

# PREVENTING SUICIDE IN SÁPMI

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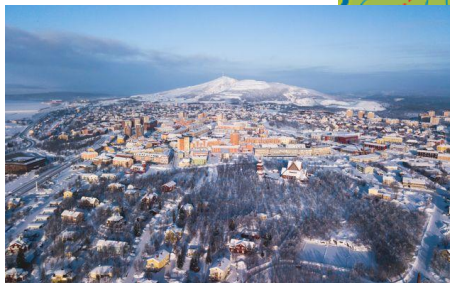
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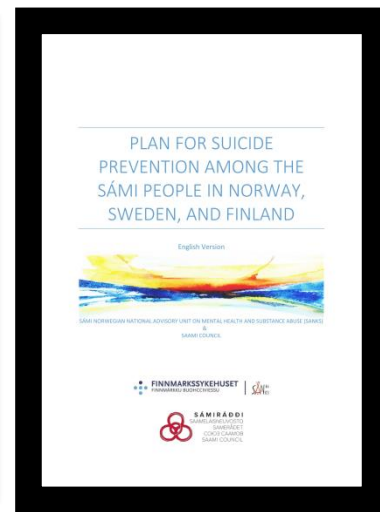
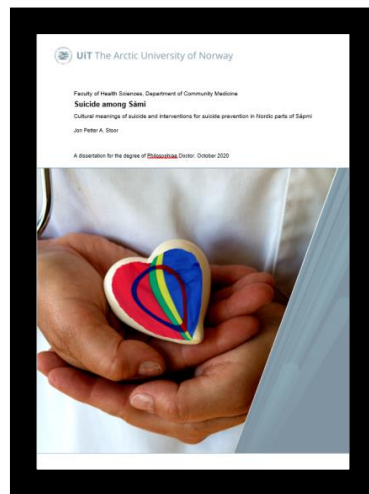


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# WHO AM I AND WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?



# OVERVIEW



## + MUSIC VIDEOS



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# KNOWLEDGE COMPILATION ON PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH AMONG SÁMI



- Suicide
- Suicidality
- Mental health



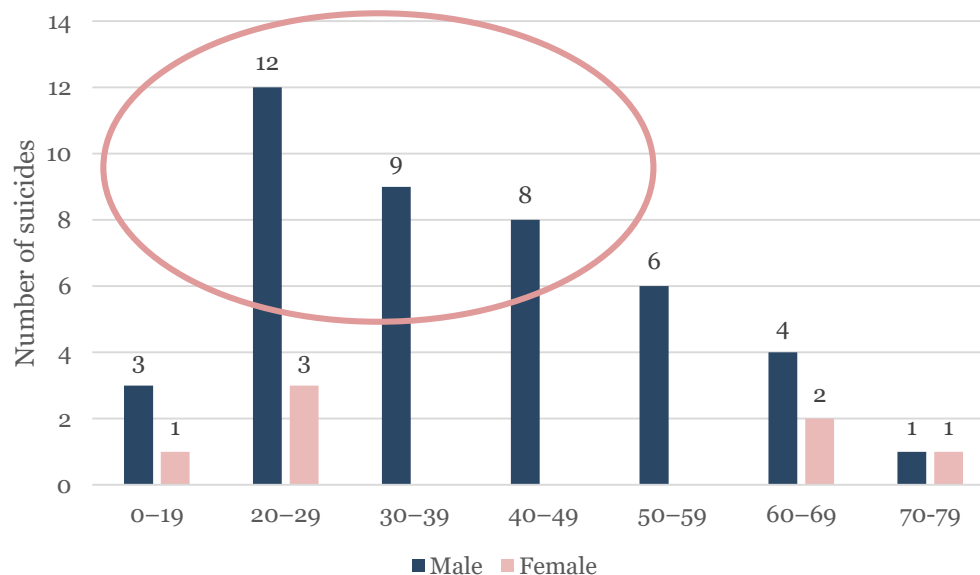
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## STANDARDISED MORTALITY RATIOS FOR SUICIDE AMONG SÁMI COMPARED TO MAJORITY POPULATIONS IN SWEDEN, NORWAY AND FINLAND

	Cohort	M	F
Northern Sweden (1961 - 2001)	Total cohort	1.17	0.76
	Non-herding	1.05	0.67
	Herding	1.50	1.12
Northern Norway (1970 – 1998)	Total cohort	1.27	1.27
	Finnmark	1.50	1.55
	Troms	0.74	1.00
	Nordland	0.42	3.17
	Core area	1.54	1.31
	Coast	1.24	1.21
	South	0.41	1.51
	1970–1980	1.17	1.14
	1981–1990	1.36	1.92
	1991–1998	1.20	0.81
	Non-herding	1.30	1.34
	Herding	1.06	0.66
	Total cohort	1.78	1.26
Northern Finland (1979-2010)	1979–1987	1.83	(No case)
	1988–1996	1.07	1.93
	1997–2005	2.55	1.2
	2006–2010	2.32	1.2

Young, Revich, & Soininen (2015)

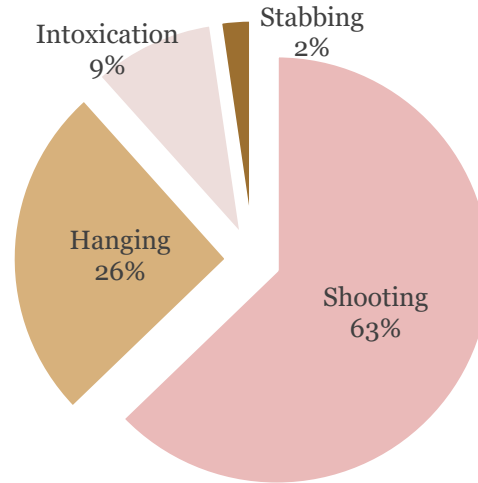
# SUICIDE AMONG REINDEER HERDING SÁMI IN SWEDEN (1961–2017) BY SEX AND AGE



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Jacobsson, Stoor & Eriksson, 2020

# SUICIDE METHODS AMONG REINDEER HERDING SÁMI MEN IN SWEDEN (1961–2017)



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Jacobsson, Stoor & Eriksson, 2020

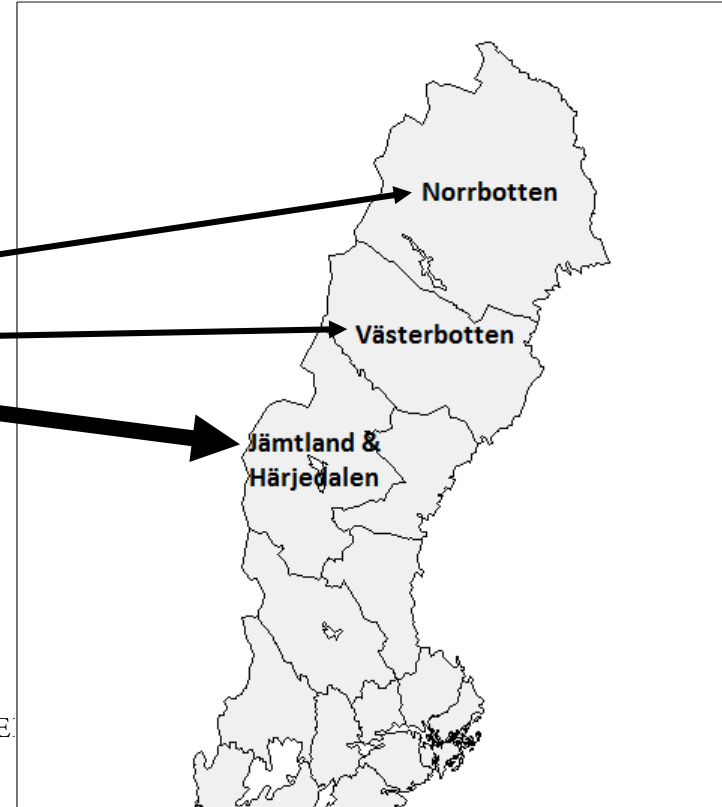
# SUICIDES BY SEX AND REGION AMONG REINDEER ERDING SÁMI IN SWEDEN, 1961-2017

Region	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Norrbotten	22	3	25
Västerbotten	8	1	9
Jämtland/Härjedalen	13	3	16
Total	43	7	50

Jacobsson, Stoor & Eriksson, 2020

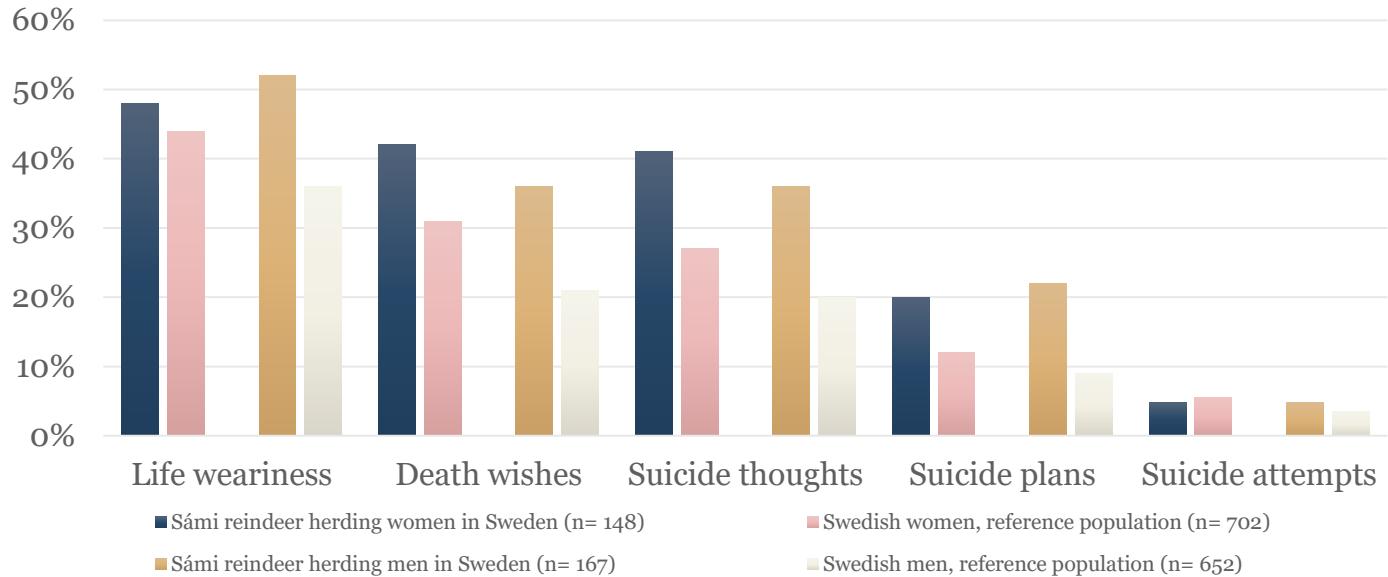


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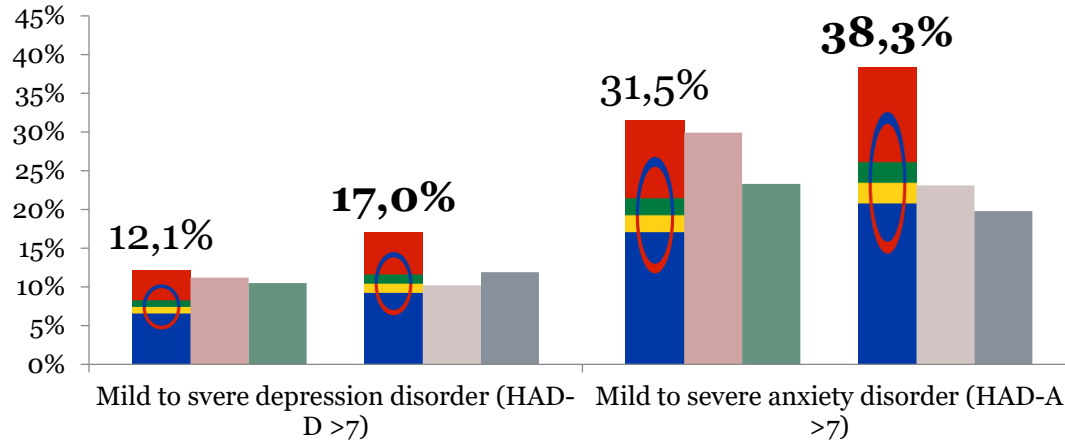
**SUICIDAL EXPRESSIONS AMONG REINDEER HERDING SÁMI IN SWEDEN, AND A SWEDISH REFERENCE POPULATION, BY ETHNICITY AND SEX, MEASURED WITH THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUICIDE SCALE (ATTS) IN 2007–2008**



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Kaiser and Salander Renberg (2012).

# DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AMONG REINDEER HERDING SÁMI IN SWEDEN (HADS CUT-OFFS)



■ Sámi reindeer herding women (n= 149) ■ "Northerner" urban women (n= 348)  
 ■ "Northerner" rural women (n= 369) ■ Sámi reindeer herding men (n= 165)  
 ■ "Northerner" urban men (n= 321) ■ "Northerner" rural men (n= 324)

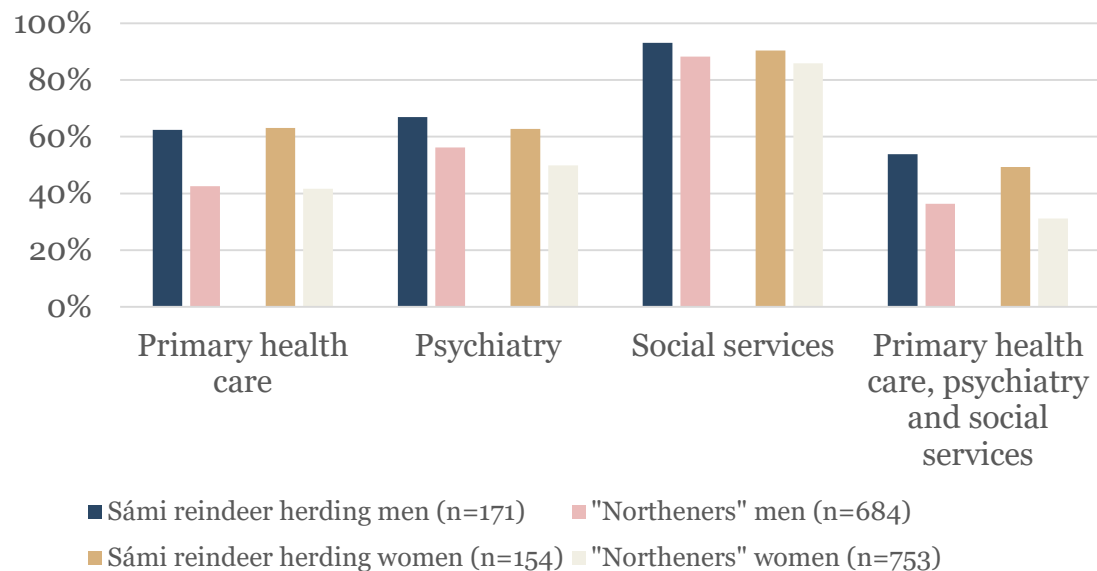
Kaiser, N., Sjolander, P.,  
 Edin-Liljegren, A.,  
 Jacobsson, L., & Salander  
 Renberg, E. (2010)



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# PERSONS WITH LOW CONFIDENCE IN PRIMARY CARE, PSYCHIATRY AND SOCIAL SERVICES AMONG REINDEER HERDING SÁMI AND «NORTHERNER» SWEDES, BY SEX

Daerga et al. (2012)



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# A SÁMI PERSPECTIVE?

Stoor, JPA., Kaiser, N., Jacobsson, L.,  
Salander-Renberg, E., & Silviken, A. (2015).  
"We are like lemmings": making sense of the  
cultural meaning(s) of suicide among the  
indigenous Sami in Sweden. *International  
Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 74, 27669.

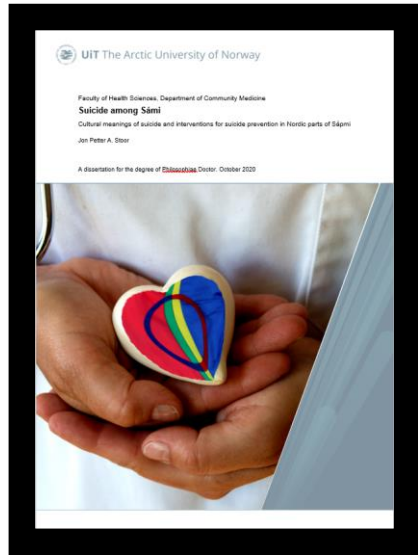


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# **MUSIC VIDEO: ÁHPÍ – SOFIA JANNOK**



# MAPPING SUICIDE PREVENTION IN SÁPMI

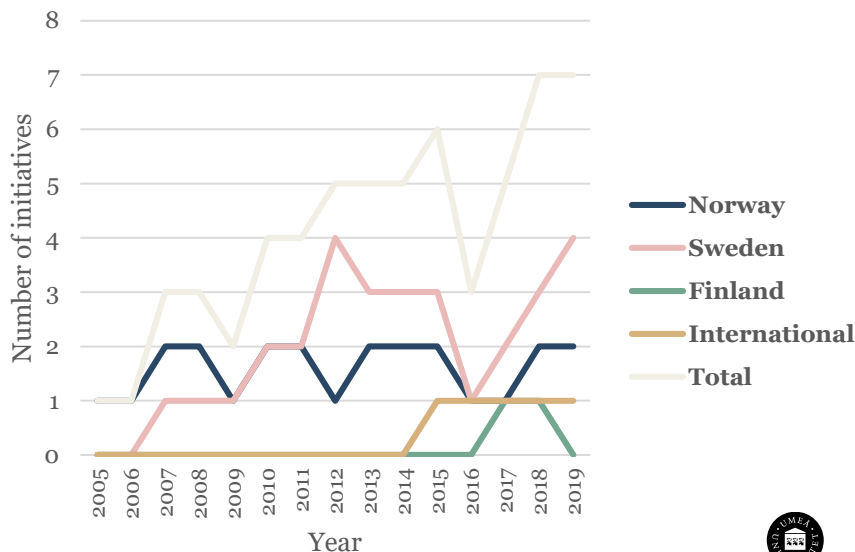


1. **Identify suicide prevention initiatives targeting Sámi**
  - Utilise prior knowledge and networks
  - Acquire project reports and other written documentation
2. **Describe initiatives**
  - Create a template
  - Input data from written documentation and first hand experience
3. **Analyse the initiatives**
  - How do they problematize suicide among Sámi? (what problems are they trying to fix?)
  - Use descriptions of initiatives for analysis
  - Analyse guided by the “what is the problem represented to be?” (WPR) – approach (Bacchi, 2016)



# FINDINGS: 17 INITIATIVES

*Number of suicide prevention initiatives targeting Sámi in Norway, Sweden, Finland and internationally, per year (2005–2019).*



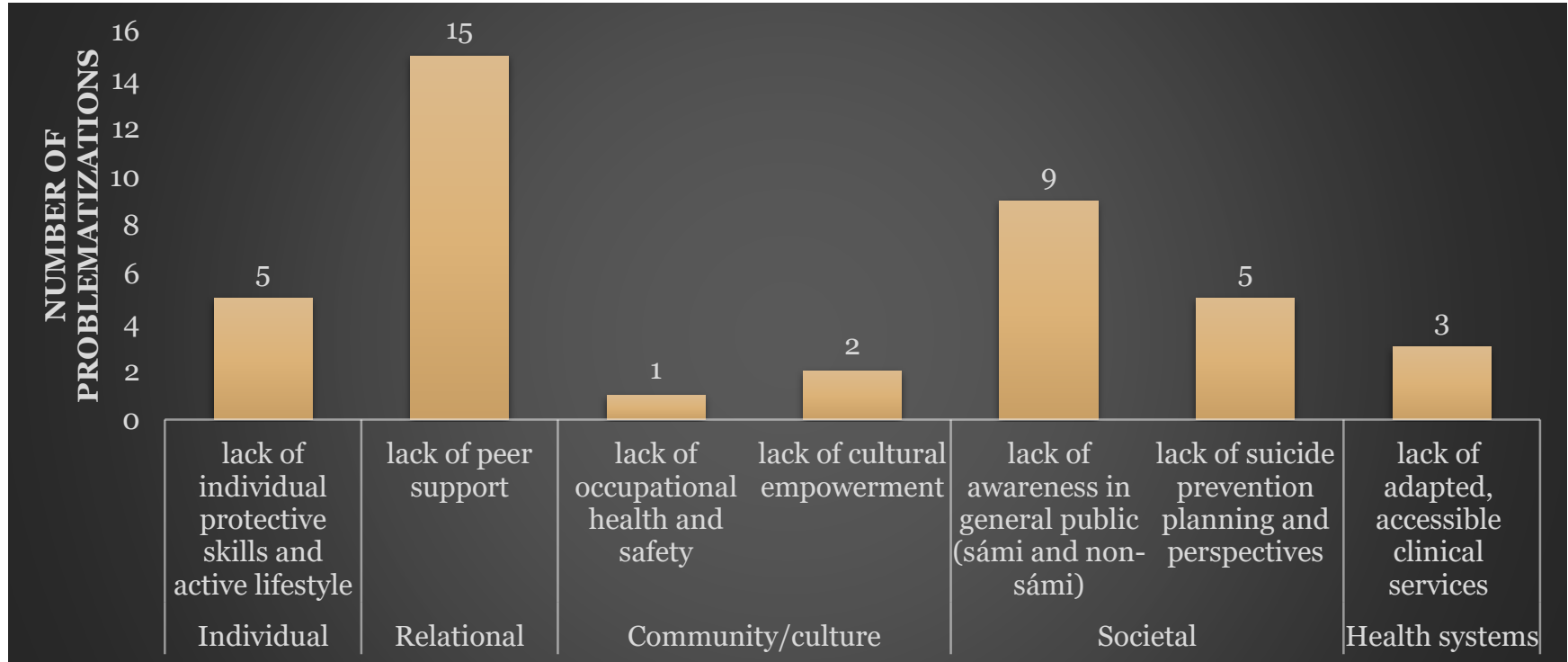
## Diversity:

- delivery methods –public meetings and workshops were most common
- target groups
- organizers (but SANKS involved in all Norwegian initiatives)
- levels of adaptation to Sámi context – range from targeting Sámi with not adapted programmes to tailor-made projects

**Similarity:** few initiatives included thorough evaluation components

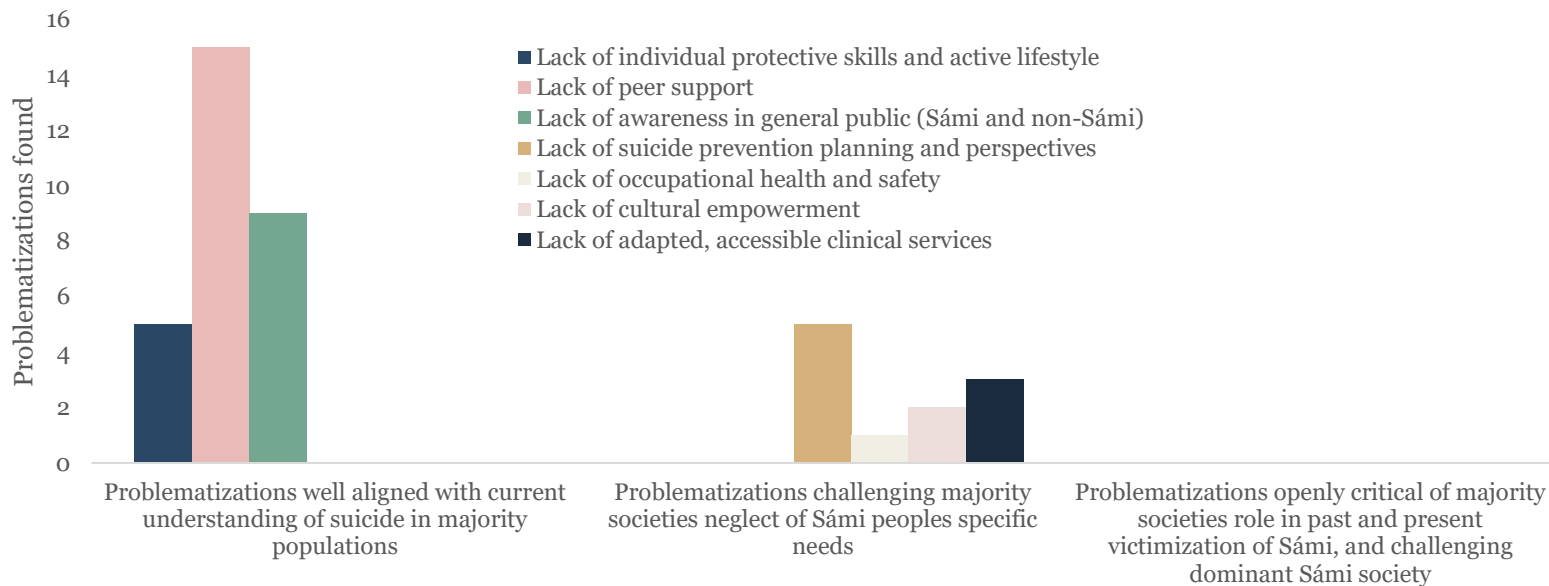


# WHAT ARE THE "PROBLEMS" IN SÁMI SUICIDE PREVENTION INITIATIVES?

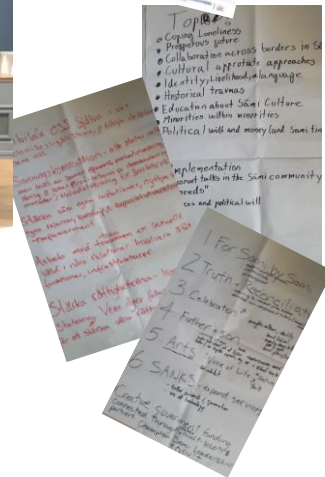
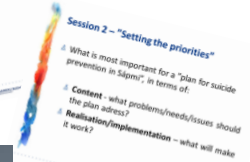
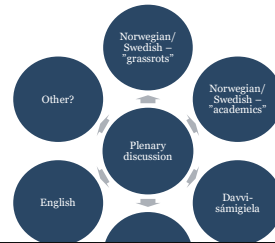
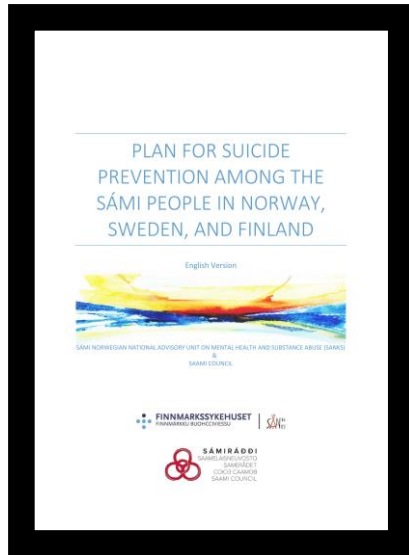




# IS THE PROBLEM THAT WE DO NOT CHALLENGE NEITHER MAJORITY NOR SÁMI SOCIETIES?



# PLAN FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AMONG SÁMI

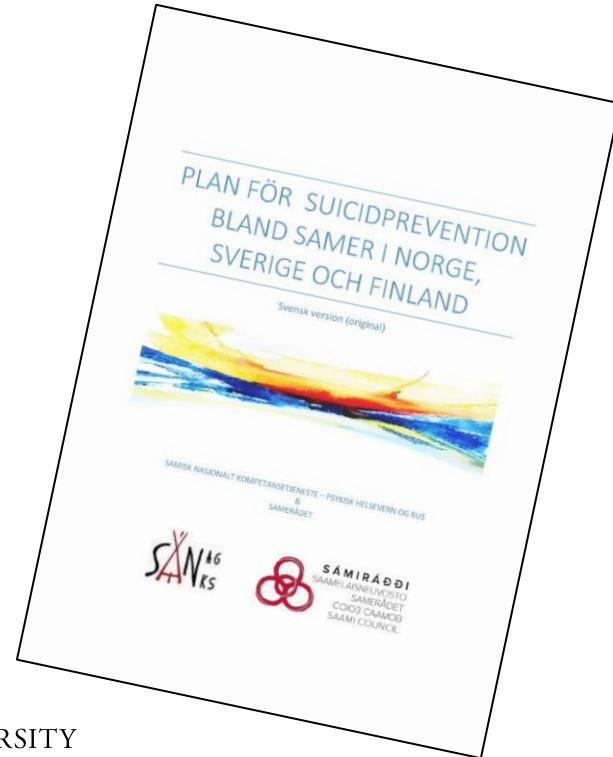


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# ”Plan for suicide prevention among Sámi in Norway, Sweden and Finland”

## 11 strategies:

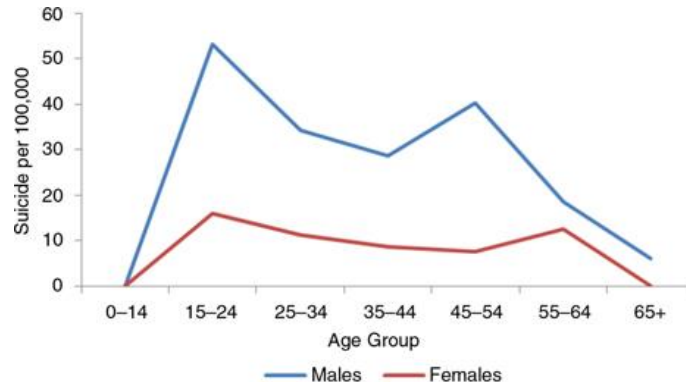
- Focus on the men
- Produce statistics and support research
- Strengthen Sámi self-determination
- Initiate work to illuminate and deal with historical trauma
- Strengthen and protect Sámi cultural identities
- Decrease violence
- Decrease ethnic discrimination
- Increase diversity and acceptance
- Ensure right to equal health care, adapted to language and culture
- Train and mobilize Sámi civic society
- Strengthen border-crossing cooperation



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# 1: FOCUS ON THE MEN

- Sámi men die **more often** by suicide than majority men
- Sámi men die by suicide at **several times the rate of Sámi women**
- Example, Suicide among Sámi in Norway 1970-1998 (Silviken, Haldorsen & Kvernmo 2006):



## 2: PRODUCE STATISTICS AND SUPPORT RESEARCH

- **No official statistics** on suicide among Sámi exists because Norway, Sweden and Finland does not register ethnicity
- Available statistics derive from **research projects**, but does not include all Sámi
- **Outdated data:**
  - Norway 1970-1998
  - Sweden 1961-2000
  - Finland 1979-2010



# 3: STRENGTHEN SÁMI SELF-DETERMINATION

- Make sure that Sámi have a **real opportunity to influence processes that affects Sámi**
- Especially important for Sámi practicing **traditional livelihoods**
- Importance stressed by Sámi grassroots



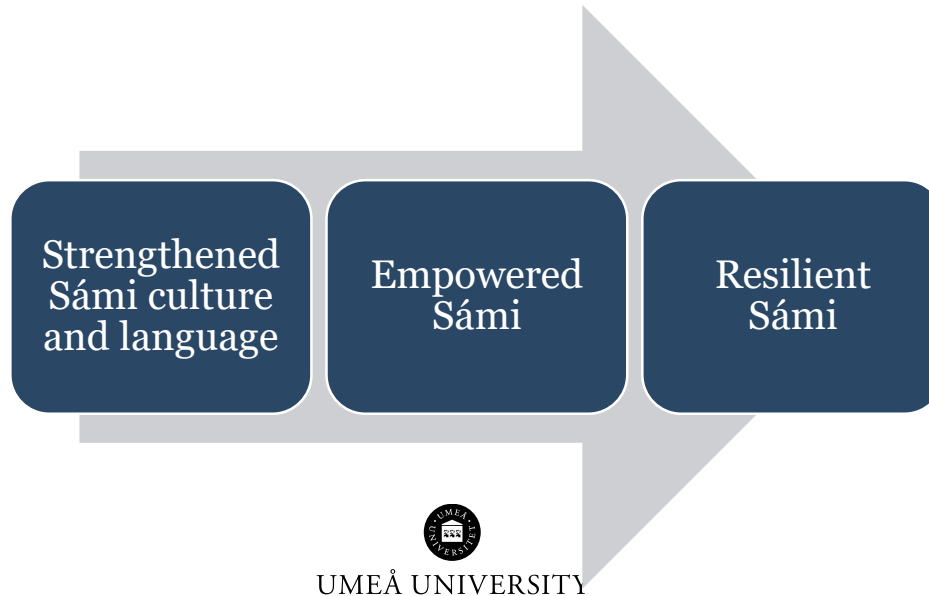
## **4: INITIATE WORK TO ILLUMINATE AND DEAL WITH HISTORICAL TRAUMA**

- Sámi have experienced a wide array of traumatic events throughout history - including forced assimilation
- Very little is known about health effects of historical trauma among Sámi
- "Truth and reconciliation"-commissions have started in Norway and Finland, as i being planned in Sweden



# 5: STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT SÁMI CULTURAL IDENTITIES

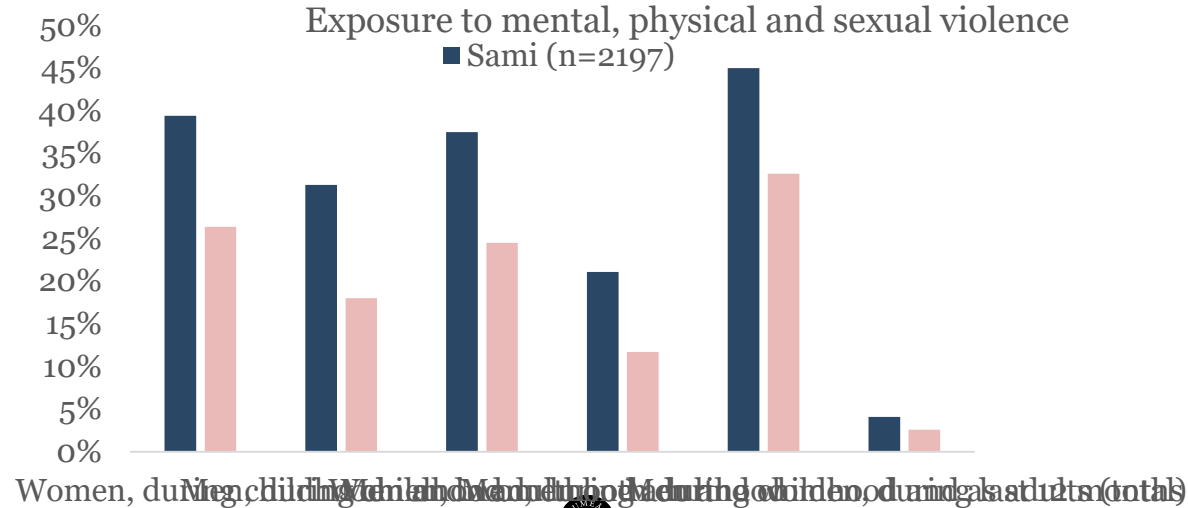
- Ensure that Sámi have access to strong arenas/contexts for Sámi language and culture





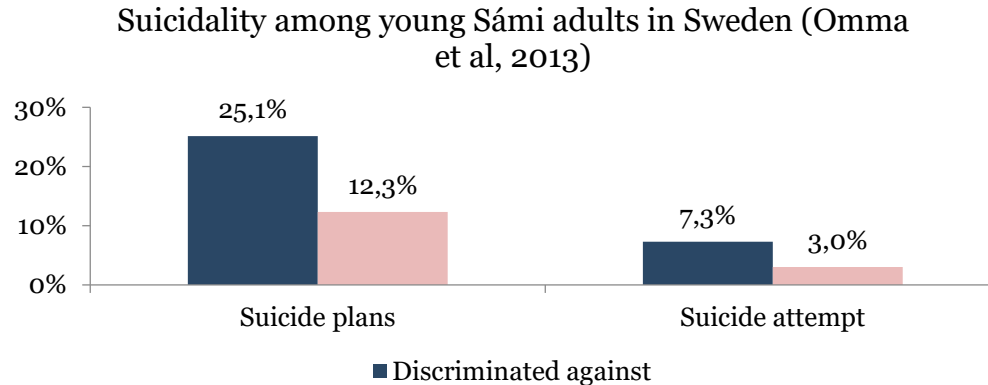
# 6: DECREASE EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

- Existing evidence suggest: Sámi at higher risk of exposure to mental, physical and sexual abuse both in childhood and adulthood (Eriksen et al, 2015)



# 7: DECREASE ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION

- Sámi experience ethnic discrimination at several times the rate of majority populations
- Experiencing discrimination is associated with poor mental health and high suicidality

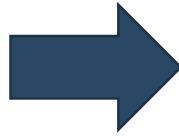


## 8: INCREASE DIVERSITY AND ACCEPTANCE

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons suffers disproportionately from suicidality
- High likelihood of this being true for Sámi LGBTQ-persons as well



Pauliina Feodoroff, Skolt-Sámi screenwriter,  
film/theater-director  
Photo: Sara Lindqvist



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# 9: ENSURE RIGHT TO EQUAL HEALTH CARE, ADAPTED TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

- Mental health services are at the core of suicide prevention
- Equal health care demands services adapted to language and cultural needs
- Especially important for psychiatric services and other "talking cures"
- Availability of such services differs greatly between different Sámi contexts



# 10: TRAIN AND MOBILIZE SÁMI CIVIC SOCIETY

- "For Sámi by Sámi" holds a partly untapped suicide prevention resource
- This includes training Sámi grass roots but also mobilizing Sámi institutions, organisations etc



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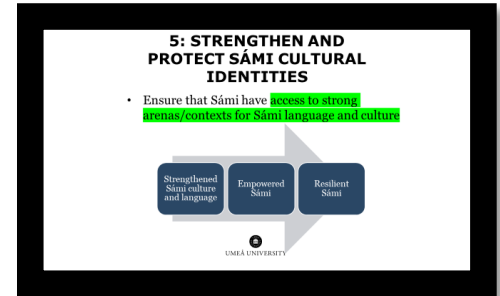
# 11: STRENGTHEN BORDER-CROSSING COOPERATION

- Sámi live in 4 countries, yet suicide preventive efforts often stop by the borders
- When resources are limited, it is more important to pool them



# WHERE TO NOW?

- **Sweden**: new national strategy for mental health and suicide prevention to be developed –
- Ministry for Health and social affairs: **Sámi perspectives to be included!**
- **Collaboration** between the Sámi parliament, the Swedish Agency for Public Health, and Department of Epidemiology and Global health, Umeå University:
  - Previous data + rights + strategies
  - New data:
    - Sámi public health questionnaire (mental health, suicidality)
    - Sámi register study (suicide mortality, patient register)
- Outcome? Hopefully a holistic approach supported by monitoring progress through data!
- Foundation for a Centre for Sámi health at UmU -> research and education



# **JON HENRIK FJÄLLGREN – MANNE LEAM FRIJJE (2015)**

