

# Cultural Diversities in Education in the North

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# **Cultural Diversities in Education in the North**

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Research Report**

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## Abstract

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The purpose of this report is to highlight some perspectives in education in compulsory schools and in teacher education in the North especially connected to cultural understanding and cultural diversities. Sensitivity in cultural understanding including curriculum texts about minorities is very limited and so is the cultural sensitivity towards and co-operation between home and community culture. Cultural diversities are often seen only as dilemmas. These challenges have been taken seriously in the longitudinal research-project introduced in this report. The issues will be dealt with through the Sámi culture. The first research question focuses on how parents and the local society can be involved in development of a culturally based curriculum. The second research question is dealing with how teachers and parents can support cultural understanding, and cultural diversities in the school context. The third research question is dealing with parental involvement and cooperation between school, parents, elders, extended family and the indigenous community. An ethnographic study with an interactive approach will be the methodological point of departure. Interviews, school visits and document analysis are used. The whole project will be reported during 2007 - 2008.

Keywords: Cultural understanding, Cultural diversities, Teacher Education, Curriculum and Cultural Diversities.



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## **Education and Teacher Education in the North – some challenges in articulating cultural diversities.**

How to fulfil the local needs of access to education?

Access to education on all levels in compulsory school as well as research in these areas is a key indicator of development in the Arctic. This work does not attempt to make a circumpolar assessment of the Sápmi area, partly because there is very little research in this field. Instead of assessing the field of education and parental involvement, the study explores some of the limitations. The aims of the study is to highlight

- To what extent do we have knowledge to articulate an introduction of indigenous curricula in terms of strengthening cultural understanding, identity, colonizing and decolonizing processes in cooperation with parents and the extended family? How is teacher education sensitive to the experienced needs from the Sámi schools and the curricula? What are possible consequences for teacher education?
- To what extent, and how are educational policies, in terms of curriculum in the existing educational systems sensitive to cultural understanding – in this case Sámi. One key question is to discuss possibilities for teacher education and teacher students to study and research the content and conditions for Sámi schools and also to discuss in service training of teachers in the Sámi schools.

Building capacity in the local society in terms of school development in Sámi schools is of interest in this study. People living in the north share opportunities, concerns and realities. These experiences are often grounded within interaction between minorities and majorities, living in vast areas. Educational policy is driven by values and interests and education is contributing to development of human capital (Johansson, Paci and Stenersen 2004). The question about who takes precedence in curriculum development over others and why as well as the process of shaping education from development to

reform was considered not to be a neutral enterprise. Promotion of skills, values, history, languages, culture and ways of thinking and behaving are on the table. Major constituencies that influence educational policy and curriculum development include professional teachers and their associations, parents and organized parents' as well as regional and local governments, economics and industries and students. Curriculum theory by Goodlad *et al* (1979) distinguishes between different levels. There is the level of ideological, formal, perceived, operational and experienced curriculum. On all these levels it is of crucial interest and importance to find out what the possibilities are for the minority culture to have their voice heard in the school. Hoem's (1978) argued concerning socialization that common interests and values in home, the student and the school do reinforce each other in socialization. Reinforced socialization can function as an optimal socialization process, a human being can reinforce the socialization on their own culture and tradition. The dominating cultures' strong influence in the education of the child was a consideration in a four year longitudinal study (Johansson & Orving, 1993). Parents and the local society were invited to read, reflect and analyze the curriculum in order to transform from the ideological, formal and perceived to the operational and experienced curriculum to explore the interest and influence from the local culture and to reflect on values and cultural priorities. With parental involvement in interpreting curriculum Goodlad's levels could concretely be discussed and related to the daily work. It is worth notice that parents have been invited to take part in the school development already in 1810. Broocman expressed the basic need of cooperation between the students, parents and the society for development of the society.

The official documents announce the organization and quantity in terms of how many hours, how many years your obligation is in the compulsory school, the quality and the content in the balance between local and national control of education, the daily work managed by culture and tradition and the introduction of indigenous curricula in formalized schools and higher education is pointed out in above work as themes that can be further explored.

## Integrate and strengthen indigenous culture in school practice.

What possibilities and obstacles do we meet in our attempts to develop praxis at schools integrating the indigenous culture, local knowledge and cultural understanding in terms of educating and fostering the next generation? What are the possibilities in the society for the local people to participate in deliberative thinking and open communication? How is it possible to understand the decolonizing processes in terms of educational practices widening democracy, to visualize and develop knowledge about the indigenous schools in terms of strengthening culture and identity? Nodding (2006) quoted that in a society where people participate in deliberative thinking and open communication there is a sense of equality that is fundamental to democracy. Englund (2000) discussed rethinking democracy and education, with the perspective of deliberative citizens. This perspective is of high interest in discussing the Sámi schools. Freire already in (1970) discussed democracy and argued for pedagogy of the oppressed. The dominating cultures have had a strong influence on schooling in most countries. What are the possibilities for the Sámi schools to take part in democracy in terms deliberative and communicative perspectives concerning colonization and decolonization? In what way does the curriculum for Sámi schools develop the Sámi schools and support education and cultural understanding on primary, secondary and postsecondary level?

*Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Article 26.2 of the Human Rights).*

Education for full development of the personality is one of the building blocks of human rights. Multicultural educational perspectives include international and local perspectives. The Dakar Framework for Action committed signatories to ensure that by 2015 all children belonging to ethnic minorities have access to complete compulsory primary, secondary and postsecondary education. This right is still very uneven as also the right to use the native language. The UNESCO document of Education and Cultural Diversity stresses that UNESCO will encourage issues involving education in

multilingual and multicultural societies to be included within Education for All, EFA action plans. The importances of these plans are meant to ensure that the educational content must include multicultural education in order to provide quality education on all levels of school systems. In New Zealand we can find an example, the Maori people have succeeded in a complete educational system for all levels based on cultural understanding and parental involvement.

Smith (2004) examined the historical and philosophical base of research of indigenous schools. Critically she explores the intersections of imperialism, knowledge and research. This examination points out a route where she provides a history of knowledge from the enlightenment to postcolonial influence. She points out the urgent demand of people carrying out their own research and the frustration of the western paradigms. In setting an agenda for planning and implementing indigenous research, she means that this is a part of reclaiming control over indigenous ways of knowing and being. Some years earlier Wenger (1998) had contributed to this issue by saying that by negotiating by the community the conditions, the resources and demands shape the practice. Situated learning was in focus. Nystad (2003) discussed consequences of schooling organized strictly around traditional disciplines as well as the man between myth and modernity. Traditional disciplines might give inadequate address to the problems of the Sámi culture for example in terms of reindeer herding.

Balto (1997) enlightened the importance of cultural understanding in terms of fostering the child. One of the most important bases in this process in Sámi culture is independence se argued. The child's learning processes are deeply connected to make own decisions, without the grown ups demanding fingers. It is of crucial importance in the Sámi culture and for the Sámi children in Sápmi to develop independence in the daily life. Connerton (1989) discussed the importance of how societies do remember; how the memory of the society is grounded in ancient history for the survival of the society. An intuition in especially important areas has been growing for generations especially in upbringing of the child.

## **Multicultural approaches in education.**

The northern countries are multicultural, and the educational systems have been questioned and discussed from the very start. Traditional indigenous education existed before contact with outsiders.

*An important consideration is how indigenous perspectives are permeating northern education, both as a starting point for school curricula and as a part of more general policy. (Johansson et al. 2004 p 7)*

For Sámi population it was not until 1980 the Sámi had the possibility to influence the educational sphere. The Swedish Riksdag decided to have a board “Sameskolstyrelse” with possibilities to influence preschools and compulsory schools and the curriculum. In most of the countries in the North the connection between school curriculum and society has been of discussion in terms of the school and the society, content of the school, the development of the curriculum. Analytically Goodlad’s theory gave the possibility to discuss the curriculum levels apart. Englund (1996a, 1997c) considered possibilities to interpret the formulations differently due to the perceived curriculum. It is of crucial interest for the minority culture to have their voice heard, in interpreting the curricula. In the Sámi culture and curriculum development especially Hoem’s (1978) work concerning socialization was important. In terms of interests and values in the society, cooperation between homes, the students and the schools to reinforce socialization was pointed out. Reinforced socialization can function as an optimal socialization process, a human being can reinforce the socialization on their own culture and tradition Hoem argued. This was also the starting point for the work with parental involvement and curriculum development in the study of Johansson & Orving (1993) within primary schools. I will come back to this later.

### **International rather than multicultural.**

Curriculum documents were analyzed of Eklund (2004). She found the documents more prescribing international than multicultural perspectives. Eklund (2004) claimed

*“that immigrants and minorities are invisible in the early documents during the initiation phase and are gradually introduced via supplements”...” The multicultural content is only a small part of the documents and it is therefore necessary for teachers to actively choose it among all the other things”...”no teaching aiming at empowerment is prescribed in the documents”...”The perspective in the curriculum documents is international rather than multicultural”( page 361).*

Eklund continues to ask what significance the recognition of the national minority groups and minority languages have for schools. She also asks for future research on multicultural learning in the majority population combined and widened to class, gender and ethnicity. An intensive process of change has taken place in Sweden as well as in most of the Nordic countries during the 1990s. From the beginning of 1991 municipalities are responsible for education, and the government controls by objectives, for the result achieved. This has led to changes of the design of curricula and syllabi, not only on local level, but also in an European and global perspective.

*Education contributes to the development of human capital. It is most apparent in its institutional forms as schools. Education is not a neutral enterprise. It is the promotion of skills, values, history, languages and ways of thinking and behaving. (Johansson et al, 2004).*

Sunnari V & Kuorikoski N (2002) dealt with the issue in Education in the North in the University of Arctic BCS 100 program in “The Circumpolar World, virtual learning module”. The curricula can be described from different point of views (Sivesund et al, 2003).

- The Curricula as a formal document of legitimating
- The Curricula authorizing and describing the content.
- The Curricula as a political norm.
- The Curricula for standardizing and for national Evaluations.

The educational system has a function on macro level to maintain and refine the culture of the society (Darnell & Hoëm, 1996). An interesting study is carried out in Iceland on peripheral communities and identities by Gudmundsson (2004). General educational aims are not sufficient Gudmundsson claimed. He points out the importance of historical identity, local identity and environmental identity in the development of the identity of individuals and groups. He argued that the schools and the subjects they choose have a strong impact on the collective identity of the students. Different discourses in a post-

modern society may cause confusions, especially for the minority groups. One important question is if there are connections, acceptance of boundaries between the National Curriculum - Local Curriculum and Individual plans, so the cultural heritage of the peoples and individuals can be included in the Multicultural Society? What is the fact in the countries in the North in the Sápmi area? If these possibilities exist, are they taken to account in the daily work, if not - what are the obstacles?

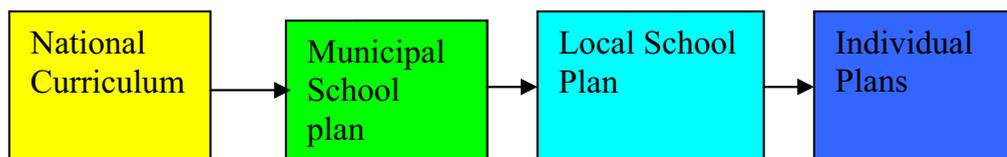


Figure 1. Curriculum for Compulsory School – educational policy in process on national, municipal, local level and individual levels.

Indigenous based education on all levels in compulsory school can evaluate experiences from the attempts to implement the national curriculum to the local curriculum. What possibilities have parents, extended family and the indigenous society to be involved? Multicultural approach to teaching and learning is in Sweden expressed already in *Language and Culture* report as well as in *Swedish government Official Reports, SOU 1983:57* and subsequently in *Riksdag Resolution in 1985 (Bill 1985:11)*. In the multicultural perspective the importance of a holistic educational approach is emphasized. This includes cooperation between home languages and the cultural backgrounds in order to cross cultural barriers. Cultural processes on different levels on international level, on national level and regional level are surrounding the school systems. Schools have an opportunity to be an arena for multicultural learning, but still it is claimed (Eklund, 2004) that the curriculum materials are focusing on international rather than multicultural issues on local, regional and national levels. The reason for this could be found in a political interest to strengthen Sweden as one nation in a European perspective or simply lack of knowledge in this area. The discrepancy between political intentions and curriculum objectives is an area of research. The fact is that in some Arctic Countries there has been a recognition of the need of more local initiatives at the municipality and local

school level. Wenger (1998) argued that to associate practice and community there is three dimensions to take in account. She pointed out mutual engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise to be dimensions that characterize and also are sources for coherence of a community. The local coherence of practice can be both strength and a weakness. The indigenous production of practice can make a community of practice the locus of creative achievements and failure, resistance to oppression and reproduction of conditions. The Swedish school law points out as one of the most important goals for the school to educate and foster critical and responsible citizens. Earlier school curricula tended more to socialize students to the existing society, not to question the existing society.

## **Setting a new agenda for education in Sámi schools?**

### **Teacher Education and democracy**

Teacher education aims to educate professional teachers, however research findings are ambiguous. Access to high quality teacher education can be seen as one of the key factors to fulfill some basic requests from the curriculum as a document of legitimating, from the political level and the society level. Teacher education has possibilities to enrichment in the field of cultural diversities and in this case of the needs of Sámi schools or schools in Sámi region. Skolverket (2003) once more questioned the Sámi schools concerning the connection to the Sámi culture. Kuhmunen & Sarri (2007) questioned if the schools and preschools were working with Sámi culture or colonizing and mainstreaming. Teacher education as well as educational policy might be considered as key factors in enriching school development. This crucial support for development of Sámi schools might also support and work for enrichment of the “mainstreamed” schools. In Norway, ILO convention No 169 in practice does give the right to Sámi to organize teacher education so it meets the needs of the Sámi. The people’s history, knowledge, technology, values, cultural as well as social and economic aspirations are focused (Hirvonen, 2004). In Norway the development of Sámi University College from 1988 to an independent college since 1994 has been able to promote Sámi culture and take to consideration the needs of teacher education of future teachers in Sámi schools and

especially schools in the northern areas. Hirvonen points out that in 1953 a Sámi department was opened in Romssa teacher training institute, and Sámi language became an option. It was taught outside compulsory school hours, often early in the morning, but still a progress because the Sámi language had earlier been kept out in this teacher training college. What is the situation in Sweden 2007, concerning teacher education for teachers aiming to work at Sámi schools and schools in the Sámi area? Mainstreaming of teacher education has been evident (Banks, 1997). What and how can cultural and multicultural processes be learned in teacher education? Probably they can not be seen as internal processes on school level or local or even on regional level and national level. For the sake of Sámi schools the international contacts are of importance. The indigenous people's effort to develop in their culture, not to leave it behind, can find crucial help from the other indigenous groups. The huge credibility problem for the research community was initially framed negatively. Hirvonen (2004) argued that Sápmi had been a meeting place for many cultures and languages. In the daily life people have learned languages of their neighbors. The Nordic states educational policy has been based on the assumption that Sápmi is an area of just one culture. The Sámi language and culture were not treated in democratic way, more in a colonizing perspective. I will refer to Noddings (2006) who discussed western democracies, which often are labeled as liberal democracies. He argued that the most fundamental concept in liberal democracy is choice or freedom. How do students make choices? An awareness and debate of cultural understanding and colonizing processes in educational policy on different levels, in teacher education and in the schools is crucial.

Today do not all the teachers in Sámi schools have access to the Sámi language or feel confidence in cultural expressions. The importance of all teachers' education in multicultural issues is visualized during interviews of teachers concerning teacher competence. To summarize: In the following figure the complexity between some areas that are of interest for teacher education and school democracy are visualized.

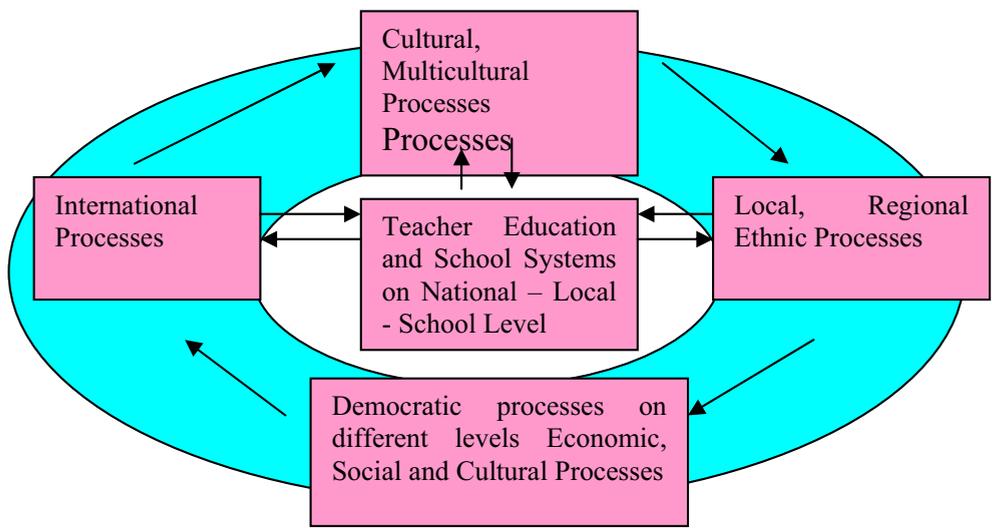


Figure 2. Teacher Education and Democracy – questions in the educational policy of how to approach cultural, multicultural, international, national, regional and local processes that are surrounding the schools systems and teacher education especially from a viewpoint of indigenous and multicultural schools.

Indigenous education existed as a part of indigenous cultural practices and mixed economies. The teachers were naturally involved in the Sámi culture. For example the Sámi in Sweden had special schools, which moved through the seasons. The children were able to live, learn and grow in their own culture and daily life. Closely shared cultural characteristics and lifestyles can be found in Scandinavia. People have much in common concerning culture and language. Perhaps the most common pan-Scandinavia is the international Sámi population; even if it is a quite small population in Sweden. It is still important to keep in mind that Sápmi is a sensitive multicultural area. In the curriculum multicultural understanding and strengthening of the identity is partly promoted, still the fact to cope with is that at least one generation have lost their language mostly during the period from 1800 till 1950 when growing of the national states was the most important issue.

Smith (2004) argued for self - determination concerning indigenous research agenda. She finds it more than a political goal, a social justice expressed by psychological, economic, social and cultural terrains. I understand this also in terms of educational questions on all levels. Mobilization on local, nation, regional and global levels, as well as transformation and decolonization are processes which conflict, inform and clarify the tensions on all levels and between the levels. These processes she claims can be incorporated into practices, but also used as a methodology.

Research concerning cooperation between schools has started quite recently in Northern Sweden to highlight the similarities between the Northern parts of Scandinavia. One project called “The same river and the same border” is going on with a ambitious involvement from the local community. Students in the border from Finland and Sweden area of Pello, as well as teachers and parents meet in joint school and society issues 8 ( Marsch, 2005). The study ended up with pointing out a lot of opportunities for cooperation and cultural understanding. Still there is a lot of work to be done. An example of this is one statement from a girl

*You are considered with skepticism if you say you are planning to stay in the area. Every student that has been successful leaves! (Girl, 16 years old).*

Cultural knowledge and decolonizing processes in indigenizing Sámi schools in the North of Sweden is highlighted as well as how teacher education is coping with processes of cultural understanding is highlighted in a longitudinal study during the period 2003 – 2007. (Balto & Johansson, 2007). This study is coordinated by Gunilla Johansson, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden and Asta Balto, Sámi College, Kautokeino, Norway. The

### **Teacher education and Cultural heritage in education on compulsory level.**

Cultural heritage from indigenous perspectives have relevance for the Education as a whole and especially in the Arctic Region. The

connection between the people and the land, how indigenous knowledge is related to the land and the survival of the habitants in these areas is crucial. Kawagley and Barnhard (1999) stated in a perspective where science with urban perspectives meets Indigenous reality as follows

*Indigenous peoples throughout the world have used their unique worldviews and associated knowledge systems for millennia, even while undergoing major social upheavals as a result of transformative forces beyond their control. Many of the core values, beliefs and practices associated with those worldviews have survived and are beginning to be recognized as having an adaptive integrity that is as valid for today's generation as it was for generations past. The depth of indigenous knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers lessons that can benefit everyone, from educator to scientist, as we search for more satisfying and sustainable way to live on this planet. (page 1 of 28.)*

They also point out that students in indigenous societies often demonstrate a distinct lack of enthusiasm for schooling in its conventional form. As Sweden has an excellent follow up of the Swedish School Systems and a lot of statistics and results are presented of the Swedish National Agency for Schools, it is easy to find facts about Swedish Schools. If just compare with one small municipality in the North of Sweden we can find higher rates of students, especially boys, leaving upper secondary schools without an exam. In Sweden we also find students with another background than Swedish, to have a higher rate of failure in the exam. These areas need more of research and follow up studies. Sunnari and Räsänen pointed out in 2000 that in North-Finland boys have a worse success in school than in the whole country, whereas the girls' success is better than in the rest of the Finland. Sunnari described and analyzed a kind of boys' school-culture where interest towards schoolwork was sooner a problem than a merit. Sunnari connects this orientation, too, to the visions of the future – or to the lack of visions, thinking unemployment etc., and to certain types of masculine subcultures. Comparison with the Sámi culture is not made in this study.

Hirvonen (2004) argued that the Norwegian Sámi have right to organize their teacher education in a way that meets the needs of the

Sámi culture. She also points out that the Maori of New Zealand have striven for similar rights. Hirvonen finds that teachers who conducted their education at Sámi college have strengthened and increased their language and cultural skills and their identity.

## Emphasis on Education in the culture

*All learning should start with what the student and community know and are using in everyday life. The Native student will become more motivated to learn when the subject matter is based on something useful and suitable to the livelihood of the community and is presented in a way that reflects the interconnectedness of all things (page 3 of 28)*

The future of indigenous education is clearly shifting toward an emphasis on education in the culture (Barnhardt, 1991) rather than education about the culture. Nystad (2003) argued that motivation and the use of knowledge for the culture is crucial. Above arguments are much of the same as in a study carried out in the North of Sweden in a village with a high rate of unemployment. Lundström (2003) discussed the boys' interest of and choice of education in relation to gender and the parents' opinions about the importance of education, especially higher education. She found that one of the most important issues was to get more knowledge about how one generation affects the next, especially in a perspective of gender.

## Lack of understanding

Darnell and Hoëm (1996) found a dilemma attributed of two conditions, the lack of respect or understanding of the culture of ethnic groups and lack of confidence in the ability of parents involvement in the education of the child. These dilemmas *have led to what we believe we now find in many locations in the Far North: education systems that often are inappropriate or inadequate and inferior to what they could be ( page 274)*. The lack of respect or understanding of the culture can also be found in the following. A recent example of this is the work of Karlsson (2004), who analyzed the most common textbooks that are used at compulsory school level for 10 – 14 year old students in Sweden. She found that these texts are deeply prejudiced. The Sámi are described as being a male person, short and quite corpulent working with reindeer herding. Females are invisible,

not mentioned in these texts. The curriculum is prescribing that all students at compulsory schools are supposed to have knowledge about the Sámi cultural heritage when they leave the school. Only 50% of the books mention the Sámi people at all. When they mention the Sámi they are described as exotic, mystic and static in their way of living. Karlsson also points out that the report within 1990 “Samerna i svenska läromedel” was revealing the same prejudices!

Barnhardt and Kawagley (2004) pointed out that formal education is still an evolving system in rural Alaska. The oldest elders today in Alaska were exposed to schooling as a one-way process, with the purpose of assimilating into the western society. If we make a short comparison with northern Sweden even late in the 1950 children were not allowed to speak Sámi or Finnish during school-time, not even during breaks. The same was the situation in Finland at that time. (Aikio – Pouskari, 2001b). They were punished if they during a play in gladness happened to speak in their mother language. Alaska Rural Systematic Initiative (AKRSI) was established in 1994 and one purpose was to document the indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska Native peoples and develop pedagogical practices integrating indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into the education system. In this way the school curriculum can be integrated with educators knowledge about teaching and learning. The focus is

*to foster a connection between two functionally interdependent but largely disconnected systems – the indigenous knowledge systems rooted in the Native cultures...and the formal education systems that have been imported to serve the rural native communities. Within each of these evolving systems is a rich body of knowledge and skills that, if properly used, can strengthen the quality of educational experiences for students throughout rural Alaska”(Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2004, page 59).*

Culturally based education and academic success are compatible to the extent that Alaska rural systematic initiative was considered by Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2004, to be exploring the above issues. Students are spending more time out in the community with elders, parents and local experts. The curriculum at school is taking in account the knowledge, values and practices that are a part of life in the local communities.

An intensive process of change has taken place in the Swedish schools. The municipalities are since 1991 responsible for school education. The Swedish Parliament and the government exercise control by setting objectives by setting principal organizers and schools for the results achieved. This change of has led to changes in design of curricula and syllabi.

## **Indigenous schools - Sámi schools .**

Indigenous population in Sweden, the Sámi people, has historically been a vulnerable and marginalized group. The CERD (2004) committee was concerned about the fact that the government refers to Sámi people merely as a national minority. The Sámi people have been recognized as indigenous and logically must be referred to as such. CERD committee (2004) argued that there still is a general ignorance of the Sámi people and the importance of the Sámi culture for Sweden. Are the Swedish School Systems providing possibilities for access for Sámi population to education on all levels? A report from Skolverket (2003) pointed out the fact that compulsory schools and preschools were not able to formulate the vision and goals for Sámi schools. These schools, teachers and so on were not formulating their main idea of their schools. As the numbers of students at same schools in Sweden are quite few, there is a possibility to cooperate with the North of Scandinavia in the development of the schools. Schools and teachers working in the northern part of Sweden, teachers in Sámi schools included are very much aware of and interested in the possibilities for in-service training as well as of being involved in research projects. The amount of teachers in the northern areas and especially teachers in Sámi schools are quite few, why cooperation with for example teacher education in the North could have a core role. The universities have an important role in the educational processes in teacher education and the in - service training of teachers. Cooperation between universities and Teacher colleges has an important role in this development process, for example in form of the University of the Arctic. The earlier mentioned project is a starting point for cooperation between Sámi College in Kautokeino, Luleå

university of technology and the Sámi schools in Gällivare and Jokkmokk (Balto & Johansson, 2007). The aim of the longitudinal project is to enlighten and develop knowledge about how school, based on Sámi culture and tradition can strengthen and develop the identity and also the willingness to learn. The project will also focus the parents and the students' responsibility and participation in learning processes. The number of students in 2007 is at the Sámi schools 161 pupils in compulsory school and 101 pupils in preschool. This project will involve 79 pupils.

In Sweden laws entitle individuals to use Sámi, Finnish and Meänkieli in dealings with administrative authorities. Municipalities are required to offer parents the option of placing their children in schools and preschools where some activities are conducted in their respective minority language. Johansson and Jernström (1997) claimed that the cultural background was not used as a resource in the educational sphere. Different reports have told us that when the children from minority groups have problems in succeeding with their schoolwork, then the problem is claimed to be found in their cultural background and in themselves. Johansson wanted to look at the phenomena from a different point of view. The problems must be seen as a problem for the school, the school that has not managed to cope with the students' multicultural backgrounds. Hoem (1978) discussed socialization into the society, especially in terms of the identity of the child and pointed out the importance of the early years. Question is if the teachers working in the preschools and compulsory schools have tools to work with cultural diversity?

### Studying the Multicultural approach at schools

Banks 1997:233 have been studying schools with integrated multicultural approach since the 1960. He developed a model to study how schools integrated the multicultural approach. He found four levels of characteristics. Hirvonen (2004) argued that this model can well be adapted for examining the educational and political views in the Nordic Countries. She argued for Sámi education, and I would like to broaden it to multicultural approach at compulsory schools in Sweden, including Sámi schools in Sweden. Banks four step model consists of four levels

- Level 1: The Contributions Approach. Focus on heroes, holidays and discrete cultural events
- Level 2: The Additive Approach. Content, concepts, themes and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure
- Level 3: The Transformation Approach. The structures of the curricula are changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups
- Level 4: The Social Action Approach. Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them.

Aikio-Puoskari ( 2006) pointed out the lack of the Sámi language, lack of traditions in education on institutions like schools and the lack of knowledge of the Sámi culture for teachers coming from the majority culture. Sámi schools outside the core Sámi could in that case be considered on the first level. This could probably be found in many of the schools with similar conditions. An area of development for teacher training institutions?

### Sámi culture and the school curriculum a Norwegian effort.

Balto ( 2000 ) as well as Aikio ( 2006) highlights the efforts made in the education area to achieve a more fair and real equality between the Sámi culture and the mainstream culture in Norway. Sámi ethno-political movement throughout the 70's and the 80's gave results. Ordinary Sámi people viewed increasingly their existence and achieved cultural survival in perspectives of indigenous peoples. Balto (1999) summarized the reform of the schools system in Norway in 1997. Compulsory schooling was extended from nine to ten years. A new national curriculum was constructed and the Sámi national curriculum was constructed for all subjects. Balto highlights the challenges for the educational field. She mentions for example the demand of bilingual teachers, and the consequences for teacher training. If home and the school have common interests and values, this could give optimal conditions for reinforcing the socialization (Hoëm, 1978). The students' cultural background is considered as an important point of view for the content of the schoolwork. Ozerk (1992) on the other hand questioned if having values in common with

the goals of the school curriculum in the reality reinforced socialization and the learning processes at school. To summarize the discussion we can quote Englund (1996 a ) that argued that the curriculum could be seen as a political instrument and stated that different interpretation by teachers, students, and parents made it possible to consider different meanings on the perceived curriculum level.

### Some perspectives on development of Educational systems and Indigenous schools in Russia.

Education can be a significant tool for renewal and can perform a significant role in northern revival and development. University of the Arctic has supported the development of networks aiming to link higher education and research in the circumpolar north. The Sápmi area has an interesting cultural background, in terms of a culture with no needs of national borders. The system of general education in Russia during the last 10 years can be characterized by two obvious tendencies. On the one hand - globalization that requires qualified specialists who are able to compete on international level. Development of regional educational systems are aiming to provide access, quality and efficiency of education in the regions. How is the regional system of education to be formed? The development of regional education was reflected in the concept for reforming indigenous schools (Zhirkov, 1992) that was adopted by the Government of the Sahka Republic in Yakutia in 1992. The concept of indigenous school reflected the changes in political life of Russia.

Implementation of the right of children to be educated in their native language and creation of conditions for the rebirth of languages of indigenous peoples, extension of areas of indigenous languages functioning. The list below deals with the educational efforts:

- Formation of intellectual abilities and moral qualities of children taking into account ethnic and psychological peculiarities of the learning processes and traditions of folk pedagogy;
- Introduction of the young generation to indigenous culture, customs and traditions of their native people, their spiritual and moral and ethical values in pre-school educational institutions, schools; integration of indigenous and world cultures;

- Interdisciplinary character of indigenous and regional component in the content of curricula;
- Variety of kinds of indigenous schools, pre-school institutions, kindergartens; variety of curricula depending on local conditions and the level of children;
- Creation of conditions for rebirth of indigenous languages of the Northern minority groups, broadening their functions as the language of instruction of pre-schools and schools;
- Prepare children to live and work in real new economic conditions.

In 1991 – 1992 the first variants of new curricula for indigenous schools were introduced under the Concept of indigenous school development. The changes in social and economic, regional and national policy of Russian are reflected in the education system. The state policy in the sphere of education is based on the principles of humanistic character of education, free development of personality, and links with indigenous, regional, cultural traditions and determines the content of curricula. Common to all cultural values is a system that provides personal development of a student. The curriculum of every school consists of compulsory subjects. They make the basic foundation of general secondary education. Besides, there are elective and optional subjects. Gabysheva (1998) stated that the national – regional component is being realized both in invariant and variant parts of curricula and meets the educational demands of the peoples of Russia. The national – regional component includes such subjects as indigenous languages and literature as well as other educational areas in which the subjects and their parts reflect regional peculiarities or ethnic characteristics of culture. School must prepare the future specialist who will be able to succeed in modern economic situation. School graduates should acquire the skills to use knowledge learned at school in life. In this respect the new paradigm of education – student-centered «profile» education is becoming more important. Vasilyeva (2000) stated that profile education means to provide more freedom in choosing the disciplines, which are necessary for the future profession. Two levels of curricula and standards are being developed for basic education and additionally for profile education. There are basic subjects and sets of profile subjects for various profiles. In addition to it the curricula can offer individual elective courses.

Unfortunately, in such curricula there is no place for the national and regional component, the so called regional subjects. The federal center offers to make regional subjects elective. In this case it is obvious that the rights of the region in general as well as the rights of a student are limited. On the one hand, a student must be able to compete in the Russian educational area, on the other, without studying regional subjects he is deprived of the important knowledge of culture and traditions of his own people.

At the present time the issue of profile education in indigenous and rural schools is being discussed in the Sakha Republic in Yakutia. In earlier times the concept of indigenous school development provided for various types of schools. As a result, regional schools were divided into elite and general school. In Sakha Republic, for example, there are boarding schools, in which the most talented indigenous children study for example the boarding school named Arctic, while children in nomadic school only have access to elementary education. 70% of all schools in Sakha Republic are small rural schools. Annual analysis of school final examinations and evaluation of students' knowledge during the State Federal Examination by independent experts reveals the most serious problem, the quality of education. Education in schools where Russian is a language of instruction for non-native Russian speakers is of a lower level than that in Russian schools. The reason is that the curriculum is being formed by the federal center. It also works out the standards of education. Evaluation of students knowledge is being done only by the subjects that are beyond federal competence. The knowledge in regional subjects is not evaluated at the Federal Examination. Mikhailova (1993) stated, those national and regional peculiarities of various curricula should be taken into consideration alongside with the federal standards during the process of the evaluation of knowledge. Attempts have been made to settle this problem in indigenous settlements in the North thus, in the Sakha Republic a network of nomadic schools was created. The schools have individual curricula, which take into account specific peculiarities of the life style, traditional economics. They may have a special time line of a study period depending on the necessity to roam from place to place with reindeer. The curricula includes basic federal subjects, in addition to them they offer indigenous cultural studies, crafts, languages. In order to avoid overloading children integrated subjects

are introduced, for example, lessons in native and Russian language. In boarding school Arctic, Khatystyr school and some others in Southern Yakutia school children study Russian, Evenki, Sakha cultures. The study of foreign languages is integrated with the study of world culture. The teachers of these schools are involved in the development and the implementation of such programs as multilingualism, interdisciplinary program, polycultural education, specialized courses on ethnic psychology, ethnic and cultural programs, this was presented in “The routes of my people” of Marfusaloova in 2003. There is a very worrying tendency in the North of Yakutia to transform secondary schools into incomplete general schools and in some of the schools a number of subjects are not taught. The reason is a lack of teachers in the North. This results in the failure of school graduates to continue their education at the colleges of further education and the university.

## **Key considerations and questions.**

### **Educational opportunities and lack of an indigenous research agenda**

One overall conclusion in this work so far is to state that the educational opportunities and possibilities to education through compulsory level to university studies have a important need of development. Research is rarely linked to indigenous agenda. Smith (2004) calls for decolonization of research methods. Two pathways to indigenous research agenda can be of interest for the Sámi schools in the North. First path is the community action projects with local initiatives, in this case the schools asked for development and research but there are also demands from the national level. The second path is through institutions by indigenous researchers or centres. This is to be developed. The first Sámi teacher from compulsory school is enrolled in doctoral studies in education at Luleå university of technology.

### **University of the Arctic**

Teacher Education is one of key questions connected to educational development. More research is needed concerning the content in the

teacher education, the content in the in - service training and more joint research and development projects with schools and universities involved. The role of university of the Arctic could be to strengthen the teacher education concerning knowledge of indigenous and the multicultural conditions in the North. University of the Arctic mounts programs of higher education, and can take an active role in teacher education as well as in in-service teacher training of teachers. And has also has an important role to stimulate research networks for school development. Educational policy including teacher education for graduate and postgraduate levels would be of importance. Following areas are still in focus:

- To what extent do we have knowledge of introduction of indigenous curricula in terms of strengthening cultural understanding, identity and cultural diversities as well as decolonizing processes in educational policy, including teacher education?
- What impact does the recognition of national minority groups and minority languages have in educational policy on different levels of education, including teacher education?
- What do we know about the multicultural learning processes in the minority or the majority population combined and widened with gender and ethnicity? How do we cope with this in teacher education?

Teachers, parents and students – globalization in a culture given?

On the state level in a democratic system it is for the political arena to decide the overall content of the schools. On this level there are a lot of considerations to be made. On macro level – state level, political and economical systems are probably expecting the educational reforms to include the cultural emphasis in the schooling systems. On the mesa level municipalities are responsible for school education, and on the micro level the responsibility is on the school level with the principal as the pedagogical leader. What about if the teachers do not have the adequate education and knowledge about cultural understanding, cultural diversities, colonizing and decolonizing processes?

The above levels do admit and support democratic freedom, including cultural understanding on all levels but do the different actors have knowledge in indigenizing processes and culturalization?

### What is the position of the school in the community?

On the municipality level there are still quite a lot of different interests to cope with. The possibility to formulate the local curriculum lies with the people living in this local society. People living in the north, for example, especially the parents might have an idea about how to give the children the strength and freedom for full personal development in their own culture. Gudmundsson (2004) highlighted that each school needs to define its position in the community, each school must take special notice of the characteristics in the community and hereby the school curriculum is of vital importance. In Akureiri the faculty of Education has organized an extensive course on local studies, including cultural issues. All teachers, from preschool - and primary school teachers have these courses as compulsory parts of their studies. They consider the society, indigenous or non-indigenous, to have the knowledge that is needed for their small society to survive. Following figure give schematic picture of the process, but there are some differences between the countries concerning the possibilities for the teachers, students and parents to choose the content.

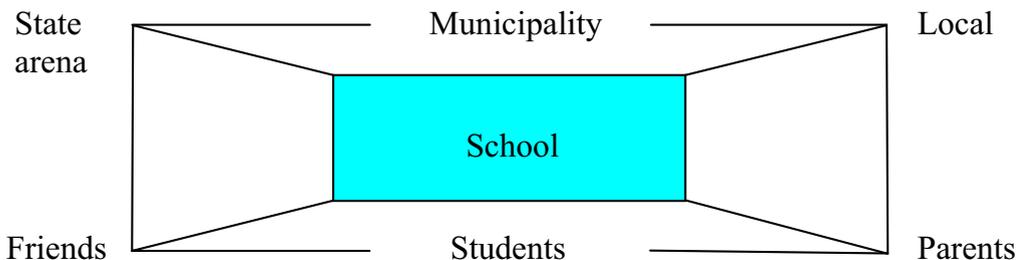


Figure 4. The context where the national curricula can be formulated due to the interests of the parents and the community.

Shared values and purposes are of importance when creating tasks and conditions on the local school arena, by the people living in this society. This will facilitate collaborative partnership and decision-making in education (Martin, J.et.al.1999). Education needs communities and communities need education. Ravn (2003) concluded that the idea of partnership programs between parents/families, students, teachers and the local society is affected by diverging cultural and societal information and political intentions. Lugovskaya (2004) compared humanitarian disciplines and stated in a comparison between Finland and Russia that the goals of education are formulated on the state level and also reflected in state programs, but not on parental level or the local society level. There are differences in the possibility to choose goals and tasks in the courses and particularly in lessons. The Finnish teacher is freer to choose at municipality level, the Russian teacher is guided by goals stipulated in the documents.

Let us look at an example from Scandinavia. Sivesund, Bachman, Afsar (2003) compares and emphasizes in “Nordiska läroplaner” the problems the local schools have in interpreting the national curriculum to the local educational need in the Nordic countries in terms of evaluation issues. The national school curriculum in Sweden is less prescriptive today and will be probably be even less prescriptive in the future. Local schools are supposed to interpret the national curriculum and supposed to decide the best content for the school, for the region and for the children in their development and also for the development of the local community. In Sweden the curriculum is prescribing general and political intentions. Finland and Denmark (Sivesund, et al., 2003) on the other hand, are increasingly prescribing the content in the national curriculum and the local schools. The goals in these national curricula are more result oriented and more oriented to standardized evaluation models. Evaluation models direct the work of the schools, even in local communities. The two directions in Scandinavia are opposed, and will certainly have an influence on the possibility for schools to develop local school plans. Compulsory schools may in these countries find problems in developing education with the roots in the culture in the North. The effects of the evaluation systems are in focus. Kallos & Lundgren, 1979 discussed curriculum as a pedagogical problem and the consequences of the situation where

the national curriculum to a to large degree is concerned with the contents of teaching. Research and development on the other hand are focused on the construction and evaluation of curricula. They emphasized the importance of relating different levels of appearance of the school system to each other. When specialists discuss the content of schooling and when researchers study the relations between curriculum and teaching, it is difficult to relate between the micro and macro levels. Patton (1997) offered the idea of process evaluation. He suggests questions such as: What do the students' experience? What do the teachers do? Why? Dahllöf (1970) described the effects of a theory oriented model for evaluation. This model relates different organizational models to processes and results. Curriculum process analysis and Comparative Evaluations of School systems have an effect on the content of the schools.

Barnhardt and Kawagley (1999) argued *“the curricula, teaching methodologies, and often teacher training associated with schooling are based on a worldview that does not always recognize or appreciate indigenous notions of an interdependent universe and the importance of place in their societies. “*

They welcome the possibilities to strengthen and renew the educational systems serving people and communities throughout the society. The need of empirical curriculum research is important for the strategic action within schools and communities. Klerfeldt (2002) clarified the fact that most doctoral thesis in Sweden from 1980 till 2002 concerning education are in the field of practice. The multicultural agenda including indigenous societies is not visible in these theses.

### Students experiences of the school context

Nordic countries have turned from a centralized policy in their education towards decentralisation. Power has been transferred to a local level. State and civil society can act in partnership, each to facilitate, but also to act as a controlling factor. In a global world, the question of education in society is crucial. Alexandersson (1998) argued that a change in the society seemed to affect young people more than it affects the older generations. Media and new

technologies for information have given new types of relations. These changes may influence the process of socialization and creation of identity. Young people develop their own lifestyles, music, sports and media cultures. Beside the culture for the youth, the school seems to have to deal with responsibilities that were earlier the concern of the families and parents, for example moral issues, how to take responsibility and the personal development of the child. Teachers are supposed to know the students interests, backgrounds and experiences and also the youth culture. Alexandersson questioned the scenario when the content in the students work, is not familiar to the context of the students daily life, when the content in the students work at school is not at all chosen by themselves for the learning and teaching processes. The Students experiences and interests must be found in the school context. This argumentation is also discussed by Balto (1997). Balto argued that the main idea of the learning processes is to develop independent individuals and a lot of effort is put in giving the learner opportunities to gain their experiences. Own experience is fundamental for building up the self confidence of the child.

Balto also gave examples from daily life where one can recognize how positive expectations and trust gives the child self-confidence, and the courage to experiment. Failure is not something threatening. Balto found that there was a large difference between schools based learning and home based learning. One conclusion can be to ask the people living in the north what they consider important for the development and understanding of teaching and *learning* processes. Balto also argued that the Sámi parents enter the school system open minded as most parents do and they hope to take part in the process between home and school for the success of their children. But what the parents meet is an enormous amount of information, written books, documents, laws and regulations within the school system. The Sámi way of life is not reflected upon, or if so, only in fragments.

Though parental involvement and approach to the issue of cooperation between parents, school and the local community have been a subject of discussion ever since compulsory school was first introduced (Johansson & Orving, 1993) teacher students usually do not have much experience of this this area during the teacher education. The OECD report in 1997 pointed out the area of school - family –

community as a topic of interest for those involved in childhood education especially among parents, teachers, policymakers. Parliamentary and governmental decisions are taken with regard to cooperation between home, school and society. Johansson and Orving emphasize parents as a resource within the schools daily work. Parents, students and teachers in the longitudinal study did emphasize that they are prepared to interpret, make the cultural background important and to tie the work to the cultural and economic realities in the region. Epstein and Sanders ( 1998 ) stated in the OECD report 1997, that social capital is increased when families, educators, students and others in the community interact in productive ways. Productive ways can be considered when small community finds ways to work together with issues of importance for the survival in the community. Teacher students could be a valuable resource in this work. Bjarnadottir, 2003 argued that the emphasis in teacher education should also be to empower the students in life skills and social competence.

### Students experiences of cultural knowledge in mathematics in the school context.

Jannok Nutti (2003) studied the learning of mathematics within the frame of pupils, parents, elders and grandparents. She argued the importance of learning in the ethnic perspective, involving the knowledge from the elders. Jannok Nutti ( 2007 ) had an ethno mathematic approach in her research, in the perspective of culturally based learning in education. The results are discussed from an indigenous perspective with decolonizing as an important perspective. A challenging perspective is the involvement of teacher students in the process.

### Suggestions for improvement – school based research and development for cultural understanding.

The aim of this study is to provide a platform for discussion of Educational opportunities on compulsory school for cultural diversities, in this case indigenous peoples. Another question is how teacher education is coping with the cultural diversities in the North. What are the needs of the local schools especially Sámi schools in the Sápmi area? What are the challenges and issues for teacher education

for indigenous peoples, cultural diversities and multicultural societies? To what extent do we have knowledge of cultural diversities to articulate an introduction of indigenous curricula in terms of strengthening cultural understanding, identity and decolonizing processes and cope with these issues and consequences for teacher education? To what extent is educational policy, in terms of curriculum development in the existing educational system serving the Sámi community? One key question is as mentioned research. Research and research methods is today rarely linked to indigenous agenda. One possibility is action research projects in indigenous research agenda.

The initiatives from the Sámi schools gave us an opportunity to get some insights and new understandings in a cultural perspectives and expressions and to support the teachers to see themselves as positioned subjects situated in their background, gender, class, kinship, profession, education and emotions. The demands from the national level is also an part of the process. Through institutions by indigenous researchers the research project has a good starting point. Networks between research institutions in the Sápmi area do give a qualified base for continuation. Teacher education and teacher students studying and researching the area but also the effects of the mainstreamed teacher education and in service training can give new insights in the development of the Sámi schools.

Any research is connected with power and control. The lack of researchers with Sámi background in the area of Compulsory Education is obvious. A research based teacher education aiming to involve the knowledge and cultural background of the teachers, preschool teachers and recreation leaders in the developmental work could serve as appoint of departure. Carr and Kemmis (1986:215) saw action research as a form of self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants to improve rationality in their own practices. Educational proposal, the curriculum, invites teachers and researchers and others to reflect rigorously on practice as a base for professional development. Stenhouse (1981:113) saw research as inquiry oriented, systematically planned and self critical. The idea of each classroom or educational situation was questioning the planning and implementation of the curriculum. Every practitioner is in this way a

member of a critical community of educational scientists. Kärkäinen (2004) argued that role of art and handicraft has been neglected when trying to work in an multicultural perspective. Art seems to empower the emotions and ethic feelings. When trying to work with different cultures it is crucial to find ways of interaction to meet and understand.

This writing has grown from the premise that Sámi schools can implement the Sámi culture in settings at the Sámi schools. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century there have been special schools for the Sámi population, but it was not until 1980 the Sámi people had a possibility to influence the educational sphere. The Swedish Riksdag decided to organize the Sámi schoolboard, “Sameskolstyrelse” in 1980. This board influenced the compulsory school and the preschools. During this work a lot of questions have been raised. Sametinget in Sweden was established in 1993, with possibilities to politically influence the educational system.

In Norway the Sámi university college was established in 1989 and is one of the state colleges for higher education in Norway. It was established to cover needs of higher education and research of the Sámi society and to strengthen Sámi professional qualifications in various fields. It has responsibility for Sámi higher education in general, but especially for teacher training. Expertise and cooperation with this college is of importance in developing education in the Sámi area, and it enrolls also students from the Nordic countries and from Russia . Indigenous research is a part of decolonizing processes and implies the right to self determination, not only from the political point of view but also with respect to research. An important issue is guaranteed educational possibilities on all levels.

Political decisions but also teachers and consequently teacher education have a crucial role for the educational possibilities for the indigenous peoples. To explore the possibilities of research based teacher education with a profile of cultural diversities would be a step forward. Sámi University College was established in northern Norway in Guovdageainnu. One primary reason was to create a college with Sámi environment in terms of language, culture and contents. Another reason was to develop a Sámi college with a variety of courses and programs in higher education, including teacher training programs. All

education is based on the needs of the Sámi society. An important role for University of the Arctic could be analysing the possibilities to develop programs and courses on graduate and postgraduate level for teachers in the communities in the North. Teachers working in the local communities very often have a lack of further education after the university teaching qualification and show a great interest in in-service training and also in participating in research and development projects. Programs offered by the University of the Arctic might be an innovative opportunity for teachers in the communities as different areas could be of mutual interest during the teacher education. Some examples of good experiences are found in the study of Hirvonen (2004) of the Sámi culture, the school and teacher training. She found out that teachers graduated from Sámi College has strengthened their identity and increased their language and cultural skills. This could be one option of cooperation for the teacher training. Some parts of teacher education could be an option to study in a college, specialized for, in this case Sámi. Another example we can find in Akureiri where there are similar opportunities in teacher education (Gudmundsson, 2004).

Capacity building and cultural understanding can give opportunities to influence the school on national level, regional level, municipality level/ district level, in school boards on municipality level, the local school and individual level. Reflective processes during the teacher education on interpreting the national plans, working with degree projects in areas above, including the evaluation systems allow the teacher students to get an overview of the possibilities for a local oriented teaching. The local school may define, analyse and act upon experiences on the content of the school, of the social and educational living conditions, on the relations to others. The local community could empower the development process in the area – the teacher students could be a part of these processes. With high degree of local participation, the community is identifying the issue they want to address, the work, research and development with sensitivity and flexibility, appropriate to the community and the local school. The whole process is aiming to benefit the local community and the culture and the teacher education, but also to take advantage of the knowledge built up of indigenous peoples' education. Nearby institutions for cooperation for teacher education are Sámi University

College in Kautokeino in Norway as well as Kiellakas institute in Finland. The aim is understand and develop knowledge together for a teacher education for the future. The practitioner's wisdom as a central source of knowledge in connection with research to analyze curriculum schooling systems. In service training and development of the school can work hand in hand. To make the change visible and to describe and analyze the process is worth some efforts. Schools very often want to continue the developmental work after the project time and one support could be collegial supervision. The principals role in leading the process of change have been on the agenda for some time. Courses developed in for example Sámi language, cultural understanding, decolonizing processes and research for the Sámi schools could be an issue for the cooperation between schools but also universities in the North. Lack of master program in Education in the area of cultural diversities is a fact.

Kansanen and Uljens (1996) argued that teacher education must be connected to education in schools. This might mean that our teacher education must be more connected to the area and culture teachers are supposed to work in. Niemi (2002) states that teacher education must run through a cultural change, active learning of teacher students must be promoted. Teacher students must experience how knowledge is deeply connected in the local culture, how this knowledge of their own must run through their bodies, before it becomes real knowledge, a necessity for their work as a teacher in the local culture. More research is needed to find out how professional competence is promoted in teacher education. Mendel (2001) finds that teacher students together with teachers should continually learn, redefine the world. She argued that this could be the way for schools, families and communities in partnership to build an increasing social capital.

Barnhardt and Kawagley (2004) argued in the follow up study that after eight years students spend more time with elders, parents and in the local communities. The school curriculum reflected the knowledge of local communities. They pointed out the importance of more place-based pedagogy involving students in studies in the surrounding physical and cultural environment. Hovdenak (2000) and Kristiansen (2001) pointed out several areas as barriers for the professional teacher in the rural area. Local culture, traditions and values were

supposed to be linked to the national curriculum. This was not an easy task. Furthermore there was a lack of textbooks dealing with local culture, heritage and knowledge. Teachers were supposed to work with classes of mixed ages, and there also were a lack of in – service support and training in the geographically isolated local communities. The figure below summarizes these problems.

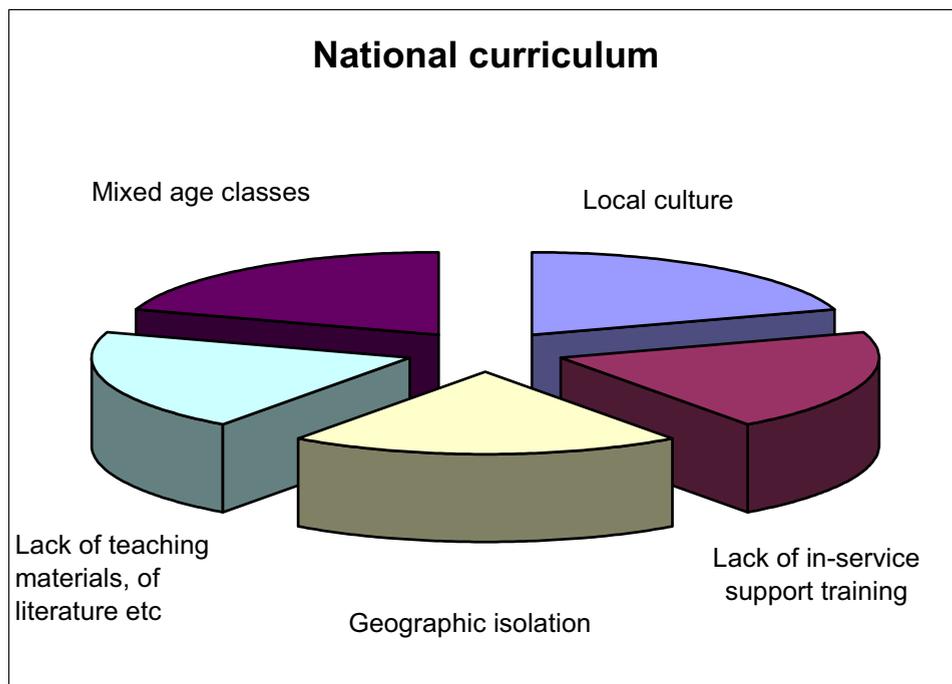


Figure 8. Barriers in the practical daily life of schools in small communities, lack of in service training and support, lack of material connected to the culture and the local school .

In most of the northern countries efforts are made to offer teacher training within the rural areas. This means that the student teachers do not need to move from the area. This has been done mostly because of the lack of teachers in these areas but also to secure professional teachers in these areas. These educational possibilities have been based on the assumptions of the national curriculum and of the

possibilities due to the curriculum. I would argue there have not been very many reflections on the local knowledge and values. Perhaps some of the reasons are to be found in the teacher training programs. In what way is teacher training dealing with these cultural connections? The strategy of the educational reforms has been to increase the students' interest and the possibility in taking part in higher education. Concluding this study and suggesting a further study I summarize that there are lot knowledge in the area to take in account if you broaden the view and take advantage of the research and educational planning in for example Norway, New Zealand, Canada and northern Russia. Educational policy, compulsory schooling and teacher education can take advantage of the existing knowledge and insights concerning indigenous peoples and cultural diversities in the multicultural society.

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