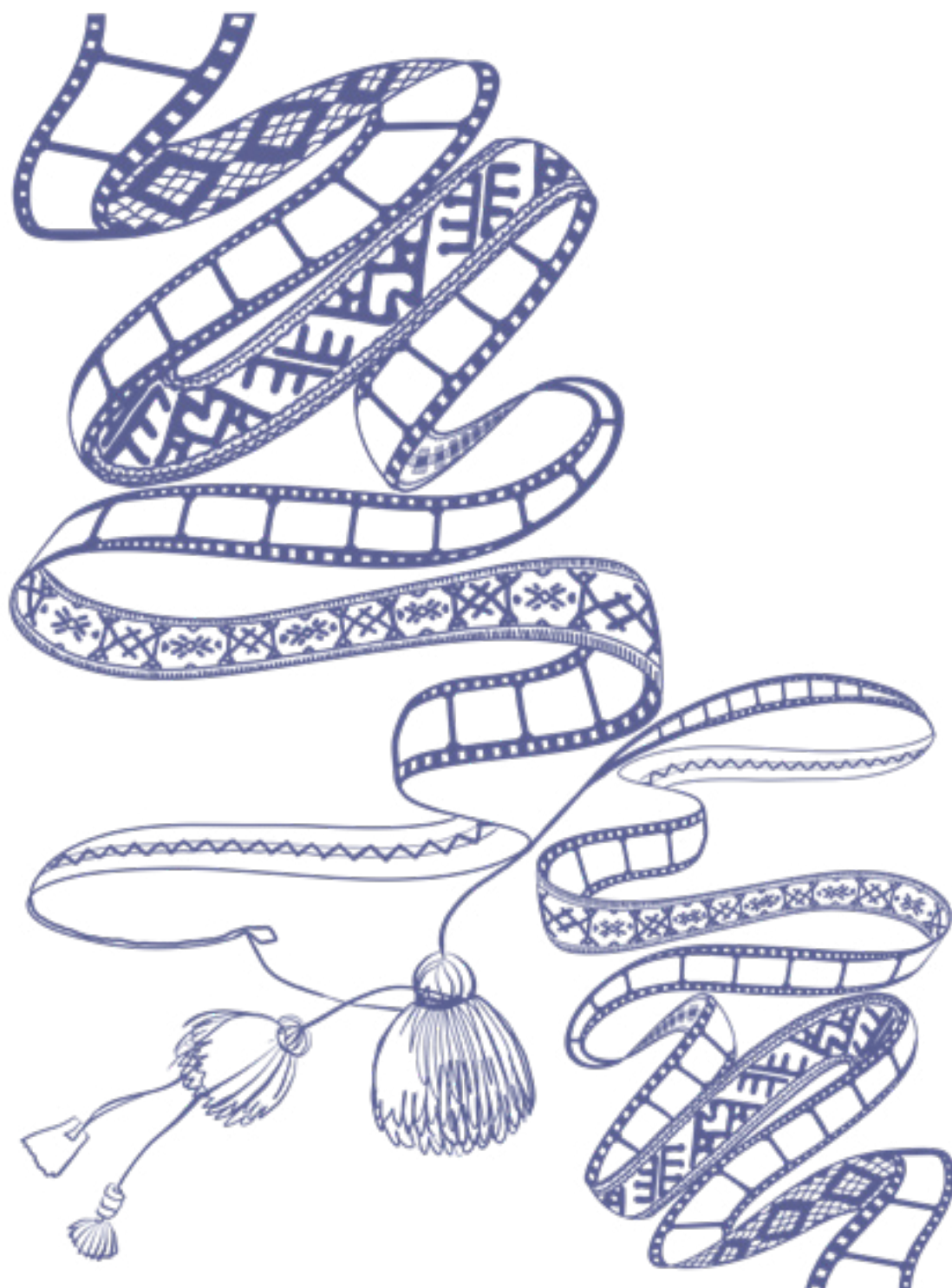

STRENGTHENING SKILLS AND BUILDING CAREERS

RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOOD PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES FOR
TRAINEESHIPS IN FILM PRODUCTIONS IN THE SÁMI REGION



ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

This report presents the outcomes and recommendations from piloting a cross-border traineeship programme model in the Sámi region, coordinated by the Sámi Education Institute (*Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus, Sámi oahpahusguovddáš, SAKK*), the International Sámi Film Institute (*Internášunála Sámi Filbmainstituhtta, ISFI*) and the folk high school Kalix folkhögskola. The programme aimed to strengthen film and media education by aligning it with the needs of the growing Sámi film industry and by enhancing youth employment opportunities.

The pilot saw 12 trainees take part in six film productions in the Sámi regions of Finland, Sweden and Norway. The traineeships ranged from 11 to 90 days, with emphasis being on long placements of more than 35 days. Participants included students from the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola, as well as young Sámi people from outside these institutions. The programme focused on practical experience, cultural inclusion and cross-border collaboration.

Key findings highlight the importance of clear roles, structured orientation for trainees, strong mentorship and support throughout the traineeship as well as cross-border mobility to foster regional collaboration and to emphasise the value of Sámi languages and cultural knowledge in productions.

Feedback from both trainees and production representatives was overwhelmingly positive. The trainees reported significant growth in skills, networks and career clarity. The Sámi productions emphasised the need for culturally knowledgeable workers. The productions also supported expanding traineeships across all production phases.

The findings include ten key recommendations to improve future traineeship models, focusing on better coordination, broader access and long-term partnerships. These insights support ISFI's upcoming Film Exčelerator Sápmi programme, which aims to further support Sámi film talents through mentorship, training and international networking.



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INTRODUCTION

Project background and objectives

The 'Recommendations on good practices and guidelines for traineeships in film productions 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 (*Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus, Sámi oahpahušguovddáš, SAKK*) coordinates the project, while Kalix folkhögskola and the International Sámi Film Institute (*Internašunála Sámi Filbmmainstituhtta, 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

Objectives of piloting a traineeship programme model

Our objective is to pilot a cross-border traineeship programme model in the Sámi regions of Finland, Sweden and Norway. Another objective is to create traineeship opportunities in film productions within the Sámi region for talented and motivated film and media students and for the Sámi youth in general. The goal is to support the rapidly growing Sámi film industry by increasing the number of film professionals who have knowledge of Sámi languages and culture through a planned and targeted traineeship programme model.

We hope that the planned traineeship programme model will enhance the benefits of traineeships by taking into account the needs of working life, such as those of film productions and production companies, as well as the needs of trainees and educational institutions providing film and media education in the Sámi region.

Through this traineeship programme model, we provide recommendations based on real-life experiences for organising future traineeships in the Sámi region and for identifying possible differences in the needs of Sámi and Nordic film productions. We hope to utilise the results of the pilot more broadly in the audiovisual sector to strengthen cooperation between working life and education.

Report structure and collection of feedback

This report on good practices and guidelines for traineeships in film productions in the Sámi region 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.

A total of six productions participated in the traineeship programme model, four of which were Sámi productions and two Nordic. A total of 12 people took part in the traineeship programme, with six completing their training in Sámi productions and the other six in Nordic productions. The length of the traineeships ranged from 11 to 90 days, with the emphasis being on long traineeships of more than 35 days. Feedback was collected from film and media teachers at upper secondary schools involved in the project, representatives of film productions as well as students who participated in the traineeships. More details about the traineeships, interviews and feedback surveys can be found at the end of the report in the Appendix section. 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 collected data is not linked to individuals, and the aim has been to provide a reliable picture of both the implementation of the traineeship programme model and the recommendations for the future. Project partners have participated in proofreading this report.

The report provides a brief overview of upper secondary film and media education in the Sámi region, focusing particularly on collaboration with working life and work-based learning. We'll first demonstrate how the traineeship programme model was implemented, after which we'll review the experiences and results from the perspectives of trainees, film productions representing working life, and film and media teachers from partnering institutions. Finally, we make recommendations for the future implementation of the traineeship programme model in the film and media industry in the Sámi region.

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 also hope that the report will encourage the development of closer cross-border networks between the film and media education institutions in the Sámi region, other educational institutions in the area as well as working life. With this report, we hope to improve the transition from education to working life through work-based learning, and to strengthen the role of work-based approaches in education. We hope to see closer collaboration between educational institutions and employers as well as better networking between students and working life already during their studies. We provide education in a northern setting and have a unique way of doing things. In this report, we've tried to take into account the distinctive features of both film and media education and the whole industry in the Sámi region.

We would like to thank all the teachers, students and productions as well as the International Sámi Film Institute for participating in piloting the traineeship programme model and for providing valuable feedback through our surveys and interviews.

UPPER SECONDARY FILM AND MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE SÁMI REGION

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. Two partnering institutions are involved who provide education in the audiovisual field: the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola. In this report, we use the official names of the education programmes, which are 'Media studies' at the Sámi Education Institute and 'Film and series production' (*film- och serieproduktion*) at Kalix folkhögskola. 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 (*Sámi Parliament's Educational Office 2025*). The Sámi Education Institute is located in Inari, Finland. In Sweden, the traditional Sámi region is defined by the Swedish Sámi Parliament (Sametinget) and the reindeer herding villages (*samebyt*). 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*) The folk high school Kalix folkhögskola is located in Kalix, Sweden. When we talk about film and media education in the Sámi region, we're generally referring to the Sámi regions of Finland, Sweden and Norway.

In addition to the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola, there are also other educational institutions that provide upper secondary education in film and media in the Sámi regions of Sweden and Norway. The proportion of film and media studies varies depending on the country, institution and curriculum. In this report, when we talk from the perspective of educational institutions, we're referring to the Sámi Education Institute's media studies and Kalix folkhögskola's film and series production programme.

When talking about Sámi film in general and its productions, we rely on ISFI's definition of a Sámi film and its grant requirements for film productions. Central roles in a 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 2025d*)

The importance of traineeships in film and media education

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*) Up north, the AV sector includes Nordic, international and Sámi productions. The number of productions in the Sámi film industry has grown significantly in recent years, resulting in a shortage of skilled workers with knowledge of the Sámi languages and culture. Sámi film has thus shown tremendous potential in recent years. 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 (*Hatakka, Luukkonen & Syrjänen 2025, 11*). Finland's attractiveness as a production location is growing, however, and larger international operators in particular are showing increasing interest (*Louhelainen, S-R 2025, 25*).

Film industry professionals tend to form close-knit networks, and relationships and reputation go a long way in the industry. Many domestic professionals work seamlessly across 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*). It would be important for film and media students to network with future industry professionals already during their studies and for them to gain experience of working abroad through traineeships. Institutions offering film and media education in the Sámi region are quite small, and the maximum intake of students is 10 per year in Inari and 16 per year in Kalix. In recent years, however, the number of enrolling students has been less than the maximum capacity. Cross-border collaboration is crucial already during studies, both between different educational institutions and between educational institutions and working life. Only continuous and close collaboration between educational institutions and employers can produce the kind of professionals that the future labour market needs (*Tarjanne 2025, 62*).

Although the emphasis in the field is on practical skills and networks, education provides a vital foundation and concrete opportunities for developing skills and establishing networks. Practice plays a key role. (*Martiskainen 2025, 73*) In his publication 'Osaajapulaa ja työttömyyttä – Nuorten mutkikas tie av-alalle' (2023), editor Antti-Veikko Salo emphasises the importance of traineeships during studies. In the audiovisual industry, traineeships are of great importance for future employment, and the industry should create conditions that allow students to establish professional contacts as much as possible already during their studies, regardless of the economic situation. To make this happen, both educational institutions and employers in the field must be involved. The publication also highlights the important role employers play in helping young people learn and enter working life by facilitating connections between the two sides.

A survey carried out as part of the Re:connect project found that employers consider successful traineeships, especially those related to the field of study, to be one of the most important aspects of networking and skills development (*Salo & Kaarivuo 2023, 61*). The project proposed that finding trainees should be made as easy as possible for productions. Joint planning between educational institutions and production companies would make it possible to anticipate future trainee needs and for traineeships to be incorporated into curricula more effectively. The project thus recommends that educational institutions establish direct links with partner companies and set up a structure for annual traineeships (*Salo & Kaarivuo 2023, 64*).

The reform of vocational education and training, which came into effect in 2018, aimed to reform education so that it would better meet the needs of students and working life. (*Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017*) The importance and

use of work-based learning in vocational education and training has increased. Traineeships are particularly important in film and media education.

The Sámi Education Institute – Work-based learning and collaboration with working life

The Sámi Education Institute 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'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 is flexible, and it's able to respond to the rapidly changing needs of the industry. The programme provides students with basic knowledge of filmmaking and can serve as a stepping stone for further studies, as an introduction to the film and media industry or as a way of building up individual media skills. It also provides an opportunity for students to network with people who operate and work in the film and media industry in the Sámi region.

Collaboration with working life is essential in the Sámi Education Institute's media studies, with many study units being closely linked to local organisations and events. In addition to collaboration with working life, the studies also include a work-based learning period. The period lasts for four weeks and is worth 7 competence points. 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 language skills, production locations and resources. Although cooperating with Sámi organisations is important, there is also traineeship cooperation outside the Sámi region and in a wider field. Some students also choose to seek placements in Southern Finland, where there are more suitable options available.

At the moment, finding paid traineeships is difficult due to the general economic situation. 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 placements to the students' individual development needs. Students generally have to organise their own placement, although teachers provide support in finding one if necessary. Predicting the state of productions is challenging in the film industry, 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.

Kalix folkhögskola – Work-based learning and collaboration with working life

The school system in Sweden and Norway is similar to that in Finland, although there are some differences as well. All countries have extensive education systems regarding folk high schools. Kalix folkhögskola is located in Sweden's Norrbotten County and was founded in 1939. The institution 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. The one-year programme covers the basics, after which students can either continue their studies or go and work in the film industry in assisting roles.

The film and series production programme and its teacher have close and well-established collaboration with working life. Kalix folkhögskola has also collaborated with local schools and worked with the acting students at Luleå University of Technology and composition students at the School of Music in Piteå. During on-site workshops, students also have the opportunity to work 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 with Filmpool Nord, which is Sweden's second largest regional centre for film and television production and a pioneer in regional film production. Staying in touch with industry professionals across Sweden is essential. The folk high school strengthens its networks with local professionals 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. Students are still encouraged to 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 directly and begin their careers in assisting roles. The goal of the traineeships 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. During traineeships, however, teachers often form closer ties with ongoing productions, which helps foster stronger collaboration in the future.

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 their professional skills as well. These connections also provide the teacher with valuable insights into new softwares, technologies, timeframes, budgets and funding channels relevant to film production.

INTERNATIONAL SÁMI FILM INSTITUTE – FACILITATOR OF TRAINEESHIPS IN SÁMI FILM PRODUCTIONS

The International Sámi Film Institute (*Internašunála Sámi Filbmainstituhtta, ISFI*) located in Kautokeino, Norway, has been building a sustainable, innovative and international Sámi film industry since 2009. ISFI has supported more than a hundred Sámi and Indigenous films all the way to their premieres. They support Sámi film professionals and aspiring ones in many ways – they provide opportunities to develop, produce and distribute Sámi films in Sámi languages and facilitate access for Sámi filmmakers to international film markets and festivals. ISFI's vision is to build a sustainable and innovative Sámi film industry that is globally visible and attractive. Values guiding their operations include respecting and connecting with nature and all living things as well as cooperating and networking both locally and globally. As Sámi people are spread out across four countries, borderless thinking forms the backbone of the operations.

In 2024, ISFI awarded script support to eight feature films, four series, six short films and four documentaries. In addition, the institute has provided development support to six documentaries, one short film and one game. Production support has been given to one documentary, two TV series, three feature films and three short films. There were also three distribution grants, three fast track grants along with 36 travel and expertise grants. In addition to all these, three

dubbing grants were also given out. In total, ISFI awarded nearly NOK 13.4 million across all grant schemes in 2024. (*International Sámi Film Institute 2025*)

Their current funding is around €3 million per year, and the aim is to increase it to €7.5 million. This increase in funding will allow more substantial grants to be awarded to larger productions, which will allow the Sámi film industry to grow. The increase in funding will also allow Sámi production companies to grow their operations. Larger productions will provide work for more people in the production process, which will create much needed continuity in the industry. Capacity can also be built by creating traineeship positions and providing more opportunities for Sámi filmmakers. ISFI has a strong culture of dialogue with Sámi filmmakers and first-hand knowledge of the industry's needs.

Over the past 15 years, ISFI has succeeded in establishing itself as a solid expert organisation and in developing the Sámi film industry to have extensive international networks and significant impact. The institute has initiated work towards a national mandate, with which they would take on the main responsibility for financing and developing the Sámi film industry in Norway. ISFI aims to promote and strengthen the Sámi community's ability to share their own stories in their own way. The ability to own and manage one's own stories is recognised internationally as a prerequisite for lasting reconciliation, and it has been a guiding principle for international reconciliation processes.

During the previous project, there were plans for the University of Lapland to apply for project funding in order to create a master's degree in film and media education with Indigenous storytelling and digital media as central themes (*Jäppinen 2022*). We are now delighted to announce that a new Master's Programme in Arctic Indigenous Cinema will launch in 2025. The programme is opening for applications in September 2025, with studies beginning in January 2026. The project is funded by Interreg Aurora, and the lead partners are the University of Lapland, the Sámi University of Applied Sciences and Umeå University. This initiative has been developed in collaboration with ISFI as well as researchers, artists and Indigenous storytellers connected to the project research group (*Interreg Aurora, 2025*).

In this ongoing project, we've focused on creating opportunities for young people in the film industry and on strengthening collaboration between working life and educational institutions by piloting an innovative traineeship programme model for Sámi film productions in the Sámi region. The experiences gained through this Erasmus+ project have been valuable for the new development and talent programme Film Exčelerator Sápmi, which will run from autumn 2025 to the end of 2026. (*International Sámi Film Institute 2025c*)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME MODEL

A total of six productions participated in the traineeship programme model, four of which were Sámi productions and two Nordic. The traineeships were organised between 3 March 2024 and 11 May 2025. A total of 12 people participated in the programme model, with six completing their traineeships in Sámi productions and the other six in Nordic productions. The length of the traineeships ranged from 11 to 90 days, with the emphasis being on long traineeships of more than 35 days. More detailed information about the traineeships can be found at the end of this report in Appendix A.

The aim of the traineeship programme model was to recruit trainees from both the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola, as well as young Sámi people from the Sámi region. One specific goal was to pilot cross-border collaboration between Finland, Sweden and Norway. The minimum number of trainees was two film and media students from the Sámi Education Institute, two film and series production students from Kalix folkhögskola and two trainees from the Sámi region outside these institutions. The minimum number of trainees was eight in total, and the minimum number of Sámi film productions was two. These goals were achieved successfully. A total of two students from the Sámi Education Institute, five from Kalix folkhögskola and five from outside these institutions participated in the traineeship programme model. Eight of these trainees were under 30 years old. Six of the trainees had less than a year of work experience in the film and media industry, four had 1–3 years and two had more than five years.

All filming locations and therefore traineeship locations were in the Sámi region. Three traineeships were organised in Norway, two in Sweden and one in Finland. In Norway, the traineeships were organised in Karasjok, Alta, Skaidi and Tromsø. In Sweden, they were organised in Kiruna as well as several other locations in Norrbotten County. In Finland, the traineeships were organised in Ylläs and Inari, while the orientation periods were held in Rovaniemi, which isn't part of the Sámi region. More detailed information about the traineeships and locations can be found in Appendix A.

Initially, the plan was to arrange an orientation period in Inari for at least 70% of the trainees before their traineeships, in accordance with their trainee job descriptions. As the project progressed and the initial plans for the orientation became more precise, we realised that it would be challenging to organise orientation before the traineeships, given that it would take place in another country with different organisations and people than those involved in the pro-

ductions and mentoring. We amended the plan so that ISFI became responsible for organising the orientation in cooperation with selected productions for those participating in Sámi film productions. For the Nordic productions, orientation was provided by the productions together with the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola. The content, length and functionality of the orientation have been assessed through feedback surveys and interviews in the section 'Orientation and support in the traineeship programme model'.

EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME MODEL

Production representatives

Data was collected from participating productions through a feedback survey and interviews. The respondents were production representatives who had first-hand knowledge of the trainees and their performance. Depending on the production, the respondents were either producers or mentors of the trainees. They assessed the trainees' overall performance and gave a score of 7.67 on a scale from 1 to 10.

From the perspective of the productions, the objective of the traineeship programme model was to equip new talent with the practical skills and professional competence needed to secure employment in future film productions or pursue further education in film to advance their careers. The traineeship programmes were considered highly important in both Sámi and Nordic film productions. The smaller the production, the more significant the involvement of trainees became.

Before their traineeships began, it was considered important to emphasise the productions' fast pace to the trainees. Cooperation with educational institutions and ISFI was highlighted, and respondents stressed the importance of recruiting new film workers locally. This approach ensures that local knowledge and experience are reflected in film productions, often resulting in higher quality and potential savings in terms of time and cost.

Respondents expressed interest in exploring the possibility of organising traineeships during pre-production and post-production phases. These roles could include, for example, participation in casting and reading sessions during the scriptwriting phase as well as involvement in the editing process during post-production. Longer-term traineeships in marketing and communication were also seen as possible, such as managing social media campaigns.

Production representatives emphasised the value of personal collaborative relationships with educational institutions, teachers and organisations in the field. Such relationships would help in anticipating future traineeship opportunities. One suggested way of strengthening collaboration was through workshops, where young people could meet potential employers early on in their studies or careers. In turn, employers could gain valuable insights from young people, particularly when it comes to ideating and evaluating content aimed at young audiences.

Shorter traineeship periods were also considered suitable for younger and less experienced students, especially when there was a need for extras during filming. In these cases, collaboration with educational institutions was deemed essential, and having a teacher or contact person present during traineeships was thought to benefit both students and production.

Productions in the Sámi region operate in an Arctic environment, which presents challenges including a cold climate, long distances and the need to secure workers on short notice. When several large productions are in the filming phase simultaneously, finding available workers can be difficult. The irregular nature of film productions and their concentration at certain periods, often in the winter, was also seen as challenging.

Production representatives emphasised the importance of trainee motivation and initiative. Local knowledge was also highly valued. While educational background and experience in the film and media industry were appreciated, the trainee's personality, motivation and ability to thrive in the traineeship were considered more important than extensive experience. However, confidence and initiative gained from previous work experience were seen as strengths. It's important to select trainees through an application process where they can show genuine motivation. Conducting interviews before selecting trainees also ensures that their expectations regarding their role in the production are realistic.

Cross-border collaboration in the Sámi region should also be developed further. In this project, the productions and thus the traineeships were located in Norway (3), Sweden (2) and Finland (1). The trainees came from Norway (5), Sweden (5) and Finland (2). From the facilitators' perspective, the cross-border traineeship programme model was well organised. Of all the trainees, however, only one completed their traineeship in a country other than their own. This low level of cross-border mobility was due to several factors, such as the small number of Sámi-speaking film and media students this year, the productions' need for trainees with Sámi language skills and the students' inability to spend several months abroad.

Looking ahead, it's particularly important to further develop cross-border traineeships, especially in terms of trainee mobility. Many cultural aspects transcend national borders, and productions often use Sámi, English, Nordic languages and Finnish, depending on the context. In general, productions are international in nature. The next step should be to enhance cross-border mobility for trainees and to remove obstacles that hinder students from moving between countries. These obstacles might include different tax systems in the Nordic countries as well as differences in upper secondary education and collective labour agreements in the AV sector.

Sámi film productions

The primary goal of organising traineeships in Sámi film productions is to increase the number of film professionals in Sápmi. By providing hands-on experience in real productions, we can strengthen local skills and create more opportunities for Sámi people to work in the film industry. Another key objective is to introduce trainees to the diversity within Sámi film productions.

Dedicated traineeship programmes are crucial for building a sustainable Sámi film industry. They offer local talents the chance to gain work experience, develop their skills and strengthen their connection to the cultural and artistic values of the Sámi community. Without such programmes, it would be significantly more difficult to form a skilled workforce within the industry. These traineeship programmes are essential for building a new generation of Sámi filmmakers and crew, ensuring cultural continuity and developing professional capacity in the Sámi region.

Programmes dedicated to the Sámi film industry will continue to be important in the future. Additional support could also be provided through mentorships and partnerships with other Sámi organisations. Representatives of the Sámi film industry were asked how important it is to have dedicated traineeship programmes like this one. The average score they gave was 10.00 on a scale from 1 to 10. When asked how well the programme enabled trainees to understand the specific features and needs of the Sámi film industry, the average score was 8.75.

According to the respondents, the number of trainees should be increased from the current level and connections with film and media education institutions in the Sámi region should be further strengthened. In Sámi film productions, special emphasis was placed on Sámi trainees who had local and cultural knowledge as well as proficiency in the Sámi languages. The Sámi film industry needs skilled workers with expertise in various areas, including cultural knowledge,

duodji and Sámi design, costume, set work, location scouting, post-production and filming as well as editing using softwares such as Premiere Pro or Final Cut. Cooperation with educational institutions offering Sámi handicraft (duodji) programmes was seen as a valuable opportunity.

There is also a need for employees with local knowledge to fill coordination roles, such as line producer, production manager and local coordinator. In Sápmi, there is considerable expertise in organising large-scale events, such as weddings, film festivals and music events, which are often seasonal. Trainees for these roles could be recruited not only from film and media students but also from students in other fields.

The industry should aim to place more Sámi individuals in key roles such as production managers, line producers and first assistant directors. These roles are essential for cultural mediation and operational success. While progress has been made, Sámi professionals are still underrepresented in some of these key positions, with many serving in assistant roles. The transition to more responsible roles is seen as both necessary and timely. One way to gain experience in these roles would be to participate in large-scale international productions supported by grants.

Productions should aim to have Sámi people in the majority of leadership roles and have them supported by multicultural teams. Pre-production seminars or workshops are also needed to prepare non-Sámi crew members to work in Sámi film productions. The importance and use of Sámi languages should also be emphasised for non-Sámi crew members.

Upper secondary educational institutions

Traineeships are an important part of film and media education in both the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola. Traineeships are part of the studies and are usually unpaid. In Finland, students in education programmes based on training agreements are not employed and therefore do not receive a salary or other compensation (*Finnish National Agency for Education, 2025*). Traineeships can also be carried out through apprenticeship training, in which case the student enters into a written, fixed-term employment or civil service contract and receives a salary (*Finnish National Board of Education, 2025*). In the one-year film and media education programmes at the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola, traineeships have mainly been unpaid. There are many different types of traineeships used in the audiovisual industry. Before starting any placement, students should find out about the conditions, guidance and

possible remuneration for the traineeships. Unpaid traineeships are always arranged either through a formal educational institution or an employment area. The collective labour agreement for film and TV productions includes a clause on trainees' pay and employment relationships, and trainees are subject to the same legislation as other employees. (*Tarvainen, 2022*) For all students going on unpaid traineeships, a contract was signed between the educational institution and the employer. For paid traineeships, an apprenticeship agreement is drawn up between the educational institution, the employer and the student, and the employer also drafts an employment contract with the student. In Sweden, paid traineeships also involve drafting up an employment contract with the student.

Due to the current situation in the audiovisual industry, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain paid traineeships. Long distances also raise costs related to logistics and accommodation, reducing the likelihood of securing traineeships in productions that take place across multiple locations – especially in the north, where distances are greater than in the south. The situation is similar in Northern Sweden, particularly in the Norrbotten County, although the industry has shown signs of recovery. In the Sámi film industry, the outlook is more positive and traineeships are often paid. In traineeships arranged through the International Sámi Film Institute, trainees were always paid a salary.

Traineeships are best scheduled during the spring semester, after students have acquired basic knowledge of filmmaking. Teachers feel responsible for upholding the reputation of their schools by ensuring that students are well prepared and professional. While careful selection of students entering film and media education programmes is ideal, limited applicant numbers sometimes mean that all candidates must be accepted, which can pose challenges for educators.

It is essential for educators to provide students with a realistic understanding of the film industry, especially for younger students with limited work experience. Strengthening students' working life skills during their education is crucial in order to avoid issues with deadlines and schedules during the traineeships. Teachers should emphasise not only technical knowledge but also soft skills such as responsibility, communication and the ability to take initiative. Responsibility and independent decision-making should be practised throughout the academic year. Students should also be taught to behave like professionals right from the start. Punctuality, attentiveness and proactive engagement are all key factors. A good trainee is always listening, observing and learning. Trainees should be encouraged to stay engaged on set even after completing tasks and to ask questions. This was emphasised by both teachers and production representatives.

Education institutions should communicate with production companies in advance to gain an understanding of the tasks students will be expected to perform. This allows teachers to tailor instruction to better prepare students for their specific roles before the traineeships begin. Teachers should also learn about students' interests and strengths to help identify suitable roles within the film productions.

Maintaining regular contact with industry professionals helps identify upcoming productions and potential placement opportunities. Institutions should collaborate with municipalities and local organisations in the film and media sector, such as ISFI and Filmpool Nord. Teachers should also stay informed about regional production incentives and upcoming projects to arrange training opportunities accordingly. Examples of such initiatives include the new Master's Programme in Arctic Indigenous Cinema starting in January 2026, ISFI's talent programme Film Exčelerator Sápmi as well as Sámi University of Applied Sciences' course on Sámi and Indigenous Storytelling through Film (*Samisk høgskole 2025*).

Teachers should maintain contact with both students and mentors during the traineeship to monitor progress and address any issues in a timely manner. After the traineeships, students reflect on their experiences through reports or diaries. Feedback discussions with the production team, or at least with the teacher, help consolidate learning and identify areas for improvement. In the interviews, teachers stressed the importance of maintaining a safe and permissive atmosphere throughout the studies. Students should feel safe to make mistakes during their education, as this fosters learning and innovation. During traineeships in a real work environment, however, reliability and professionalism are expected.

Orientation and support in the traineeship programme model

Both Sámi and Nordic film productions participated in the traineeship programme model. ISFI coordinated the selection of trainees and communications with Sámi film productions, while communications with Nordic productions was handled directly by the Erasmus+ project manager as well as the film and media teachers at the Sámi Education Institute and Kalix folkhögskola.

In Sámi film productions, trainees were introduced to their roles and tasks by both producers and ISFI. The latter also conducted individual meetings between each producer or film production team and trainees in order to define roles and clarify specific tasks and responsibilities. Based on the experiences gained from

the first traineeship period, ISFI began hosting joint sessions with both trainees and producers during the second round. These sessions provided a deeper understanding of the expectations for trainees in a professional production environment, the roles of producers and film production teams, the goals of the Erasmus+ traineeship programme model and ISFI's role in the process.

For Nordic productions, an initial meeting was held with the Erasmus+ project manager and a representative from the educational institution, typically the teacher responsible for film and media education. These meetings established the terms and conditions for the traineeships and clarified the roles of the students. Topics included how the traineeships fit into students' studies and the types of collaboration and agreements that need to be established between the educational institution and the production companies. In productions involving students, the teachers and the Erasmus+ project manager remained in contact with the trainees throughout the period.

Orientation at the beginning and during production was primarily the responsibility of a designated production employee working closely with the trainees. Orientation was divided into three phases: pre-arrival orientation (often conducted remotely), on-site orientation at the start of the traineeship and ongoing task-specific guidance throughout the traineeship.

The average duration of orientation was 1–2 days. Contractual matters were discussed and remote meetings held prior to this. In some cases, orientation was shorter, lasting only a few hours. This was the case in some short film productions, for example, or when trainees rotated between departments. Since productions and departmental tasks vary significantly, much of the orientation could not be conducted in advance.

Trainees' experiences of the orientation and support they received during the traineeship generally aligned with the production teams' assessments of the orientation they provided. However, a small difference was noted: in responses to question 12 (for production representatives) and question 8 (for trainees), production representatives rated the comprehensiveness and depth of their orientation during the first week slightly higher than the trainees did. When asked about the support and guidance received during the traineeships, most trainees (8 out of 12, or 66.7%) reported that they received support and felt comfortable asking for help when needed. Three respondents (25%) felt that support was limited but available upon request, while one respondent (8.3%) felt that they didn't receive any support.

Some trainees didn't view the lack of support as problematic, especially if they had prior experience in film production and were already familiar with the tasks. For others, this lack of support posed a challenge and negatively affected their overall experience. Trainees who reported receiving good or excellent orientation highlighted the preparation of their mentor and the time allocated for getting accustomed to their new role. They felt warmly welcomed and had the opportunity to ask questions. This strong connection between trainees and mentors was evident throughout the traineeship and contributed to its success and the trainees' satisfaction.

When planning orientation, more attention should be placed on the period before and at the start of the traineeships. If possible, a meeting should be arranged in advance between the trainee and the production representative responsible for them. Regular, weekly check-ins were also suggested, especially in productions involving multiple trainees. Better preparation before arriving on set would be beneficial, particularly regarding production expectations. For example, a digital onboarding pack could help set realistic expectations and ease the transition. Additionally, some respondents suggested organising an orientation event in collaboration with ISFI.

12. Which of the following did trainee's job orientation (first week of traineeship) include?

● very little ● little ● some ● quite much ● very much

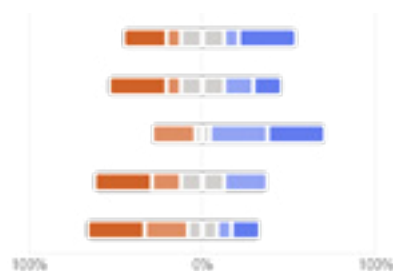
Film industry standards and practices relevant to your role
 Technical training and equipment familiarization
 Networking and relationship building
 Safety instructions related to working in film productions
 Sámi film industry-specific topics or guidelines



8. Which of the following did your job orientation (first week of traineeship) include?

● very little ● little ● some ● quite much ● very much

Film industry standards and practices relevant to your role
 Technical training and equipment familiarization
 Networking and relationship building
 Safety instructions related to working in film productions
 Sámi film industry-specific topics or guidelines



Trainees

Trainees rated their overall traineeship experience with an average score of 7.50 on a scale from 1 to 10. Those who had the opportunity to explore multiple roles during their traineeship valued the variety, as it helped them understand how different departments collaborate. It also enabled them to discover their own interests and strengths. Some trainees already knew which role or department they wanted to work in, and for them, the opportunity to focus on their area of interest was particularly important.

The most rewarding experiences during the traineeships were the moments spent working alongside film professionals and being on set during filming. These experiences helped trainees gain a deeper understanding of how the film industry operates. Additionally, moments when trainees felt useful and appreciated for their contributions were highlighted as especially meaningful.

Trainees appreciated supportive environments, the opportunity to ask questions and the chance to learn from colleagues. They particularly valued the 'learning by doing' approach. For most trainees, the experience was eye-opening and helpful in shaping their career interests. The traineeships played a key role in bridging the gap between school and real film work. Many also appreciated the more challenging conditions, as these allowed them to take on greater responsibility. Trainees who were given significant responsibility felt valued as members of the team, and believed their skills were recognised.

Trainees in Sámi productions also felt that they were able to apply their cultural knowledge, which was appreciated by the production teams. They had opportunities to network with Sámi filmmakers, and the collaboration felt natural. Sámi trainees also felt that they were able to share their knowledge of Sámi culture and languages with other crew members. Some reported that the traineeship helped strengthen their Sámi language skills.

Interest in film and media as a career was already high at the beginning of the traineeships, with an average score of 8.91. This figure increased slightly to 9.08 by the end. Trainees also stressed the importance of networking. On average, the trainees' rating of their own professional networks in the film and media industry increased from 4.55 at the beginning of the traineeships to 7.25 at the end, representing a 59% increase. Additionally, they rated their skills in the film and media industry at 5.36 at the beginning of the traineeships and at 7.00 at the end, which was an increase of 30.1%. This highlights the significant impact a single traineeship period can have at the start of a career. Trainees who completed their placement in Sámi film productions were also asked to rate

their understanding of the Sámi film industry. Their average rating increased from 5.20 to 7.17, representing a 37.9% improvement during the traineeships.

Trainees were also asked how well they were able to develop specific skills during the traineeships (see question 10). The responses indicated that the trainees felt they had developed all the listed skills to a significant extent. The only slightly lower result was in technical skills, which is understandable given that trainee roles often don't involve highly technical tasks.

*How would you rate your **interest** in film and media as a career option at the moment?*

8,91 → 9,08

*How would you rate your **networks** in the film and media industry at the moment?*

4,55 → 7,25

*How would you rate your **skills** in the film and media industry at the moment?*

5,36 → 7,00

*How would you rate your **understanding** in the Sámi film industry?*

5,20 → 7,17

How would you generally rate your traineeship experience in production?

7,50

10. As a trainee in film productions, it is possible to develop many kinds of skills. Rate how well you were able to develop the following skills during the traineeship period.

● very little ● little ● some ● quite much ● very much

Communication skills: The ability to communicate clearly and effectively with different teams and stakeholders is essential in...

Teamwork skills: Ability to work collaboratively with different people in different roles and environments.

Organizational skills: Ability to manage time, resources and tasks effectively and systematically

Creativity: The ability to think innovatively and bring new ideas to film production.

Technical skills: Depending on the role of the traineeship, it may be possible to learn various technical skills such as camera...

Stress tolerance: The ability to maintain calmness and efficiency in stressful situations that can occur in a busy production...

Adaptability: The ability to quickly adapt to changing situations and environments.

Independent work: Ability to take responsibility for own tasks and work independently when necessary.



Trainees also provided suggestions for improving future traineeship programmes. Those who had completed their traineeship with little or no financial compensation expressed a desire for trainees to receive payment in addition to coverage of maintenance costs.

Other suggestions focused on the coordination, communication and orientation aspects of the traineeships. While most trainees felt they had received adequate

orientation and generally had positive experiences, they stressed the need for improved communication between the educational institutions or traineeship coordinators and the production companies hosting the trainees. They highlighted the importance of clearly defining the trainee's role and responsibilities at the outset of the traineeship.

Trainees also emphasised the importance of ensuring the commitment of mentors or supervisors to their roles and consistent support for the trainee throughout the production process. Follow-up visits from the educational institutions or traineeship coordinators were also suggested as valuable additions.

In traineeships involving students from Kalix folkhögskola, the teacher maintained regular contact throughout the process and conducted follow-up visits during the traineeships. They had five trainees involved in a film production, and the teacher's presence helped ensure that challenges were addressed quickly and effectively. Other trainees also praised the teacher's support all throughout the traineeships.

Role of traineeships in career development

In the audiovisual industry, traineeships play a crucial role in supporting future employment. The industry should strive to create conditions that allow students to build as many professional connections as possible during their studies, regardless of their economic background (*Salo, 2023*). A successful traineeship often serves as a strong recommendation for future projects, as personal relationships are highly valued in the AV sector. Production representatives also acknowledged their role in supporting trainees at the start of their careers. Many expressed a willingness to share contacts and provide positive recommendations to help trainees secure future employment.

This pilot confirmed that a successful traineeship can significantly influence employment prospects and long-term career development. When asked how the traineeships had affected their future career plans, many trainees reported that the experience helped them identify their strengths and discern the roles they would like to pursue. For some, the traineeship consolidated their plans regarding further education or specific employment paths.

Several participants of the pilot have since moved on to other roles in the film industry. One student trainee, for example, has set up a business and is starting a freelance career in the AV sector. She noted that the experience and contacts gained during the traineeship strengthened her decision to pursue this path,

clarified her future goals and boosted her confidence. She described the practical experience as valuable for her learning. Another trainee, who worked as a camera assistant in a Sámi production, confirmed his desire to advance in the film industry. He was later accepted into one of Norway's most prestigious film and media universities. These examples demonstrate how impactful traineeships can be in shaping careers and facilitating entry into the industry.

The professional networks established during the traineeships also played a key role in creating new job opportunities. For instance, two students from the Sámi Education Institute were hired as camera operators for the live streaming of *the Sohkaršohka* red carpet event at *the Sámi Grand Prix music festival* in Kautokeino. This opportunity arose directly from the connections made during their traineeships.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISING TRAINEESHIPS IN THE SÁMI REGION

Based on the experiences and feedback collected during the traineeship programme model, the following recommendations are proposed to support the development of high-quality, inclusive and sustainable traineeship models in the Sámi region.

1. ESTABLISH CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Define the trainee's role, tasks and expectations clearly at the beginning of the traineeship.

2. ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Improve communications between educational institutions, organisations offering traineeships and production companies to ensure that the traineeship's goals and responsibilities are aligned.

Maintain regular contact throughout the traineeship, including follow-up visits or check-ins, especially in productions involving multiple trainees. When possible, increase the number of trainees in a production for peer support and to create a more structured learning environment.

3. STRENGTHEN ORIENTATION AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Provide a structured orientation that includes pre-arrival information, on-site introduction and ongoing task-specific guidance. Ensure that each trainee has a designated mentor or supervisor who is committed to supporting their learning throughout the traineeship.

4. PROMOTE PAID TRAINEESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Whenever possible, provide financial compensation for trainees in addition to covering maintenance costs.

5. SUPPORT CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY

Encourage trainees to gain experience from productions outside their home country to strengthen regional collaboration and cultural exchange. Facilitate cross-border traineeships by addressing logistical and administrative barriers.

6. FOSTER CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC INCLUSION

Emphasise the value of Sámi languages and cultural knowledge in productions.

Provide opportunities for Sámi trainees to share their cultural expertise and strengthen their language skills.

7. EXPAND TRAINEESHIP OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS DIFFERENT PRODUCTION PHASES

Offer traineeships not only during filming but also in pre-production and post-production phases.

Consider recruiting trainees from fields other than film and media.

8. INTEGRATE TRAINEESHIPS INTO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Schedule traineeships after students have acquired basic filmmaking skills. Tailor traineeship placements to match students' interests and strengths.

9. MONITOR AND EVALUATE TRAINEESHIPS' IMPACT

Collect feedback from trainees, mentors and production teams to continuously improve the traineeship model. Track trainees' career development to assess the long-term impact of the programme on employment and professional growth.

10. BUILD LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen cooperation between educational institutions, production companies and regional organisations and municipalities. Develop structured, recurring traineeship opportunities through long-term agreements and shared planning.

FILM EXČELERATOR SÁPMI

The International Sámi Film Institute has the most extensive knowledge and experience to organise traineeships in Sámi film productions. ISFI, Talent Norway and SpareBank 1 Nord-Norge are collaborating on the development and talent programme Film Exčelator Sápmi to ensure a sustainable and innovative Sámi film industry. Many of the recommendations detailed in this report have already been taken into account in this new development and talent programme. Film Exčelator Sápmi offers a tailored programme for up to 15 participants who want to develop themselves and work in the Sámi film industry during the fall of 2025 and the year 2026.

The programme aims to recruit and train participants as well as provide practical work experience and inspire our future Sámi film workers in all positions and stages of film production. Candidates will have access to mentorships, international network opportunities and paid traineeships. The programme values diversity and encourages all qualified candidates to apply – regardless of gender, age, potential disability, family situation or country of residence.

Film Exčelator Sápmi begins with a joint start-up workshop where trainees will be introduced to the Sámi film industry. For each participant, a tailored individual programme will then be created. Participants will have access to traineeships in the Sámi region or in international productions, mentorship from experienced professionals, workshops and training relevant to their specific fields and industries as well as market events, such as film festivals, in both Sápmi and abroad. (*International Sámi Film Institute 2025*)

Another development programme is Sámi Storyžat Lab, which is designed to support and elevate emerging Sámi filmmakers. The initiative builds on the successful three-year partnership between the International Sámi Film Institute and Netflix and reaffirms a shared commitment to empowering more voices in the Nordic creative industry. The Sámi Storyžat Lab will support ten aspiring Sámi filmmakers in developing original short film projects through development grants, dedicated mentorship and tailored script support with the support of an educational partner called Tatino Films. (*International Sámi Film Institute 2025*)

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APPENDIX A

A.1 Film productions, production companies and filming locations

3.3.–2.5.2024

Oro jaska, Alfred Film og TV AS, 2 trainees, Karasjok

7.8.–24.9.2024

Árru, Elle Sofe Company, 2 trainees, Alta, Skáidi

6.1.–3.4.2025

Garrat du váimmu, Forest People AS, 1 trainee, Kiiruna, Stora Sjöfallet

13.1.–11.4.2025

Jag for ner till bror, Filmlance International AB, 5 trainees, Norrbotten area, Älvsbyn, Vidsel, Persön, Jämtön, Råneå, Boden and Luleå

31.3.–11.4.2025

Romssa Táksi, 7ish Film AS, 2 trainees, Tromsø, Nordkjosbotn, Skibotn

18.3.–11.5.2025

Dream of Lapland, Yleisradio Oy (YLE), 1 trainee, Rovaniemi, Inari, Ylläs

A.2 Trainee roles and departments

Oro jaska:

1. Rotating between several departments (art dep., camera dep., light dep., script/continuity, production dep., costume dep.)
2. Rotating between several departments (art dep., camera dep., light dep., script/continuity, production dep., costume dep.)

Árru:

1. Production coordinator
2. Digital imaging technician DIT

Garrat du váimmu:

1. Production department assistant, runner, art department assistant

Jag for ner till bror:

1. Production department, office assistant

-
2. Production department, office assistant
 3. Extras department assistant
 4. Craft department assistant
 5. Props/location department assistant

Romssa Táksi:

- 1.–2. Assistant in several departments, such as the production department and art department, assisting on set, managing continuity, helping with equipment

Unelma Lapista:

1. Script writing team, pre-editing, key image and press photo shootings

A.3 Feedback surveys

Initial survey: Traineeship programme in Sámi film productions
(trainees' response rate 11/12)

Final survey: Traineeship programme in Sámi film productions
(trainees' response rate 12/12)

Feedback survey: Traineeship programme in Sámi film production
(productions' response rate 6/6)

A.4 Interviews

Alexander Falkenberg, Filmlance International AB, 15.4.2025

Elle Sofe Sara, Elle Sofe Company, 25.4.2025

Per-Josef Idivuoma, Forest People AS, 25.4.2025

Silje Burgin-Borch, Alfred Film og TV AS, 6.5.2025

Laura Satimus, Yleisradio Oy, 26.5.2025

Group interview, 21.5.2025

Anders Durvall, teacher, Kalix folkhögskola

Erkki Feodoroff, teacher, SAKK

Jukka Vuorela-Morottaja, teacher, SAKK

Katariina Guttorm, student, SAKK, 28.4.2025

Tanja Ikonen, student, SAKK, 16.5.2025

Group interview 6.6.2025

Sara Månsson, student, Kalix folkhögskola

Alma Vesterlund, Kalix folkhögskola