen (2025) anticipates changes in sectoral competence needs all the way up to 2030. The report anticipates the competence needs of vocational education and training teachers to grow most in the area of mental health. Other competence needs pertain to sectoral working life skills as well as developing work-based

learning and digital learning tools and environments. Film and media teachers in the north are experienced and committed to their work. They have extensive experience of working in the audiovisual industry, and some of them continue to work in the field alongside their teaching. They also have strong connections with both the local AV community and working life. Teachers in Sámi organisations have knowledge of Sámi languages and culture, which enables and strengthens the inclusion of Sámi culture and multiculturalism in their teaching.

The audiovisual industry is in a state of flux, where technological innovations and changing markets require professionals to have versatile skills and in-depth knowledge. Experts in the field stress the importance of having a strong knowledge base. (*Tarjanne 2025, 72*) Institutions offering film and media education in the Sámi region are quite small, so cross-border collaboration is crucial already during studies, both between different educational institutions and between educational institutions and working life. Basic skills form the foundation on which other skills can be built. These basic skills required of AV professionals include process competency, technical skills, expressive abilities as well as working life skills and an entrepreneurial approach. (*Luukkonen 2025, 70*)

Although rapid technological developments require professionals to keep their skills up to date and there is a constant demand for niche skills in the industry, teachers still feel that the role of upper secondary schools offering film and media education is to teach students the basics. After completing their upper secondary education, students can either pursue higher education to learn more or enter the working life straight away. In addition to basic skills, teachers place a strong emphasis on working life skills and continuous learning. As students progress, their motivation and performance begin to shed light on their potential paths. Learning by doing is a prominent teaching method in upper secondary education in the audiovisual field. The teaching also emphasises communication skills and working as part of a team.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has entered the educational arena, particularly in the context of audio and image processing, and its use in education is to be increased in a measured and responsible way. Film and media teachers interviewed for this report agree that it's not the role of upper secondary schools to provide the latest, most in-depth knowledge about AI and other rapidly changing technologies. There is a constant need for strong niche skills in the AV sector as the field and job descriptions evolve. It's essential to provide opportunities for further study in order for students to strengthen specific skills, and structures must be put in place to support professionals in updating their skills throughout their careers. (*Luukkonen 2025, 71–72*) However, this isn't the main focus of film and media education in upper secon-

dary schools and partnering institutions. As technological development is so rapid, it's important to teach continuous learning skills and critical media literacy in upper secondary education.

While language technology tools are becoming a part of everyday life in many majority languages, minority languages are lagging behind when it comes to the development of AI tools (*Rauhala 2025*). Technological developments currently favour the use of majority languages, and it impacts the use of Sámi languages in film and media education. AI doesn't work in many Sámi languages, which is challenging for the whole community as it causes people to opt for Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish or English more often than necessary. Sámi speakers cannot use new transcription tools, for example, and must work in a traditional way if they want to use the Sámi languages. Mikko Kurimo, Professor of Speech and Language Processing at Aalto University, and his team are developing speech recognition and transcription tools for sound archives in Northern Sámi (*Kivimäki 2025*). Although research into using AI in Sámi languages, especially Northern Sámi, has started, there is still a lot of catching up to do.

Sámi Education Institute

The Sámi Education Institute (*Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus, Sámi oahpahusguovddáš, SAKK*) is an upper secondary school founded in 1978. It's 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.

The Sámi Education Institute's media studies, dating back nearly 20 years, are in many ways a unique type of education in the Sámi region. The education programme lasts for one year, and the language of instruction is Finnish. The degree programme in media studies is flexible, and it's able to respond to the rapidly changing needs of the industry. The studies include film and animation productions, learning about different aspects of audiovisual communication and participating in the organisation of local events. The Sámi culture, multiculturalism and northern dimension are at the centre of the studies. The programme includes 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. The programme's traineeship lasts for four weeks and is worth seven credits.

The media studies provide 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. They also provide an opportunity for students to network with people who operate and work in the film and media industry in the Sámi region.

Kalix folkhögskola

The school systems in Sweden and Norway are 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 institutions (*folkhögskola*, *folkehøgskole*) mainly correspond with the Sámi Education Institute's media studies. Kalix folkhögskola is located in Sweden's Norrbotten County and was founded in 1939, and it has been running the film and series production programme since the early 80s.

The programme lasts for a year, and the language of instruction is Swedish. In the past, the two-year film and multicam programme was taught face-to-face at Kalix. Since 2019, it has been organised as multiform studies with six weeks (five days a week) of face-to-face instruction per year, during which students come to Kalix and work together in workshops.

Students of film and series production have the opportunity to try out various professional tasks relating to sound, camera, lighting and production management. They also work on practical assignments, such as short films and documentaries. During the programme, they learn how the Swedish film and TV industry works. The one-year programme covers the basics, after which students can either continue their studies or go straight to work. Both options are viable when it comes to working in the film industry. During the year-long programme, students complete a 10-week traineeship.

Kalix is not located within the traditional Sámi region of Sweden, as defined by the Swedish Sámi Parliament (*Sametinget*) and the reindeer herding villages (*samebyar*). There are eight Sámi villages that are known as 'concession villages', where reindeer husbandry is practised with special permission, and Kalix is one of them. (*Swedish Sámi Parliament 2025*) Kalix folkhögskola has also hosted students who speak Meänkieli and Sámi languages. Many of Sweden's national minorities are present in Norrbotten: Sámis, Swedish Finns, Meänkieli speakers and Romani people. In this report, when we talk about media education in the Sámi region, we're talking about the vast area in Finland, Sweden and Norway (as well as Russia) which has historically and culturally been considered the Sámi region.

BEST PRACTICES: SÁMI EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Media studies' objective, content and focus areas

The Sámi Education Institute has its own objectives laid down in law, according to which its purpose is 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. To achieve these objectives, the institute provides vocational education and training, organises teaching on Sámi languages and culture, produces and develops related learning materials and runs online teaching as well as other educational support services. (*Act on the Sámi Education Institute 252/2010*)

The 60-credit media studies programme lasts for one academic year and is organised as contact instruction in Inari. The studies are founded on Sámi culture, multiculturalism and a northern perspective (*Sámi Education Institute 2025a*). The media studies offer students diverse general knowledge of the media industry with a particular focus on moving image, journalism, radio, animation and project work. The aim is not to turn students into professionals in a year, but rather to develop their skills and provide them with valuable contacts, particularly through traineeships. The institution designs its own curriculum, allowing for flexibility and the integration of Sámi culture in a variety of ways.

The most important cultural foundation of the Sámi Education Institute is Sámi culture. Sámi culture and languages thus form a natural part of all curricula. The institute supports employees and students in learning and using the Sámi languages, and traditional knowledge and teaching methods are employed in a manner that respects rights. Respecting differences in people's cultural identities is an important aspect of cultural diversity. The aim is to ensure that all the internal and external groups involved with the institution collaborate seamlessly. In teaching, this is realised by increasing collaboration between different study modules, staff and students. Collaboration with working life and stakeholders is also consolidated and increased. (*Sámi Education Institute 2025b*)

The Sámi Education Institute's media studies curriculum includes at least three competence points of Sámi language and culture studies. Depending on their starting level, students may also study Sámi languages for an additional five or seven competence points. Afterwards, they can continue their studies through online courses organised by the institute. In addition to having courses on Sámi languages and culture, media studies are often closely linked to local organisations and events. Students thus have the opportunity to network in the field already during their studies.

The study programme also takes into account students who speak Sámi. They can choose to complete course exercises, such as creating short films, news inserts or newspaper articles, for the Sogsakk Sanomat newspaper in Sámi and on topics related to Sámi culture. They are encouraged to do so, but teaching takes into account students' backgrounds and respects cultural diversity – meaning it respects differences in peoples' cultural identities. The Arctic nature and working in an Arctic environment are also strongly integrated into the studies.

Teaching methods

In this chapter, we review the teaching methods used in the Sámi Education Institute's media studies. Other terms can also be used alongside 'teaching method', such as 'educational method' or 'working method' (*Oulu University of Applied Sciences 2025*).

The institute's media studies emphasise learning by doing as well as project-based work. Many of the courses are closely linked to local events and organisations. As part of their studies, students are responsible for the technical implementation of the Skábmagovat film festival as well as for producing the live stream of the Ijahis idja music festival. Both events are locally produced and well-known Indigenous events that bring together participants from across the Sámi region and the global Indigenous community.

The students also work together with Radio Inari and the children's TV show Unna Junná, produced by Yle Sápmi. For years now, an animation course has been an important form of collaboration not only with Yle Sápmi but also with the Sámi languages and culture programmes. The animations have been dubbed into Sámi languages, with language students stepping in as voice actors where necessary. The course is one of the largest in the curriculum (7 credits), alongside courses on the tools of filmmaking (8 credits) and work-based learning (7 credits). The animation course emphasises process learning: students take an animation from idea to finished product, thereby gaining experience of the entire production process. The animation course is a prime example of real collaboration with working life – students see their finished animations live on YLE TV2's children's TV show Unna Junná, and the animations will later be available on Yle Areena.

A maximum of 10 students are admitted to the media studies each year, which ensures they can be supported individually. Students are supported in and encouraged to reflect on their own strengths and to build a career path that aligns with their individual interests. Providing special support and identifying needs

is also easier and faster in smaller classes. The Sámi region should offer basic training in film and media especially for young people – the strengthening of identity, networking in the industry, contemplating further education opportunities and strengthening personal skills and motivation are some of the important reasons for it (*Jäppinen 2022*).

A good media education teacher needs to have both pedagogical skills and extensive expertise in their field. The film and media industry encompasses a wide range of competencies, and teachers must update their knowledge and skills continuously. Visiting teachers are also a valuable asset in media education, especially in courses where their expertise, professional experience and networks add value to the teaching. These courses have included the animation course and, to varying degrees, a workshop on producing inserts as well as a production course.

Recruiting visiting teachers has become more difficult, however, as funding has decreased. Last year, the media studies programme was carried out by two teachers. This allowed for reflection, development and sharing of ideas between the teachers. The arrangement was made possible by one of the full-time teachers voluntarily working part-time.

Work-based learning and collaboration with working life

Collaboration with working life is essential in the Sámi Education Institute's media studies, with many courses being closely linked to local organisations and events. In addition to collaborating with working life, the studies also include a work-based learning period. The traineeship lasts for four weeks and is worth 7 competence points. The institute supports students in finding a traineeship position if necessary. The implementation of the traineeship varies depending on the student's background and objectives. Some might prefer to focus on professional development, while others want to learn the basics, such as the rules of working life. Students' access to traineeship positions is influenced by factors such as language skills, production locations and available resources. Although collaborating with Sámi organisations is important, there is also collaboration in regard to traineeships outside the Sámi region and in a wider field. Some students choose to seek placements in Southern Finland, where there are more suitable options available. At the moment, finding paid traineeships is difficult. A general economic downturn and reduced international funding have contributed to a collapse in production volumes and thus to widespread unemployment among AV professionals (*Hatakka, Luukkonen & Syrjänen 2025, 11*).

Students come from a variety of backgrounds in terms of both working life and professional competences, and it's therefore up to the teacher to tailor the traineeship placement to the students' individual development needs. Students generally have to organise their own placement, although the institute supports students in finding one if necessary. The institute works with local companies and organisations, but there are no formal cooperation agreements in place. Predicting the state of productions is challenging, and there can be significant changes from year to year. The number of students, their ambitions and their skills can also vary greatly from one year to the next. In this type of situation, it's crucial for students to find traineeships at the right time.

BEST PRACTICES: KALIX FOLKHÖGSKOLA

Film and series production programme's objective, content and focus areas

The objective of the film and series production programme at the folk high school Kalix folkhögskola is to educate students and inspire them to pursue a career in the film industry. Students are given the opportunity to explore different professional roles, and the teaching prepares them for real production conditions, including time pressure and the need for collaboration. Effective teaching is hands-on, and it adapts communication to suit students' diverse backgrounds and ages while building trust and clarity. Students are expected to develop independence, communication skills and initiative, which are all essential traits for future film industry professionals.

The programme provides basic level education in film and TV production and in working within these fields. The latest technologies are not included in the curriculum; instead, students are expected to deepen their technical knowledge later on through work experience or further studies. The aim is to ensure that students graduate feeling motivated and ready to begin working in the film and TV industry.

Kalix folkhögskola is not a Sámi organisation, but it is located in the Sámi region. Neither the teachers nor the institution have specific expertise or personal experience of the Sámi languages spoken in Sweden or of Sámi culture. However, both the educational institution and its staff have a general awareness of the country's minority groups and minority languages. Over the years, the student body has included Sámi students as well as members of other national minorities in Sweden, such as Swedish Finns and Meänkieli speakers.

Minority groups are not explicitly addressed in the curriculum, and the language of instruction is Swedish. Inclusivity is considered important, and the classroom environment generally supports cultural expression. Sámi students are encouraged to incorporate Sámi languages and cultural topics into their assignments.

Kalix folkhögskola also runs a two-year journalism programme that is carried out as multiform studies. Joint teaching has been explored between the two education programmes in the past, but it wasn't very successful due to differences in content, objectives and study progression. Consideration has been given to whether, in the future, the teaching could be combined in some way to achieve synergistic benefits due to the similarities between the two programmes.

Teaching methods

Learning by doing, project-based learning and team learning are all emphasised in the film and series production programme's teaching methods. The studies are organised as multiform studies, with five weeks of contact instruction per year at Kalix. During these weeks, students work together for five days. Students often work in groups in the workshops, and each group of four is equipped with the necessary number of cameras, recording equipment and other technology. This way, the institution doesn't have to purchase large amounts of equipment for all students. During the distance learning weeks, there is online contact teaching for 20 hours each week, which can include both direct instruction and group work.

The programme is structured around learning by doing, hands-on workshops and technical training. Students engage in scriptwriting, filming and editing, and they receive regular feedback from both their peers and teachers. The education programme emphasises the importance of storytelling, understanding technical basics and collaboration.

During weeks with contact instruction, local visiting teachers also participate in the teaching. They get to know the students, which can affect traineeship opportunities, since the students will already have contacts in the film industry. Visiting teachers, in turn, have the chance to meet future professionals. Students gain valuable industry contacts, which is especially useful when it comes to traineeships and job opportunities. The interaction and discussions between students during contact instruction are also important, as they influence how well they collaborate during distance learning periods.

This teaching approach consistently seeks to recreate real-life situations in both workshops and distance learning assignments. During the spring semester of the year-long programme, students complete a 10-week traineeship in which they put everything they've learned into practice.

Multiform learning

The programme includes weekly distance learning sessions totalling 20 hours, which are typically conducted via Zoom. Group collaboration is also emphasised during weeks of distance learning, and visiting lecturers provide teaching remotely when necessary.

Peer feedback is also a key teaching method during distance learning periods. When studying screenwriting, for example, students receive material to read in advance and participate in distance learning sessions. They write short film scripts and receive feedback from both the teacher and rest of the class.

Another method employed in distance learning is the use of workshops. During the workshops, students complete assignments at home using their own cameras and submit their work to the teacher. The teacher then provides feedback, and students can alter or reshoot scenes if needed. Working remotely is not always easy, but as it is currently a part of the education programme, effective and appropriate methods must be found to support its implementation.

It's important to experiment with different approaches in distance learning and to test which teaching methods are best suited for film and media education. Visiting teachers are also utilised in distance learning, for example in film editing. In such cases, the editing teacher reviews students' short films and provides feedback on how different editing choices can convey different stories.

Technical aspects and their suitability for distance learning must also be considered. The most important criterion is practicality. HD quality is sufficient, and students are not required to own expensive lighting equipment. Instead, improvising with natural light and household lamps is acceptable. Each student must have a laptop, a smartphone and a microphone that's compatible with their phone. The smartphone must be able to run applications used during courses, such as Blackmagic Cam. During the first contact instruction week, all the equipment required for distance learning weeks is reviewed together and the functioning of the setups is ensured. Equipment can also be borrowed from the institution for the distance learning weeks if needed.

Work-based learning and collaboration with working life

Kalix folkhögskola has collaborated with local schools and worked with acting students from the Luleå University of Technology and composition students from the School of Music in Piteå. During on-site workshops, students also have the opportunity to work with professional actors. As resources are allocated according to the number of students and funding is limited, the number of visiting teachers and professional actors involved may vary. However, the use of professional actors in teaching is considered highly valuable. During a study visit, students from the Sámi Education Institute also had the opportunity to participate in a workshop with professional actors.

There's a large film industry cluster in Norrbotten, and the shift from producing films to creating more TV series has increased the duration of productions and the need for labour. Kalix folkhögskola has strong ties with regional production companies as well as Filmpool Nord. Filmpool Nord is Sweden's second largest regional centre for film and television production and a pioneer in regional film production. It develops, co-produces and funds feature films, TV series, documentaries and short films. Staying in touch with industry professionals across Sweden is essential. Local professional networks are strengthened by regularly hosting visiting teachers from the industry, particularly those operating in Northern Sweden.

During the year-long programme, students complete a 10-week traineeship. The concept of traineeships is introduced early on in the programme. Although some students may feel unsure about how to approach production companies, they are supported in making these initial contacts. Nevertheless, students are encouraged to take initiative and act as independently as possible, as this helps build confidence and essential freelancing skills.

Students are encouraged to choose traineeship placements that align with their personal interests. During the traineeships, they gain hands-on experience in real film productions. Some students aim to enter the industry straight away after their studies and start their careers in assisting roles. The goal of the traineeship and the one-year programme is to ensure that students are motivated and skilled enough to continue working in the industry after graduation. There is strong evidence that this approach is effective: according to the programme's teacher, approximately 40% of graduates are still working in the field.

Although the programme's teacher maintains good relationships with production companies, these companies may not always be able to offer traineeship positions. Some productions involve long pre-production phases, during which

traineeship opportunities are limited. However, traineeships often enable teachers to establish closer contact with ongoing productions, strengthening future collaboration. One challenge is the high turnover of people in the film industry, many of whom are freelancers. Despite this, collaboration with industry professionals offers significant benefits. It helps the teacher maintain and update professional skills, for instance. These connections also provide the teacher with valuable insights into new softwares, technologies, production schedules, budgets and funding channels relevant to film production.

Best practices: Sámi Education Institute

Learning by doing
Project-based learning
Integration of Sámi languages and culture
Small group sizes and individual support
Flexible and diverse curriculum
Strong local and cultural partnerships

Best practices: Kalix folkhögskola

Learning by doing
Team learning with peer feedback
Multiform learning
Early and supported preparation for traineeships
Involvement of professional actors and visiting teachers
Strong film industry connections



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING UPPER SECONDARY FILM AND MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE SÁMI REGION

Strengthening cross-border collaboration

Two study visits were organised during the project, where film and media education students and teachers from different countries had the opportunity to get to know each other's education programmes. Students from the Sámi Education Institute visited Kalix folkhögskola in March 2024. During their visit, students took part in a two-day short film workshop and learned about the Norrbotten film industry in Luleå. In January 2025, students and a teacher from Kalix folkhögskola's film and series production visited Inari. The visit included learning about the Indigenous film industry at the Skábmagovat Film Festival as well as a two-day drone workshop.

Feedback on international mobility and collaboration has been very positive, with both being seen as significantly enhancing learning. In their feedback, students emphasised the importance of teamwork as well as getting to know students and film industry networks in another country already during their studies. There are extensive collaborative networks between the film industries in Finland and Sweden, and networking during studies can lead to new training and employment opportunities.

International study visits benefit students in many ways. A workshop held in a foreign language and in a new environment provides students with an opportunity to put what they've learned into practice. It strengthens their problem-solving and teamwork skills as well as creative thinking. Working in an international environment improves communication skills, which will be a valuable asset in future working life. The success of the workshops reinforced the students' belief that they're capable of solving challenging problems as part of a multinational team. According to the feedback survey, 86% of students found the workshop 'very useful' or 'useful' in relation to their studies or work, and 100% of students 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the workshop increased their understanding of the film industry and/or related skills. 57% of the students also reported that they had networked with people in the film industry 'very much' or 'much'.

Another key theme that emerged from the feedback on the study visits was an increased awareness and understanding of the Sámi film industry as well as Sámi languages and culture. According to the feedback survey, 75% of students 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the Skábmagovat Film Festival increased their understanding of the Sámi film industry. Students stated in the feedback survey

that the diverse films shown in the Skábmagovat Film Festival from different Indigenous peoples around the world inspired them to continue working on their own projects and highlighted themes such as women's stories, injustice and climate change. They also highly valued the opportunity to hear directors talk about their films in person and to meet people they never would've met if it wasn't for the study visit.

One of the most important development measures in the Sámi region is increasing cross-border collaboration between Finland, Sweden and Norway when it comes to media education. It directly impacts students' skills, motivation and their sense of competence. Collaboration also creates more networking opportunities for students, teachers and industry professionals alike. As collaboration increases, it's important to take into account the differences in the countries' upper secondary education. These differences can have an impact on things like credit transfer, the age of students, enrolment and on organising traineeships in another country.

Working in Arctic conditions should be strongly emphasised in the education programmes. As international productions often lack experience of working in an Arctic environment, it's more likely that local professionals will be hired. Collaboration should be promoted across borders in the Sámi region, particularly in an east-west direction, rather than hiring workers from the south for northern productions. While this may be necessary to ensure a skilled workforce, there are also risks associated with working in Arctic conditions and collaborating with Sámi people and the Sámi film industry.

Sámi languages and culture in film and media education

In a publication by the 'AV UP – New Skills for the AV Industry' project, there is a chapter on the distinctive features of linguistic minorities in production environments. The chapter primarily focuses on the film and media education of the Finnish-Swedish community in Finland. The publication discusses the conditions under which linguistic minorities in Finland could feel that they have an opportunity to work both professionally and equally in the industry through education. It also explores how, through the role of education, these distinctive features and emphases could profit the Finnish media industry. (*Engelbrektsen & Nordström 2025, 83*) The Sámi Education Institute is the only educational institution in Finland that trains AV professionals from the perspective of Sámi languages and culture. Especially at the beginning of one's career, it's important to have a place where you can get support in finding your voice and strengthening your identity. It should be noted that not all Sámi people speak the language, and those who

have lost their language should still have an opportunity to be educated from a cultural perspective (*Feodoroff 2025, 92–93*).

The language of instruction in the Sámi Education Institute's media studies is Finnish, yet Sámi culture and languages are a natural part of the curriculum. The programme hosts both Sámi and Finnish students as well as international students on occasion. Cultural diversity is taken into account at both institutional and educational levels. However, not all educational institutions have the same level of knowledge of the Sámi languages and culture as the Sámi Education Institute does as a Sámi organisation. One of the objectives of developing upper secondary film and media education in the Sámi region is therefore to promote awareness of Sámi languages and culture.

The Sámi film and media industry has been growing rapidly in recent years, and there is a shortage of professionals who speak Sámi and understand the culture. The Sámi film industry has strong ties to other Indigenous film industries. When talking about Sámi film in general and its productions, we rely on ISFI's grant requirements for film productions. Central roles in the project must be held by Sámi; in that either the producer or co-producer, and director or script writer define themselves as Sámi or speak Sámi. The requirements include that the project must be developed in Sámi in its entirety, the project must have a Sámi theme and that the main language in the film must be Sámi. (*International Sámi Film Institute 2025*)

Larger international productions up north tend to be multicultural, employing both Sámi and Nordic as well as international professionals. ISFI has launched a handbook called 'Ofelaš – The Pathfinder, Guidelines for Responsible Film-making with Sámi Culture and People'. These guidelines are meant to serve as a practical guide for filmmakers who want to include Sámi themes, topics and persons in their movies, offering guidance on how to approach this work in a respectful manner (*International Sámi Film Institute 2024*).

Educational institutions and teachers providing film and media education in the Sámi region should be aware of the Sámi film industry and its distinctive features. Raising awareness is particularly important among teachers so that they can encourage their students to engage with topics related to their own culture or to use the Sámi languages in their studies. Teachers should also be aware of the work and traineeship opportunities available within the Sámi film industry.

During this project, we broadened our understanding of the Sámi people and the Sámi film industry through joint workshops, company visits and by getting to know each other and local events. In the feedback surveys, students expressed

their satisfaction with the way these topics were handled. Kalix folkhögskola's students don't have the opportunity to study Sámi languages as part of their studies. During the joint study visit, students expressed their interest in studying Sámi. As part of the project, we thus organised six 45-minute lessons on the basics of Northern Sámi. Participation was voluntary, and the study material was made available to all.

Strengthening Nordic collaboration, creating connections with other educational institutions and professionals in the Sámi film industry as well as raising awareness of Sámi topics in education will contribute to inclusiveness in education. Increasing awareness of Sámi culture and the Sámi film industry in film and media education will help build respect and better relationships with the Sámi film industry and Sámi communities.

Continuous learning needs

In the audiovisual industry, the essential needs for continuous learning today and in the near future are working life skills, technical skills, business skills and leadership as well as internationality and sustainability (*Salo & Kaarivuo 2025, 75*). The upper secondary film and media education in the Sámi region is currently focusing particularly on working life skills and internationality. Students enrolling in the programme include young people as well as older individuals with more work experience and working life skills. However, it's important that all applicants learn and follow industry practices and network within the industry through traineeships. We learned through teachers and the traineeship programme model that in the film and media industry, the most important working life skills expected of students are the ability to adhere to schedules, ability to adapt to the intensive work pace and collaboration skills. In terms of internationality, I would like to bring up an important skill highlighted in the publication of the 'AV UP – New Skills for the AV Industry' project, which is the ability to work simultaneously in several languages in a multicultural environment (*Salo & Kaarivuo 2025, 78*). Depending on the location, there are often at least three languages used in Sámi film productions: one Nordic language, Sámi and English. In practice, the teams include people from different Nordic countries and people who speak different Sámi languages. The number of working languages can easily rise to six or even seven.

In Nordic film and media education, entrepreneurship and freelancing skills are emphasised as part of business skills. At both the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola, these skills are honed through hands-on projects and events in cooperation with representatives of working life. Traineeships also help stu-

dents both market their skills and network. However, entrepreneurial studies are not currently included in the curriculum of film and media education at either institution. Many students nevertheless need these skills after graduation, and some will also start their own businesses later on.

In the future, business skills and entrepreneurship in the audiovisual industry could form a separate study module in film and media education. This type of module could cover marketing one's own skills, terms of employment and legislation in the AV sector as well as occupational safety and well-being. This would allow students to reflect on their aptitude for entrepreneurship in a concrete manner already during their studies. One option to increase entrepreneurial skills is to participate in the JA Company Program organised by Junior Achievement (JA) Finland. In Finland, the programme offers a turnkey solution for general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions to teach entrepreneurship (Junior Achievement (JA) Finland 2025). In Sweden, the number of students participating in the programme is more than ten times higher than in Finland (Junior Achievement (JA) Finland 2024).

Collaboration with working life

In both Norrbotten and Lapland, networks within the audiovisual industry are small, and professionals know each other well. This makes it even more important for teachers to network with companies and professionals in the industry. The importance of predictability in traineeship positions is also emphasised. Teachers should build lasting and reliable relationships within the industry. These relationships must be flexible and adaptable to the changing needs of the industry, as production volumes can vary significantly from year to year.

Organising a one-year programme means that there's a new set of students each year. Every autumn, new students start their studies, and only then can teachers form an idea of the students' previous work experience and skills. It takes time to get to know the students, and they often aren't sure at first what type of a role they'd like to play in the industry or where they'd like to complete their traineeship.

Although the flexible studies allow traineeships to be completed at different stages, most students organise theirs in the spring semester once they've built up their skills. The audiovisual industry is changing rapidly, and it's becoming increasingly important to network and gain work experience already during studies. In relation to education, the significance of traineeships and collaboration with working life is continually increasing. Only continuous and close collabora-

tion between educational institutions and employers can produce the kind of professionals that the future labour market needs. In addition to artistic ability and overall competence, a wealth of knowledge is needed regarding operational environments and how to manage changes to them. (*Tarjanne 2025, 62*)

Concrete ways to develop film and media education in the Sámi region

1. PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL STUDY VISITS AND WORK-BASED LEARNING IN THE SÁMI REGION

Erasmus+ mobility projects, for example, offer opportunities for international collaboration (*Finnish National Agency for Education, 2025b*).

2. COMPLETING STUDY UNITS IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Students can complete study units abroad and benefit from each institution's strengths. Prime examples include the Sámi Education Institute's animation course and Kalix folkhögskola's short film workshop.

3. INCREASING AWARENESS OF SÁMI TOPICS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Students should be given the opportunity to include Sámi language and culture studies in their education, for example through online courses.

4. ANNUAL MEETING OF FILM AND MEDIA TEACHERS

A meeting between teachers in the Sámi region enhances networking, collaboration and future development.

5. STRENGTHENING THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF FILM AND MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE SÁMI REGION

The Arctic operational environment and the distinctive features of the Sámi region should be increasingly taken into account in curricula.

6. STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION WITH WORKING LIFE IN THE SÁMI REGION

Extensive collaboration with regional operators promotes the quality and appeal of education.

7. INCORPORATING ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES INTO EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Film and media education should include entrepreneurial studies to support students in becoming freelancers or entrepreneurs.

8. DEVELOPING COLLABORATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT FIELDS OF EDUCATION

Identifying synergistic benefits and common approaches between different fields of education.

SUMMARY:

1. International mobility
2. Completing study units abroad
3. Increasing awareness of Sámi topics
4. Annual meeting of teachers
5. Strengthening the distinctive features of education in the Sámi region
6. Strengthening collaboration with working life
7. Entrepreneurial studies into the curricula
8. Collaboration between fields of education

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APPENDIX A

Curricula of education programmes

Sámi Education Institute: <https://www.sogsakk.fi/fi/opiskelijalle/opiskelu/osaa-misen-arvioinnin-toteuttamissuunnitelmat-ja-opetussuunnitelmat/saamen-kielen-ja-kulttuurin-lukuvuosikoulutukset/media-ala>

Kalix folkhögskola: Kursplan/Helår, Film & serieproduktion 2023/2024

Study visits

Kalix folkhögskola 11.–15.3.2024: 11 students, 3 teachers, project manager

Sámi Education Institute 24.–29.1.2025: 9 students, 3 teachers, project manager

Interviews

Erkki Feodoroff 2.4.2025

Anders Durvall 19.3.2025 & 20.3.2025

Group interviews with teachers 27.1.2024 & 22.4.2024

Anders Durvall

Erkki Feodoroff

Jukka Vuorela-Morottaja

Berit Marie Lise Eira

Susanne Persson

Elisabeth Gustavsson

Student feedback surveys

Study visit to Kalix: 7 respondents

Study visit to Inari: 8 respondents