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# Voices of Guovdageaidnu

## Introduction by Europan Norway

Before the competition in Guovdageaidnu was fully financed, Europan found it urgently important to create a new type of knowledge base that could communicate to both the Europan secretariat writing the program and the participating teams all over Europe, a wide range of information about this stronghold of Sámi language and culture.

Europan invited, with an open invitation text, 30 people to write two pages about their take on the society, their experience, ambitions and challenges and possibilities in Guovdageaidnu. The response was formidable and can for the competitors be seen as a first Guovdageaidnu reader, a pathfinder.

The first writers were tentatively found through the own network of Europan. This was extended through the personal knowledge of the different actors the municipality introduced to Europan.

Continuous dialogues with each of the writers in a series of mail discussions and very long and many telephone conversations based on their text proposals widened this unfolding carpet of information.

Europan was met with a very positive attitude from all the people we contacted, also from capacities that did not write a text. The long conversations were met with a friendly and personal eagerness to communicate aspects of the society, the different lifeforms, livelihood and open innovative perspectives.

The municipality sees these dialogues with the writers as a treasure in the new type of discussion that has to take place in Guovdageaidnu, now restarting and restructuring the path of the society into times to come.

In Sámi language the word Ságat means conversation. Ságat allat means a continuous conversation, and implies that this type of active participation is a strong point of departure for the municipality. A conversation to be continued.

Through Sámi experts, voices from Guovdageaidnu living in other cities in Norway (in the diaspora), a wider field of new contacts is discovered, which the municipality has found very precious.

This new library of knowledge contains voices from very different fields and in each text it is possible to find views and statements that can inform the approach of the Europan teams. The Voices of Guovdageaidnu can be seen as an extension of the Europan 15 program for this society in change.

Knut Eirik Dahl  
President of Europan Norway



# Some aspects of reindeer husbandry in Guovdageaidnu

**Mikkel Nils Sara**

Mikkel Nils Sara is Associate Professor at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. Mikkel works with qualitative social research. His most recent publication includes “Misreading the Arctic landscape: A political ecology of reindeer, carrying capacities, and overstocking in Finnmark, Norway”.

Approximately half of the population in Guovdageaidnu takes part in or has close connections to reindeer husbandry. Sámi reindeer husbandry is a migratory way of life. In late April, the siidas – i.e. groups of reindeer herders having their reindeer in one herd unit – start to migrate towards the coastal mountains and islands. They will return at the end of September or October.

A couple of generations ago this meant that half of the population stayed outside the municipal borders for 5–6 months. Extension of compulsory school, new means of transport and construction of roads, however, have shortened this period of being gone from the municipality of Guovdageaidnu for most family members. School ends around June 20 and begins around August 20. However, in May, June and September the family members commute to their summer home on the days they do not have work or go to school by driving cars up to 300 km each way.

Reindeer husbandry is a family enterprise. Today, this means some of the family members work full-time to carry out the tasks of reindeer husbandry and herding. Others take part more occasionally, i.e. in more work intensive periods like spring migration or during reindeer herd roundups. Otherwise, they have other, ordinary jobs or studies. The youngsters will learn about reindeer husbandry and herding and acquire the skills necessary for this occupation. That includes things like how to handle and treat the reindeer, earmarking the calves and reading earmarks. Furthermore, it includes reading the landscape, making use of different natural

resources and keeping control over the reindeer herd in different terrain under different weather and climate conditions, and herein mastering the Sámi terminology for the various aspects of life and work related to the livelihood.

The reindeer husbandry families of the municipality comprise a part of the population that has homesteads and interests related to their livelihood and way of life in an including the western part of the county of Finnmark and the eastern part of the county of Troms. Thus combined they have a quite thorough knowledge about all this vast area. Guovdageaidnu is a meeting place and a common centre for all these people throughout the year of spreading and gathering.

Throughout the winter months, all the reindeer husbandry families and their reindeer are within the municipal borders. They make up about 1500 people. The number of reindeer varies a lot, from 60 000 to more than 100 000 in April and from 85 000 to 150 000 in September (the calves born in May/June included). These numbers reflect more or less favourable climatic conditions throughout different years. Thus, weather conditions in the different seasons and forecasts in the months ahead are always a topic of conversation when reindeer herders meet.

Reindeer are slaughtered in the period from mid-September to February. Some are slaughtered for own use, while most are delivered for sale. There is a slaughterhouse in the town (Márkan) of Guovdageaidnu.

Reindeer are transported by lorries from different summer or autumn pastures to be slaughtered in Guovdageaidnu. Herds can also be driven to the slaughterhouse later, on snow-covered ground. Reindeer meat is Guovdageaidnu's main market product and is well known for its good taste and its content of health-promoting vitamins and minerals.

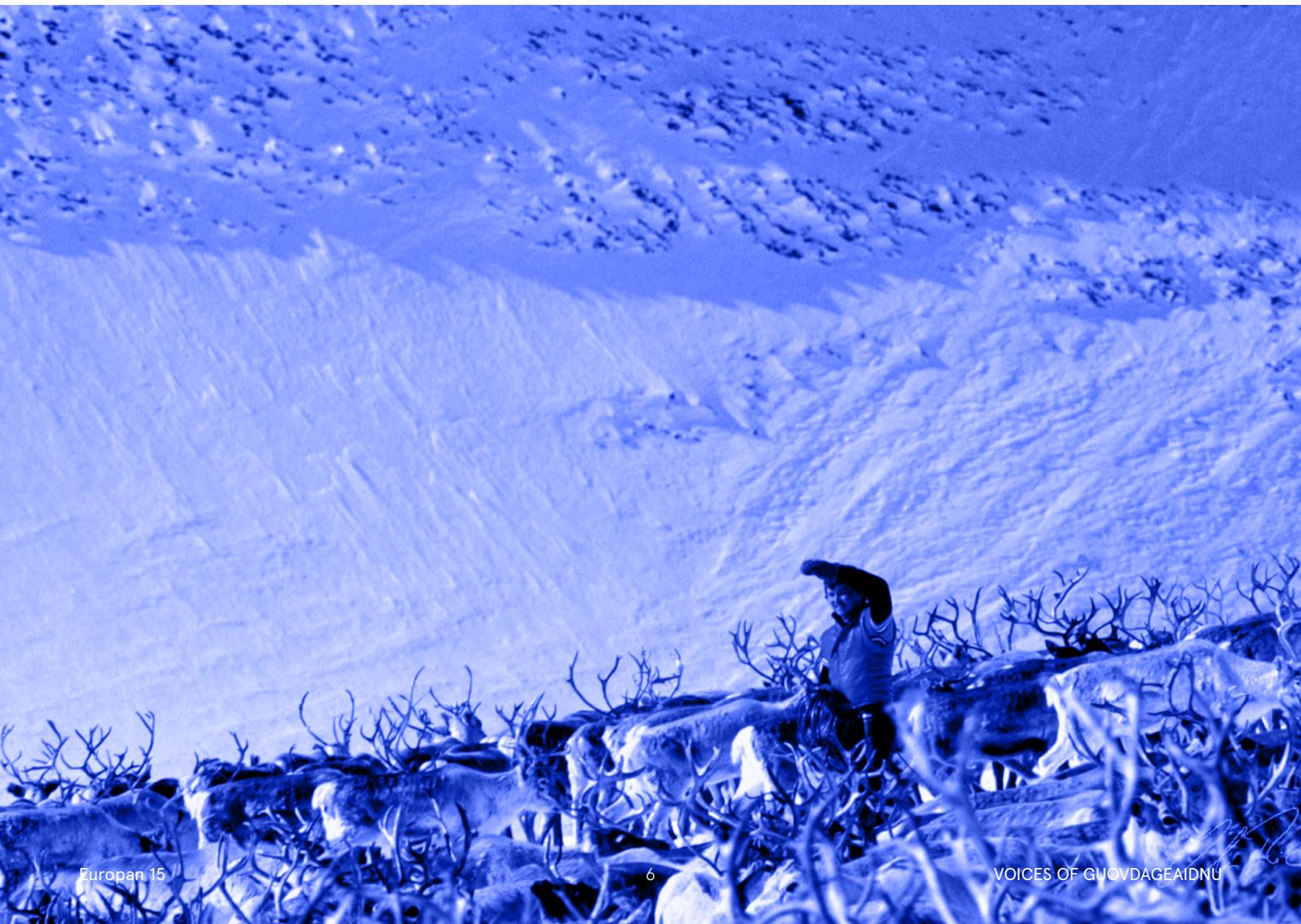
In the past, tamed draught reindeer and pack reindeer were used for transportation. Nowadays they are tamed for purposes of sport and tourism. Regarding the daily work in the siidas, different motorised vehicles are used for herding and transportation. Today the reindeer herding families have snowmobiles for winter use, ATVs for summer use, and of course cars for travels and transportation between summer and winter homesteads and to/from towns and villages. In winter, as in summer, the siida camps and herds are spread throughout the undeveloped siida areas. Nowadays the families have houses and reside in the villages/towns most of the time. The herders, too, will return to the village/town when they have days off from herding duties.

Extension of compulsory school (and the end of residential school), the benefits of modern houses (including water supply and electricity) and opportunities for paid work were the original reasons for families to build houses and to settle in the centres. Now, new benefits of having the main house in the centre have been added. These are based on the reindeer herders' need for mobility and good communications.

The vehicles need fuel, maintenance and repair, which means that herders often have errands to do in the centre and often have to wait to have e.g. repairs done. There are a couple of companies that sell/repair snowmobiles/ATVs and several gas stations or car repair shops.

Now, new equipment like drones has been taken into use to facilitate herding in rough terrain. Furthermore, herders often need information e.g. about the roundups of the different siidas because herds often mix, and the owners have to get their reindeer back to their own herd by being present at the roundups. They also need access to the internet because of requirements to report to the state authorities on operational and business matters. The use of mobile phones, smartphones and PCs is very common among reindeer herders, and from that comes the need for equipment and services related to these technologies. Nowadays herders also have to consult e.g. accountants and officials, and attend meetings and sometimes conferences in order to safeguard their interests about the many issues that arise. All these things make it necessary for the herders to seek out services that are offered at the centres.

Reindeer husbandry and herding represent a range of needs, interest and possibilities stretching from the very old and traditional (ref. knowledge, products) to the newest innovations in transportation and information. Most herders seek out services related to these things at the centres, besides errands pertaining to public administration and especially safeguarding reindeer pasture areas.



# Hashtag Guovdageaidnu

## Elle Sofe Sara

Hi European people! My name is Elle Sofe Sara, I am a choreographer and director living in and from Guovdageaidnu. I have started this artist collective, Daiddadallu, together with Maret Anne Sara (artist and author). We started in 2014. Today 5 years later we are 18 artists and people who have creative process as a big part in their work. DD members are from Norway, Sweden and Finland. DD is a unique artistic environment with disciplines such as visual arts, performing arts, film, writers and music. Most DD members are based in Guovdageaidnu, but travel and work on projects nationally and internationally. International projects last year were documenta14 exhibition by Maret Anne, Snoweye music group with Elle Marja and Led Zeppelin guitarist John Paul, Sundance film festival for Per Josef's film. In addition to this, DD members have many exiting ongoing collaborations, exhibitions and film showings in Canada, Finland and New Zealand and more. The DD overall vision is to challenge ways we think about and structure society. And with this DD wishes to contribute to develop our society. DD exists because we want to develop Sámi artists and the making of art.

I am Unit- Ántte Rávna Elle Sofe, or Elle Sofe Sara as my name is written.

I was born and raised in Guovdageaidnu. I was actually born in the same house as the Daiddadallu artist collective where I work. Back then, that building was health clinic and an old folk's home. I was the third child of my mother and we did not have time to go to the nearest hospital which was 4 hours' drive to Hammerfest. So I was born in Guovdageaidnu in 1984. I moved away when I was 16 to go to high school in Alta and Tromsø. I moved because I wanted to study theatre and dance, and that was not possible in Guovdageaidnu. I travelled a lot between the ages of 16 and 30: 3 years in London, 2 years in Oslo and travelling through China, Canada, Greenland, Russia, Australia and Scandinavia – working with dance, film and yoik (traditional Sámi song).

I believe that my vision of Guovdageaidnu is strongly influenced by my travel experiences and meeting different cultures and people in other life situations. I love living in Guovdageaidnu. I really feel that I get the best of two worlds. A traditional Sámi world and the contemporary world. I feel like the luckiest person on earth to be able to live like this.

### Some things that are great about Guovdageaidnu:

Volunteer work at wedding parties: I got married in June 2018 and in Guovdageaidnu we hold BIG wedding parties at the Bákteharji sports hall with 500 up to 2000 guests. We depend on help from family, relatives and friends

to do that. At our wedding we had over 100 people helping us. We asked people to help and everyone gladly said yes. In Guovdageaidnu, when you say yes you automatically know what to do. This is one of the most precious and special things about my hometown.

Here is a link to a TV series called Sápmi Love, it is not from our wedding but you will see what a Sámi wedding looks like: <https://vimeo.com/193699880>

### Language

I love that Sámi language is the main language here. But I also feel every day that we are losing bits and pieces of our language. I have 2 small children who only speak Sámi, but they get so influenced by Norwegian and English children's movies and TV. I wish the Sámi language was even more visible in Guovdageaidnu so we and our children could learn that the Sámi language has status and is important.

### Verddevuohta

I think that many people in Guovdageaidnu have this *fix it yourself* philosophy that *verddevuohta* is a part of. *Verdde* is a person and friend you have an unspoken *trade agreement* with. You can exchange help or borrow things from them. So for instance, we can ask someone to come and help us at the reindeer corral and later we can help them with something, or we can borrow a car from them, a snowmobile, a garage or something else. This is a very good thing where you don't need money

to buy services but you exchange services with each other. It makes us also less dependent on money.

### Visit Guovdageaidnu

When you come to Guovdageaidnu, there are not many things to see to inform you about the rich culture and unique traditions that exist here.

I think one of the reasons it is like that is because the Sámi have not traditionally had this way of thinking, that you should build *empires*. You can just look at our history, many places where the Sámi have lived do not have *the remains of civilisation*. Archaeologists only discover campfires that have grown back to earth. I must say that I am so proud that our elders had this philosophy; what an environmental mindset they had!

I may seem to be talking about ancient times here, but I am talking about my parent's and my grandparent's generations. My mother migrated with the reindeer when she grew up and she was 18 years old the first time she wore something other than a *gákti* (traditional Sámi dress). My generation and I are actually the first in our family to live in a house throughout the year. That is a very fast shift for our society and I believe that is not something you see from the outside.

I hope that Guovdageaidnu appreciates these ways of thinking that our elders teach and show us, that we do not take more than we need and *verddevuohta*

to mention two things. My wish is that these ways of thinking could also be reflected in our architecture and structures in Guovdageaidnu.

I hope we never see a big building in Guovdageaidnu that *shows* Sámi culture to tourists. I do not believe that is possible; showing a vibrant living Sámi culture in that way.

I hope that many different gathering places arise that as a whole show some of the Sámi culture in Guovdageaidnu. We must also keep in mind that Sámi culture is not only the things you see like lavvos, reindeer and traditional dresses. Sámi culture is a way of thinking, intangible traditions and customs that are not visible to the eye. They need to be experienced to be understood.

What I fear most for Guovdageaidnu is that we make too big a shift socially. I mentioned earlier the big shift from our parents' generation and our generation. These shifts also bring challenges. There are a lot of challenges I could write about, but I think mental illness is the biggest challenge that we face. I hope there would be a way that architecture could help to make things a bit better. I often think that we lack meeting places; we lack easy-access to hiking trails in our beautiful nature. I believe that physical activity and connecting to our land and nature can be the best medicine for both mental and physical illness.

Thank you for reading my thoughts today!

Elle Sofe Sara, Guovdageaidnu, 1 February 2019



# Some thoughts about and from Guovdageaidnu

**Nils Johan Heatta**

Nils Johan Heatta (b. 1954) is from Siebe, a small village outside of Guovdageaidnu. In 1985, Heatta became the director of NRK's Sámi program division and thus part of senior management at NRK. NRK Sápmi produces Sámi media content for radio, television and internet. Heatta has been a key person in the Sámi cross-border media cooperation and was essential to the creation of common daily Nordic Sámi news broadcasts via television. He also helped establish an independent Sámi radio station in Lovozero, Russia. Heatta helped set up a worldwide collaborative network for indigenous TV broadcasters in 2008: The World Indigenous Television Broadcasting Network. He was a board member for 7 years, of which 2 years he served as chairperson. Media houses from 5 different continents participated in the network. In 2015, Heatta resigned as director and moved back to his roots in Guovdageaidnu. He now works as a journalist and does genealogy research in his spare time.

We are concerned about the family and the passing of generations, and we care about how people are related to each other, how many children they have and who married whom. We look back at former generations to identify kinship between the people who live here. And we would like to know where our people have moved, where they have lived and about their families and descendants. To be absolutely certain that we are discussing the same person, we use our Sámi names on the persons. The Sámi names to describe a person and type of kinship are in most cases exact. "Kautokeinoslekter (The clans of Guovdageaidnu)" is perhaps not the most important book for those of us who live in Guovdageaidnu, but the book is certainly the one book which is most used. If a home's family genealogy book has not been repaired by the bookbinder, it will be in pretty bad condition with loose pages and a broken spine that barely exists any more.

Are we driven by an insatiable curiosity? Or is it because we look for things we can use against each other or spread gossip about others? We may do that as well. But we like knowing and telling the family who we met at the grocery store or on the road or on a snowmobile trip.

If a stranger comes to the village, we want to know who he is and where he came from. We are ready to get to know them and have a chat if we speak the same language or can understand each other. If we cannot communicate, we quickly move on – making us seem a bit cheeky and rude.

We are happy when immigrants learn Sámi and become a part of our Sámi environment. And we are ready to talk to those who come to our village, and we want their children to learn our language. They will never be Sámi, but as people, they are just as valuable as us – and we are willing to defend them if they themselves show the same respect that we want from those who come here. The sky is high and wide in Guovdageaidnu. The open countryside is a delight and a gift to those who live here. We can see far and wide until the horizon hides what lies behind. Vegetation is sparse, even though we can remember times when there was almost no vegetation between or around the houses. The vegetation has grown gradually, but perhaps most where we have planted trees and shrubs around our homes – a hidden urge to hide and mark our small plots on the tundra. Some of us have even made small gardens around our houses. In the new era of proper working hours and fixed salaries, we have something called spare time that has to be used for something. The trees and shrubs around our houses may hide some of the clutter we surround ourselves with. For we do have clutter, but it does not seem to bother us much. But there are probably many people glancing at the nicely done roadsides and plantings in the neighbouring villages, both to the north and to the south. Still, the greatest envy might be directed at what they have achieved in the neighbouring village to the east. If someone brings this up, we shrug our shoulders and express our patriotism for Guovdageaidnu by claiming that the neighbouring village to the east is marked by a process of Norwegianisation.

The open landscape also seems to define the people of Guovdageaidnu. Of course we are different, but we are particularly patriotic – at least most of us who are born and raised here. Yes, at times this loyalty can be a bit much; so much so that we don't see the imperfections of our own village. At times, this patriotism might get so strong that we do not wish to realize that there are lots of things not working as they should in our village. We can become unfair and attack people who come from outside and who dare to say negative things about our village. Between us, we may nevertheless be hard on each other and yell at politicians and bureaucrats failing to keep our municipality in order.

The sky-high and wide gives us both space and the feeling of freedom. That sets its mark on the people who are born and raised here and those who live their lives among us. We have been bullied through generations, but we have never given up. We have found our ways of dealing with superior forces. But we are starting to get tired of the bullying from the larger society. We dislike the way Norway encroaches on our territory and makes decisions that make no sense to us. That is why we will continue our annual duck hunt in the spring and manage our pastures as we see fit. Norway is not welcome with laws and regulations that aim to limit our right to exercise our traditions, our industries and our culture.

We are strongly tied to traditions, and our cultural traditions are very important to us. Our Sámi customs and values are extremely important and we are confident in our identity. Young or old, we like to wear our traditional costume Gákti/Kofte and Sámi clothing. This we do during holidays and the giant weddings (2-3000 invited guests) and during the confirmations of our youths every year right before the Easter holiday. We love to show up in our proud and colourful traditional costumes. We fill our annual Easter concert festival with colourful Sámi clothing and dance, casting glances at those who fail to wear their Sámi attire.

Our village is a part of the nature on the plateau. Nature is only 10 minutes outside the village, by foot or on skis. You will see many snowmobiles around the village in the winter. They are necessary to get from place to place, from home the grocery store, in natural, wild surroundings like this. And we find it ok that village people use snowmobiles to get to work, or that residents in any of the surrounding small villages come to the grocery store or public places by driving a snowmobile. They are a part of life here, so we need to organize a life that works for us. We do not want anyone from outside to tell us that we can no longer drive our snowmobiles to the petrol station to refuel.

An aerial view of the village would look like complete chaos of houses and buildings. The settlement does not seem very planned or structured, with the exception of the residential areas that have come in recent decades. Even there, you will see buildings scattered here and there. Sometimes, one might wonder if the buildings were thrown from outer space and just ended up where they ended up. Although an aerial view might show a lot of imbalance between the houses and buildings, and infinite chaos, it may be that the owner of the dwelling had a feeling there was practical and mental balance in the way the dwelling was settled.

It is hard to say if we have a centre in our village. And what exactly is a centre? Who defines what a centre is? Is it where the municipal offices are, or is it where the shops are? Or perhaps where most of the traffic stops – at our petrol stations? Or is it the Diehtosiida, or perhaps near an industrial zone, of which there are several in the village? Or is it at the Báktehárji sports hall? Or is it by the primary school? Or maybe our home is our centre of the village? Our great Sámi artist, Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, once wrote: "Mu ruoktu lea mu váimmus" (My home is in my heart). Maybe we should rephrase this to say it this way: "Dat mii geasuha mu lea munnje guovddáš" (What attracts me is to me a centre).

Only the gods know where the centre is and why we would need a so-called centre. Is it meant for those of us who live here, or is it for the tourists who hardly stop here? Or will they perhaps stop here and spend some coins if we establish a centre with many activities to offer? Yes, that might be a good idea. There are undoubtedly many activities that would attract people. Activities in the sports hall, both sporting, cultural and commercial. Of course, we have the most wonderful ski trails prepared by the most amazing volunteers. But we have no space for outdoor activities: playgrounds for the children or sledge runs. We have no outdoor park where we can sit down and just relax, a spot for campfires or a lávvu-tent or turf hut to enter.

Some tables and chairs at the entrance to the grocery store have become a meeting place for many, but it's pretty empty there. Three tables and three chairs at each table. Nevertheless, this is where you can stop for a chat with the person already seated there with his cup of coffee. No luxury and still a bad option after the cafe at the agricultural cooperative disappeared, the Wine Monopoly took over the premises and after a somewhat newer and more sophisticated cafe in the building next door had to shut down because we were not used to that kind of cafe. Many of us miss a good cafe, connected to the grocery store, and a place to play the lottery or football coupons. Where we can just come and go, where we can have a chat about the weather and snow conditions and where we talk about hunting and fishing and about our duodji and other daily tasks.

# Village Centre of Guovdageaidnu

**Johan Klemet Kalstad**

I was brought up in the traditional Sámi culture with smallholding, inland fishing, trapping and reindeer husbandry. When I became an adult, I knew that I had to choose between reindeer and an education. I spent some time after studies commuting between the traditional and the modern.

I finished my education with a PhD in Social Sciences and have worked for Arts Council Norway, government ministries and the regional reindeer husbandry administration.

I had a position in Guovdageaidnu as the head of business development for the municipality, the director of the Nordic Sámi Institute and Sámi University College, which I am affiliated with as a professor emeritus. I was involved in Sámi politics in the 1970s and in the subsequent decades,

I spent much of my time working for the Municipality of Kautokeino (executive committee) and the Finnmark County Council.

The centre of Guovdageaidnu is understood here as a part of the church's village where businesses, private services, and public agencies such as the municipal administration office, cultural institutions etc. are located. The village is thus a part of the church site and an expanded centre. In my opinion, a well-functioning municipal centre should be concentrated and clearly defined. In that way, it will be possible to focus on available resources to establish and maintain an attractive and thriving village centre. Using this understanding and terminology, the centre of Guovdageaidnu must lie in its entirety on the north side of the river and the bridge. The village centre will thus comprise a contiguous area that extends from the museum/giliišilju and Duodjeinstituhitta along the E-45 to the town hall/Coop and from there past the school to the Culture House and the Les building.

From here, the centre of Kautokeino will be delineated from the residential areas on the north side with a line reaching from the Culture house and the Les building to Pit stop, making the area comprising Coop Extra etc. part of the centre. The residential zone on the north side of Bidjovageveien street and on the west side of the E-45 highway should remain a residential area surrounded by unspoiled nature that can be used for culture and leisure. The hotel and the area around it *will fall* within the area defined as the municipal centre, and by drawing a line from here past Dietosiida/College and Alfreds Kro to the Kautokeino work centre and onwards to the starting point at the Duodji institute, we can define the municipal centre of Guovdageaidnu geographically.

This area is large, which gives us plenty of opportunities to think and plan how it should be done if we want to realise and safeguard the hub of vital services and functions that every municipality needs to serve its population. There will be sports facilities within this area, and there is potential for expansion without having to think about locations in surrounding natural areas. Likewise, there are opportunities for locating leisure activities for the travel industry in relation to, for instance, the river, and other natural areas in or in relation to the area. This area should be defined and regulated as the municipal centre to where businesses, private and public services, cultural enterprises, small-scale industry, and art and cultural services will be directed. This also means that neither basic investments nor possible financial support should be obtainable for new businesses or municipal or cultural services outside this centre area. A clear demarcation would allow for a more productive municipal centre based on sustainable business life. At the same time, a geographical demarcation would allow future developers and municipal authorities to strengthen the planning of their locations and their surroundings, not having the opportunity to constantly expand into other areas.

A policy of this kind will naturally lead to densification as an obvious consequence. It is therefore important to discuss it explicitly and as an objective in itself. A process of densification allows for expansion without constantly transforming unspoiled nature in the vicinities into new forms and purposes.

A clearly defined village centre would attract future localisations of businesses, and by thinking globally and acting locally, Guovdageaidnu will have the opportunity to develop a productive centre surrounded by unspoiled nature.

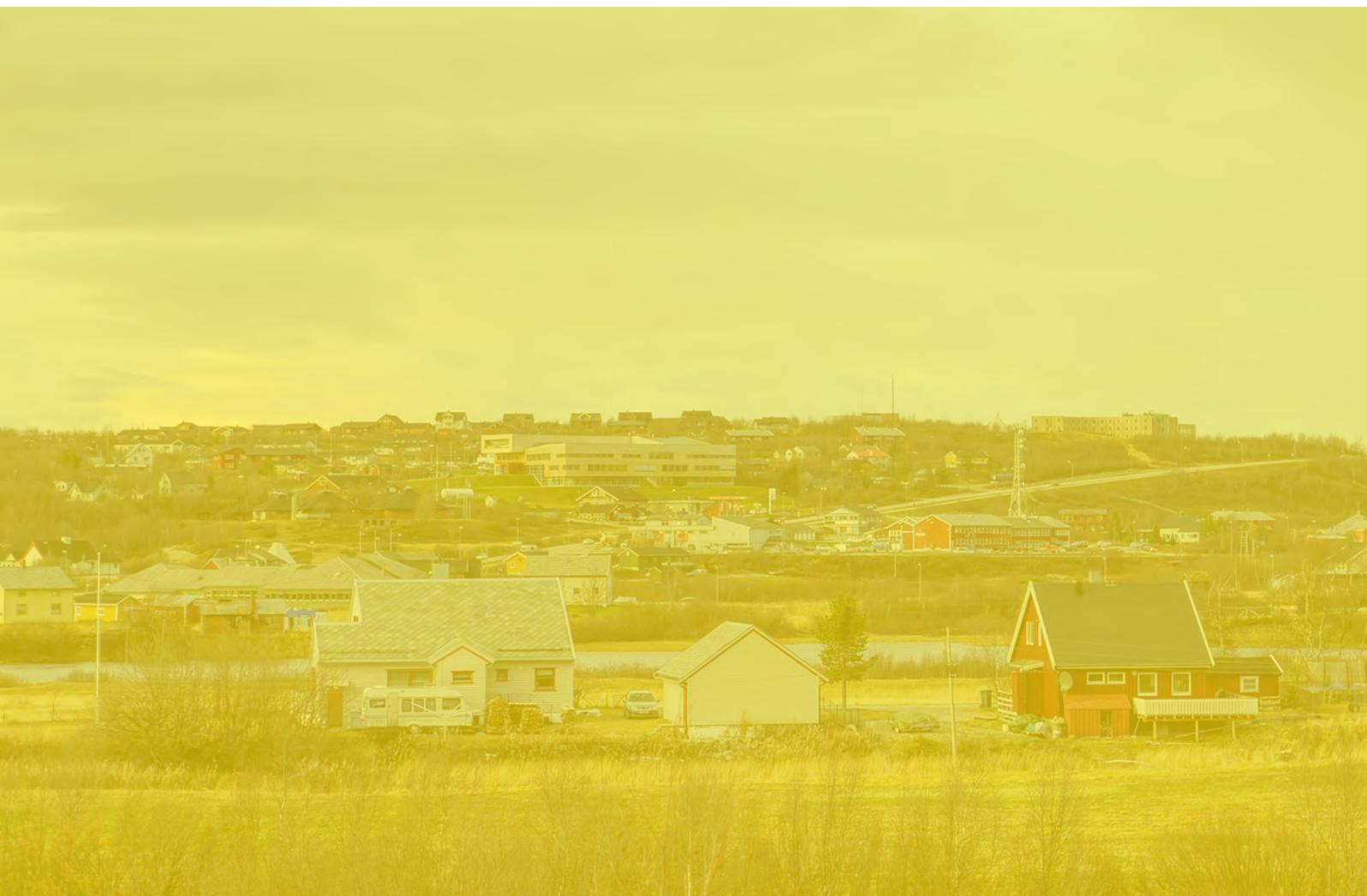
We have had a tendency to be extensive in our planning and our thinking about space. An observation of this kind can possibly be compared with the experience we have gained from previous attempts at developing a municipal hub in the village. Development of this kind has been discussed in the past, such as when building plots were chosen in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the policy was directed at plans to initiate developments around the new municipal building/savings bank and an expansion of the two businesses that existed there at the time, as well as re-zoning and changes to Bredbuktnesveien street. This did not stir up any interest beyond the developments which I just mentioned.

Since then, the idea of creating a village centre/municipal hub has fallen apart, moving partly to the north along the E-45 highway so we already have an extended commercial area to relate to. Behind the tendency of the municipal centre falling apart, we find powers that at first glance are invisible. I think the population's purchasing power has been weakened in the last couple of decades. That may be one of the reasons why specialised businesses that did establish themselves in the 1970-1980s are now gone. The same is true for banks and other services. The lack of a village centre may, in other words, be the reason why Guovdageaidnu has not seen many new sources of income over the past decades.

A centre is an important condition for social gatherings, meaning that we get to meet our neighbours and relatives. We also have to meet newcomers and strangers in our village. Our culture has traditionally been open to contact with neighbours and relatives. However, the occasions for such encounters seem to be disappearing. But, planners and decision-makers must also take into account the new habits and needs of the inhabitants of Guovdageaidnu I am thinking about our need to meet, greet and mingle with strangers, visitors and new inhabitants. It is possible that we are touching on an important point, the modern urge to be a stranger among other strangers, which allows us to remain anonymous. To cater to such a need, we need areas where many people can gather without an excuse or an event.

A productive village centre would stimulate economically profitable businesses within the retail trade and private services. That means our village centre should be appealing to the general public and invite potential customers to the businesses and services in the area.

A municipal village centre on the Finnmarksvidda plateau should be surrounded by virgin nature, i.e. nature that has not been abused by motorised traffic. The surroundings of Guovdageaidnu are already seriously harmed by snowmobiles and ATV traffic, especially by young people. Higher density within a delineated area for the village centre will provide both the opportunity for and facilitate the planning of how the surrounding nature areas will be managed and used.



## Specific information about the natural environment in the area:

- Guovdageaidnu is surrounded on the west and north by a plateau filled with short dwarf birch. This area has ski trails and hiking trails and it is utilised for outdoor leisure activities. We also see flocks of reindeer grazing in the area. However, outdoorsmen and grazing reindeer face strong competition from snowmobiles and ATVs/quads. An appropriate action would be to prohibit motorised traffic in a zone outside the urbanised area to the west and north around the centre.

- The parish district here has strong cultural and historical ties to the Sámi culture that once lived alongside the rivers. It would also be wise to design the municipal layout in relation and connection to the river and river bank. This can be done by including museums and culture houses in this area when the municipal hub is being planned.

17 December 2018  
Johan Klemet Kalstad

## Plan for the village centre of Guovdageaidnu – European Seminar, 16 January 2019

Guovdageaidnu means midway, due to our location midway on the routes from Muonioniska in Finland and Karesuando in Sweden (marketplace and church) to Alta (marketplace until the 1950s) and Karasjok. A third route ran between Karasjok and Skibotn (marketplace after World War II).

During World War II, Guovdageaidnu was a key refugee route from Alta, East Finnmark via Karasjok and Nord-Troms to Sweden over Finskekilen (barely 30 kilometres). Likewise, couriers would use this route from Alta using e.g. the battleship Tirpitz to Karesuando and further on to Stockholm and London.

Guovdageaidnu became the centre of Sámi higher education and research after the Nordic Sámi Institute was established here in 1974. The Sámi University College carries the former institute's traditions forward by recruiting students from Norway, Sweden and Finland. The university college also offers an international course on indigenous peoples. The international reindeer husbandry centre is located in Guovdageaidnu.

International indigenous cooperation accelerated in the 1970s, expressed here by the creation of the world's first international indigenous organization: the World Council for Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). Indigenous Sámis from Guovdageaidnu were essential in the preparation and operation of new organizations, such as Aslak Nils Sara who was the vice president of WCIP for many years. A Canadian professor from the University of British Columbia, Douglas Sanders, has stated: "The Saami have struggled to gain recognition and to influence events not simply in the four states in which they live, but also at the regional and international levels."

17 January 2019  
Johan Klemet Kalstad



# Innovative Guovdageaidnu

Lars Ailo Bongo

I am a Professor in Health Technology at UiT - The Arctic University of Norway. I am also the co-founder of the Medsensio AS health technology startup and founder of the Searas Bongo ENK Sámi language e-learning tool company. I was born and spent the first 15 years of my life in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), but the last 25 years I have mostly lived in Tromsø (Norway), but also in Princeton (NJ, USA). I believe I have a good understanding of the place and its people but I also bring an outside perspective.

*Disclaimer: The opinions in this note do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UiT - The Arctic University of Norway, and UiT is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.*

## Introduction and background

The Municipality Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) aims to cooperate with European 15 to build a new center that enables innovative thinking about future industries and new technologies that supports Sámi culture. Since my expertise is in computer science and I am interested in entrepreneurship, I will focus on technology and the opportunities of innovation in this article. I aim to provide the background and perspectives needed to understand and plan for such studies. I will also outline some ideas for opportunities within technology innovation.

Guovdageaidnu is a small village, with an impressive production and visibility in arts and culture. Most jobs are either in the public sector or associated with reindeer husbandry. The Sámi University of Applied Sciences is located in Guovdageaidnu. But it does not research technologies. It and other institutions however do attract highly-educated people. Unfortunately, there is a high unemployment rate and many young people do not take a higher education needed for jobs within the technology industry. There are no significant technology companies here either.

Guovdageaidnu is a Sámi village. But it is very integrated into Norwegian society. The inhabitants of Guovdageaidnu are highly skilled in the use of technology and use the same technologies and services as the rest of Norway. However, Sámi language solutions are typically lagging behind Norwegian or English solutions. For example, voice recognition in the Sámi languages will not be available in the foreseeable future.

There is a large diaspora with a strong connection to Guovdageaidnu, such as in the nearby city of Tromsø. Many people would move back, provided there were jobs relevant to their skills. Guovdageaidnu is also close to Finland and since the Sámi population is spread across four countries, there are many connections and an international mindset within the population. Oulu (Finland), which is probably the most innovative city in Northern Scandinavia, is close to Guovdageaidnu. There are also connections to other indigenous people all over the world.

The Sámi University of Applied Sciences is very active in Sámi culture and language research and has stable financing. There are also research funds available for Sámi culture and language. EU considers Guovdageaidnu to be an underdeveloped region, so there are opportunities for funding from INTERREG and other sources. However, I do not know how much funding has been obtained from EU. There are no significant sources of private (startup) funding, but the Norwegian government has many good financing opportunities.

## Opportunities for technology innovation

One unique opportunity that Guovdageaidnu has as a resource is technology development within its minority language. First, there is a lot of interest in the population for maintaining and improving the use of the Sámi languages. Second, there are many public funds available from the Sámi Parliament and others. Third, there is an active arts and music community that can contribute. Finally, although the Sámi language market is very small, the technology and knowledge can be transferred to other minority language markets.

Such initiatives can be bootstrapped into three parts. First, by providing training in computer application development. There are many easy-to-use tools and training material out there. For example, in the Norwegian part of the "Hour of Code" project, we are translating training material and tools to Northern Sámi. This can be done with very little funding.

Second: create an attractive coworking space where app developers, artists and visiting diaspora can meet, work, collaborate, and be inspired. Funding is needed for an organizer, but there are many public funding opportunities out there, including EU. An excellent place to start looking for partners for innovation would be the startup communities in Oulu.

Third, one could start a research project to provide the labelled datasets needed to develop future machine learning technologies. I believe small datasets will be increasingly interesting for machine learning research. A high-quality small dataset built especially for such research may attract interest and hence solutions from leading machine learning researchers and companies. Guovdageaidnu can provide the manual labour required to create the dataset. The Department of Computer Science, where I am a Professor, has the necessary expertise for such a project. There are many funding opportunities in the Norwegian Research Council and the EU research programs.

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*Professor Lars Ailo Bongo ( larsab@cs.uit.no )*



# Guovdageaidnu – seen from the perspective of the head of NAV

**Márjá Elise H Eira**

Márjá Elise M. H. Eira is in charge of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) in Guovdageaidnu. Márjá Elise Hætta Eira is from Guovdageaidnu. She is married and has two children. She was educated as a primary school teacher, has held the position of director of education at the Sámi University College and has worked primarily for NAV since 2010. She started her education in teacher training but has also studied the Sámi language at college and has some leadership training. She had various occupations and understands the employment market well. She knows the business community in Inner Finnmark and how challenges and opportunities are linked, and she knows how to succeed in the labour market and society.

The Municipality of Kautokeino (Finnmark) has approximately 3000 inhabitants. The municipality is located at the southern end of the Finnmark plateau and borders on two municipalities in Finnmark and one in Nord-Troms. Kautokeino/Guovdageaidnu also shares a border with Finland. The Municipality of Kautokeino has roads leading to Alta in the north, Karasjok in the east and Finland in the south. The Municipality of Kautokeino is Norway's largest Sámi municipality and has the most reindeer husbandry operations in Norway. Approximately 90 % of all the residents speak North Sámi as their mother tongue.

Guovdageaidnu is home to a number of Sámi institutions such as the Sámi National Theatre (Beaivvaš), Sámi University College, the Training Department of the Sámi Parliament, the Sámi Archives, NRK Sámi Radio/department, the International Sámi Film Center, the traditional Guovdageaidnu Farm, the Regional Office for the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, the Duodje Institute, the Sámi Upper Secondary School, the Reindeer Husbandry School and the Sámi newspaper *Avvir*. The largest employer is the municipality itself. Reindeer husbandry employs many people.

Reindeer husbandry in the municipality constitutes approximately 42 % of reindeer husbandry in Norway. Guovdageaidnu has 210 licensed reindeer herders (henceforth operational units) of which approximately 1400 people have work related to the reindeer industry. There are about 78 000 reindeer in Guovdageaidnu and about 27 000 reindeer are slaughtered annually in Guovdageaidnu.

The population of the municipality is relatively young. The municipality's inhabitants have largely managed to sustain themselves through primary industries and have therefore not found it necessary to take higher education. This means very many young people have parents without higher education. They do not have not the same possibilities when it comes to completing upper secondary schooling.

Today's job market requires an education, and there is a great mismatch between job seekers and the labour market. Experience shows that you will not be competitive in the labour market without an education. There are not many jobs available via primary industries here, so finding a job is difficult. Without an education or work experience, finding a job can be difficult here. There are also many people with strong ties to Sámi culture and language, which makes it difficult to move and adapt to the Norwegian society.

The roads and train infrastructures are not good enough, so commuting is difficult. Finnmark is huge and there are great distances between the villages, towns and cities. Guovdageaidnu is the largest municipality in Norway in terms of square meters, so commuting up here requires a lot of time on the road.

There is a lot of child poverty around Guovdageaidnu. 22.2 % of the children live in households with persistent low income. Compared with Finnmark County (8.8%) and Norway (10.3 %), Guovdageaidnu has double the challenges in this field.

Guovdageaidnu has persistently high unemployment, which has been going on for quite some time. Unemployment may be due to the limited number of jobs and/or the mismatch between the competence of job seekers and the skills required in the labour market. Those who are struggling to get into the labour market have only completed primary school as their highest level of education.

The government has decided to set an upper limit on the number of reindeer each herder may keep. The operational units are required to adapt to those numbers. All operational units were ordered to reduce the number of reindeer in their unit. This has led to a reduction in overall income in the industry.

Payouts of economic social assistance benefits are less than in comparable municipalities. Guovdageaidnu paid out NOK 1087 per capita in 2015 in social assistance benefits, while the national average is NOK 1421. Compared with Karasjok, which paid out NOK 1912 per capita, Guovdageaidnu has a lower payout where social assistance benefits are concerned. The people of Guovdageaidnu are proud; they do not seek help before their home is being foreclosed. Sámi culture plays a big role here. The population has been self-reliant a long time before the western world came to our little community.

## Room for opportunities

Young people need to be monitored during their education to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to complete upper secondary school and have the opportunity to join the labour market.

There is ample space in the municipality, so there is much room for more government buildings. Creating government jobs would help private companies establish themselves in the village and the region.

With better roads and train connections and an airport, there would be more opportunity to create jobs for unskilled labourers. We have amazing nature here, which is great for tourism activities. We have a unique Sámi community, which is the real thing. If we had an airport, the region would have the opportunity to promote natural attractions like the quiet, cold, snow, northern lights, real reindeer husbandry, inland fishing and everything else nature offers in these areas.

I like to say that work and welfare can only survive in areas with good roads and train and infrastructures = airport.

Our municipal vision: *The Gateway to Sámi Country.*

My vision is **green growth**.



# Contrasts

Lisa Marie Kristensen

Lisa Marie Kristensen is a film and television creator born and raised in Kautokeino. After many years as a producer for the Swedish state channel, she left the Swedish capital and moved home with her partner and two young children. In the middle of the village, she runs her small production company that develops, writes and produces content for film and television.

After living in many different places in my twenties, gradually gaining perspective on life, experiencing life in other cities, this is what I say when friends ask me where I come from.

First of all, you are never alone. Kautokeino is a small town where everybody knows you, and if they don't know you, then they know your mother. They also know everything you have done. You are always somebody's sister, daughter or cousin. In fact, that is how you usually get introduced to new people: not by who you actually are but who you are related to. It's like being a part of the British royal family, but without the cash and with a lot more responsibility.

Secondly, contrasts. This is a small town in the middle of the Arctic tundra with around 3000 people living in it and about a 1000 registered businesses. There are 3 churches but no bookstore. A theatre and an artist collective, but no cultural activities for children. A burger joint and a luxury restaurant, but no cafes. A high school and a college, but no gym. No pharmacy, but at least two stores that sell snowmobiles. The bus to the nearest city comes every second day and does not correspond with other transportation.

We have a rich, and some might say an important role in Sámi culture, being the only Sámi village where you probably won't get a job if you don't speak Sámi. The only place where Sámi is spoken at the doctor's office, at the supermarket and at the bank (When we still had a bank). Culturally we have a rich music culture and many

joikers. Joik, being one of the oldest singing traditions in the world, is still very much alive in Kautokeino and we have world-class artists who tour the world but really no stage for them to perform on here. If you don't count the local pub, and I don't. We attend the world's largest film festivals, but we have no film festival or movie theatre here.

It is the only place in Norway where women earn more than men, have higher educations, combine children and careers at the same time and often provide for entire families alone. At the same time, Sámi women experience more violence than others in Norway. We are traditionally a matriarchy but – like other places – we have some misogyny mixed in.

We have a high school and a university, and therefore many educated teachers and so many never leave town, and the latest trend is that many (of my age) come back after finishing their degrees.

If I were really rich, I would build a cultural centre where you can attend concerts and listen to Joik-archives, or your children can attend dance classes or maybe put up an exhibition. I would make a Sámi music museum. I would offer the public fantastic properties to build their houses on because we are Norway's biggest municipality (geographically speaking) and yet we can only buy a property on a narrow street if we want to build a home. A small property where all you see is the neighbour's three garages.

We have space, why aren't we using it? I would make sure you can walk around town and in the surrounding nature (now we only have one street to walk on), I would make sure we could swim every day of the week at the public pool with a sauna! At least in the coldest periods. Make sure people are getting their workouts, eating well and experiencing the culture and – most importantly – build places where we can meet each other, talk about life and create ideas. I am writing this in January, just before the sun makes her long-awaited return to Kautokeino. A time of year when people here feel tired. At least I do. It's like we have all been in hibernation for a couple of months and with the first weak sunrays we wake up again. After what feels like several months of not having daylight, just waking up is hard. It is like a depression that is only physical and goes away when the sun appears again. It shouldn't have to be hard.

So, I was born and raised in Kautokeino. I basically have no relatives anywhere else, and my roots are therefore pretty much just here. I think many people here have the same kind of story. I left town after finishing high school, to get an education somewhere else, and what later became a career in television. Two years ago, however, I quit my very well-paid job in Swedish television and moved back home to become one of those registered businesses, where I am my own boss.

A decision that is frequently still discussed. Because many might say that leaving a job as a producer for a big TV channel, leaving the hipster Mecca – creative bubble dream that Stockholm was – to go back to a small town in the middle of nowhere, is a crazy idea. And it is.

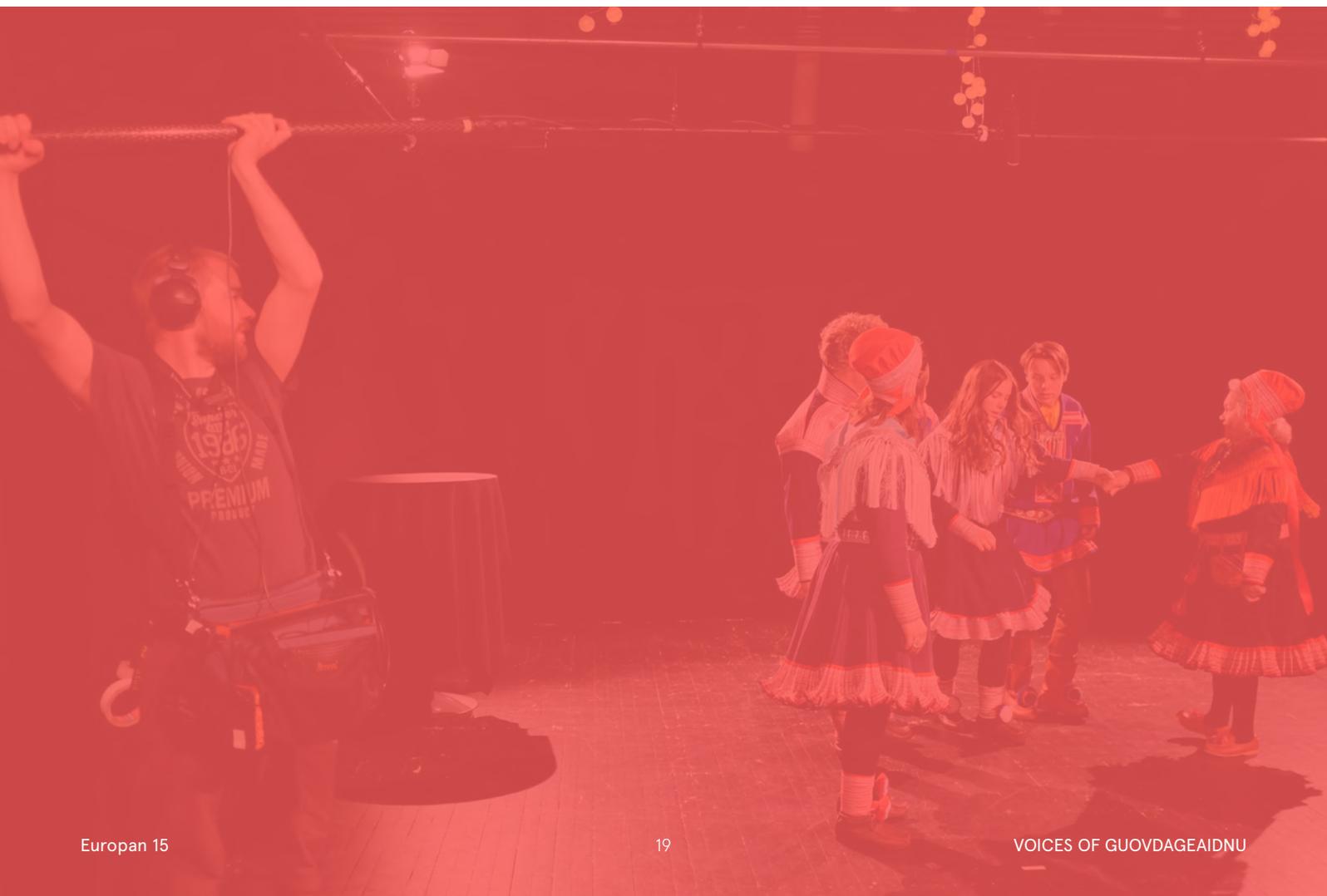
I think in many ways it is a myth that we have a bubbling creative environment in our town. We have many creatives, we make a lot of creative content, but we do not actually see each other and therefore we have no real environment. I am telling you this because architects work with space. And you know that without a space to meet and share creativity and thoughts, at one point the thoughts and ideas will hit a wall and go no further than the mind that created it.

Our biggest challenge? Keeping people here and keeping people busy creatively and keeping people happy making a living and doing what they are good at. Because there is a shelf life on all this creativity. If we are not able to step things up, create a 2.0 version of all this soon, it will remain at an individual level, and we won't change anything at all.

So, why did I come back? A I came home to be my own boss and tell my stories the way I want to. Because even though I sometimes feel like I am a part of the English royal family with basically no anonymity, you have freedom here in a way you can't find anywhere else. And I think that is common for people here; we all cherish that freedom. It is the perfect place to write about because it is so filled with contrasts. It is never black or white, but everything in between. What makes you furious one day, makes you furious the next day, and maybe the third day it'll make you smile.

But, without a doubt, we are crazy for living here. And being in the storytelling business, I know that crazy is much more interesting than normal.

Lisa M Kristensen



# Guovdageaidnu

Sara Margrethe Oskal

Sara Margrethe Oskal was a professional reindeer herder until she had to make a choice between the Arts and the traditional lifestyle. She chose the Arts and holds a PhD in performing Arts from the National Academy of Arts, Oslo-Norway, on "Sámi humor in yoik, storytelling and contemporary stage expressions". She is also an experienced screenwriter and poet and was nominated to the Nordic Council Literature price in 2016 with the poetry book «savkkuhan sávrii sániid - tireless words». In 2015 she made her debut as a film director with the short film Aurora Keeps an Eye on You. It left a strong impression and was screened in several prestigious international film festivals. Her second "Daughter of the Sun" is now being screen world wide in film festival. She is currently developing her feature film script "Siidadoallit".

Guovdageaidnu was a long time *Márkkan* for me. *Márkkan* means a village, a marketplace. The village offered things that my childhood hamlet never had: Grade school and middle school. Trade school. A municipal building. Three grocery stores. The old folk's home. Two petrol stations. The church. The lodge. A reindeer slaughterhouse. Dispersed urbanisation, with small hamlets scattered around.

I have lived most of my life in this village; a place that I came to understand was very different and unique in many ways.

For a long time, I thought all Sámi children grew up as the majority in town; that the Sámi language was what you heard on the streets and set the framework for communication, for thoughts and for values. That it was normal to wear traditional clothing every day and that reindeer herding was the biggest occupation around. And that we harvested what we needed from nature when the time was right. Finding topics. Processing. Producing. All in due time.

Today, Guovdageaidnu has become even more precious to me than ever. I hope that more people realise we need to protect the wonderful things we already have. We have language expertise. Duodji expertise. Expertise on the interaction between reindeer, man and nature. We have expertise in harvesting from nature and everything nature gives us. Expertise on surviving on the tundra, a daily life that is still characterised by

traditional customs, but where modern life pushes at us with all its simplifications, with GPS and apps for this and that. That this simplification is also a threat to our oral traditions living on.

The fore-leg reindeer hide over the whirl  
The hind-leg reindeer hide quarter over the hock  
Slaughter the hoofs properly

Make the  
fore-leg reindeer hide  
jig-saw puzzle  
Make the  
hind-leg reindeer hide  
jig-saw puzzle

It is liberating to return to Guovdageaidnu with all its Sámi presence. It is liberating to speak Sámi at the grocery store; liberating to drop by the library and find Sámi literature there. It is liberating to know that you have several duodji shops you can get inspiration from, or buy what you need there and more. It is liberating to drop by someone's home without having an appointment. It is liberating to visit the home of a Sámi family that runs reindeer, close to the Sámi soul. Breathe Sámi air when you enter the yard, and encounter a structure that testifies to everything being coordinated into practical everyday life. Language. Duodji – Sámi handicraft.

## A world view. Perspectives.

They have  
Reindeer husbandry units

We have  
the flock

They talk about  
Culling the flock

We talk about  
the individuals in the flock

They have  
Kilos  
We have  
looks, age, descendants

they have  
Dates

We have  
the community of the siida  
the conditions of the snow  
colleagues

they have  
Borderlines

So do we

But if we are not conscious of the fact that this knowledge is fragile and vital, that the coming generations may lose the knowledge our ancestors have acquired, that the grazing and herding grounds are the alpha and omega of reindeer sustenance, we could lose all this; a very frightening thought.

Easy money and simplifying everyday life are attractive ideas. Modernisation. But it was the reindeer that adapted to the ecology and climate of this barren land, which has retained all the knowledge they need to survive here.

I think the reindeer are the reason we settled here in the first place and they are the foundation of our lives and contribute greatly to the evolution of Guovdageaidnu, so we can now benefit from an institutionalised modern Sámi society with traditional roots. We must never forget that.

They've forgotten the yoik of the wolf

They've let the wolf into the lavvo  
begging for cured meat  
wagging its tail  
stretching out on its belly

They've forgotten the yoik of the wolf

Snarls elegantly  
Howls and wails  
Divide and conquer

They've forgotten the yoik of the wolf

Confuses the confused  
who know some words of the yoik  
but have forgotten the melody

*By Sara Margrethe Oskal 2.3.2019. The poems are from "Váimmu vuohhtume", 2006.*

*English reinterpretation: Thea Stabell*



# Guovdageaidnu – The Heart of Sápmi

**Nils Martin Kristensen**

Nils was born in Guovdageaidnu in 1964. He grew up in a family of merchants. His mother is from Guovdageaidnu, while his father comes from Alta. He was trained as a recording engineer and worked for NRK Sápmi in the 1980s. He opened Guovdageaidnu's first local radio station in 1989, and the second in 1991. He also worked 4 years for a Sámi language newspaper. He has played in a Sámi rock band since he was 13 years old. The band is still playing, and they launched their newest CD in 2017. The band also performs at the local pub and has concerts. He is married to Ning and has three children from before. Nils is a true Guovdageaidnu patriot. He truly cares about Guovdageaidnu's future and its development.

I made up this motto about 10 years ago. That was when Guovdageaidnu Lagasradio ran the municipal tourist information office(!). Its objective was to tell the world that Guovdageaidnu was the most important place to visit for all things Sámi. Many travel agents and operators within the tourism industry still use my slogan in their marketing. I would like to see more people use it more often, in the appropriate context.

We are a proud and stubborn people here on the plateau ever since the Kautokeino Rebellion in 1852; that includes the Sámi nomads and those who have settled in or near the village for good. We are very proud of that today. It has also given us great cultural and social benefits compared to other Sámi areas in Norway and to some extent also in other Arctic regions.

Guovdageaidnu was never Norwegianised in the same way as our neighbouring municipalities. For example, we managed to keep our Sámi surnames. That is not true everywhere.

We always spoke Sámi at the store, at government offices and at church. School children were not punished for speaking Sámi at school. This is perhaps a big reason why the Sámi University of Applied Sciences is located here, with Norway's largest staff of teachers of the Sámi language.

Today, Guovdageaidnu is the only place in Norway where parents plan to move if they want to make sure their children will learn to speak Sámi. This is not possible in any of the other municipalities.

Finding ways to change a place like Guovdageaidnu in an effective way and modernise the village requires some deep thinking. Those of us who grew up here have become accustomed to our way of life, and we may have trouble thinking new thoughts. The process would also involve remembering what we need to protect and knowing what we need to do better today and more diligently, but also defining the uniqueness of our society and home which does not need streamlining or modernising.

Guovdageaidnu has a very strong identity. Guovdageaidnu is known for its endless skies and expansive openness, physically and mentally. They say that if you have trouble getting to know people, that it is part of your upbringing and you are the one who needs to do something about it.

I think the people of Guovdageaidnu want the centre of their village to be an open landscape. It should function in practical terms and it should be attractive. It should not be too organized, and it should not be filled with too much Sámi symbolism. We have enough Sámi symbols around every corner. In Guovdageaidnu, we cannot install a steel or aluminium sign because it is not "Sámi" enough. We make signs out of wood instead, so it looks Sámi, but we see the results only a few years later. The sign has rotted and there is no way to read what once stood on the sign. The future should be different than that. Romanticising like that is never good.

We want to be a modern Sámi society, proud of who we are, without shoving it in people's faces all the time. Consider this: Everyone in Guovdageaidnu owns a traditional Sámi outfit (kõfte), but we don't need to wear it all the time to prove we are Sámi (even though we do wear it as often as we can...). We are very patriotic, which usually manifests itself in inner strength, not so often in our outward appearance. We want to see changes in society that reflect our wishes and needs.

We are constantly bombarded with new rules, regulations and laws from the south, which are completely foreign to us. Still, we have to follow the new rules, even though they are new and scary, but we forget that they are diametrically opposed to our way of thinking and traditions. We can live happily with speed limits and the building codes. There are worse things, like how the government is trying to destroy our traditional spring duck hunt, which is one of the worst forms of Norwegianisation we have seen in modern times. The authorities have scorned the people of Guovdageaidnu for thirty years to dilute the hunt to the extent that the tradition is almost dead.

Another thing is the increasing restrictions on snowmobile driving. We have been pretty free in terms of where we can drive our snowmobiles, and this has worked well, but only because the Municipality of Kautokeino has not enforced the law these past forty years, to great protests from the environmental movement.

Municipal and regional reforms are another big conflict, which was purely devised from the south, completely without regard for the consequences this would entail for those of us who live in the north, with our insanely long distances, lousy bus network – and for the inhabitants of Guovdageaidnu there is no airport on this side of the climate crisis.

My point here is to emphasise how important it is for the new plans for the village centre to satisfy the needs of those of us who live here, not what other people think we need. Much more could have been written about the modern challenges we face, but I think what I wrote here gives a good picture of how many people think.



## Specifics:

- The centre of the village needs to go back where it used to be and where it belongs. It does not belong between two housing areas and a sports hall.
- The area between the municipal building and the schoolhouse should be the centre of Guovdageaidnu now and in the future. Telenor needs to tear down its masts and move out of the centre.
- We need a pedestrian street with snowmobile parking between the municipal building and the school to reach the shopping street.
- We need real snowmobile lanes that run through the village, along with the pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- All public buildings, shops and petrol stations should have direct access.
- The school should be rebuilt, but it should remain where it is today, and the kindergarten should be located adjacent to the school.
- The southern part of the village centre, the municipal building, should be given a completely new design. The owners of the old commercial buildings there should start doing business in their vacant premises.
- Loankusaddu needs to be renovated and made more attractive for commercial and industrial interests. This is a perfect area for business and industry that has been left to rot for many years.
- Travel and tourism need better infrastructures and better organization. Companies that sell safaris need to drive tourists right out the front door of their premises.
- We need public toilets. We tell the world we are a tourist destination, but there is no place for tourists to go to the bathroom in this village. Absolutely amazing.
- We need new systems to prevent motorhomes from parking at the public parking spots, and instead make campsites nearby somewhere in the municipality. This leads to big losses for those who try to earn a living from tourism.
- We need an airport with flights to Tromsø. No tourist destination in the world can develop without an airport nearby. That would have a big impact on planning work already today.

# Thoughts on Guovdageaidnu from my point of view

Sunniva Juhls

Sunniva Juhls is 47 years old, married and mother of 3. Born and raised in Guovdageaidnu. Educated in Germany as a goldsmith and designer. She is the 2nd generation owner and operator of the Juhls' Silver Gallery, her life's work and a well-known attraction and workshop, with 15 employees. She has always been very enthusiastic about tourism and the local community, but not much in politics.

This is an architectural competition for young European architects who graduated from a European point of view/mind-set. People wonder why we would invite outsiders to build something in our community. This scepticism is understandable. This is not the first time that western ideas on how things should be done and how they are good for us have landed on our shores. We have been hearing other people tell us what is good for us for hundreds of years. However, this time I think it will be exciting and I think it can work.

Modernity took us by surprise, perhaps much faster than in other societies that had time to adapt to the changes. We belong to the West in geographic terms but we do not feel very western. Anyone who intends to influence Guovdageaidnu MUST be aware of a few significant things first.

All villages and towns have a history reaching far back in time or they have arisen in recent times. But generally, their development follows a relatively similar pattern. It is about the people who live here and who have shaped their communities by doing what they do; craftsmen, tradesmen, industries etc. They consist of families and family dynasties with wealth, property and power – and other families and people from completely different walks of life such as labourers, servants and the less resourceful. But material wealth, property, houses and infrastructures have been the starting point for regional expansion where hamlets have become villages and towns, or vice versa. That industries close down, roads and railways are not renovated or maintained. Industries

die or become obsolete and jobs disappear. Schools disappear and young people are forced to move away.

Guovdageaidnu is different.

Guovdageaidnu is located in the heart of Sápmi, where the reindeer herding has always been strong. We were a hunter and gather society before domesticated reindeer husbandry began – but we have essentially always been nomadic. We have always followed the animals and moved with them through the changing seasons. Of course, many Sámi remain in one area and newcomers stay to work with agriculture and trades, but that was not very long ago. That is why we cannot compare our development with other villages where primary industries such as agriculture were the starting point for communities with many people. Guovdageaidnu is therefore not in the farmlands with strong ties to arable land and farmhouses, farms and barns where generations of farmers in the same family have deep roots who worked the land as their fathers did. The villages are not old in that way, even if people have been moving from place to place in this area for endless generations.

The settlement of Guovdageaidnu has grown around churches and a few farms. We are talking about accumulations of houses out on the tundra, in the valley along the great river, which has also functioned as a communication artery for centuries. We have no village centre, so the *centre* has moved its location often because there are not many things to move.

Our village is long and narrow, and today, people drive all the way to their destination, be it a shop, an office or a private home. There were many stores and shops here before, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. You could park at the municipal building and find everything you needed in walking distance. There were 2 grocery stores, a hardware store, sporting goods, office supplies store, toy store, a bank, a post office, a police station, all the public services, a dentist, cafe, taxi station, clothing store, gift shop, a local radio station and the school. There is not much left of our urban hub anymore. First, we lost many stores, then the trade leakage to Alta escalated. The little that was left slowly moved away too. A new village centre appears to be growing farther north, at the Cirkel K and Coop Extra. To the south, across the bridge, we have the REMA grocery store fighting to survive.

Instead of choosing one of these locations, I would rather see a plan to build the infrastructure and buildings that connect these two extremes. Let the extremes remain and fill up the middle with good premises for business and employment, shops, a new street and cafes. There should be a tourist information station here, possibly where Boddu is located now. That would make it easier for travellers and visitors to stop and park.

There could be public toilets and a public rest stop or a place for markets during festivals and/or competitions and activities such as reindeer rides etc., or for children and young people. This will stop the need to drive from place to place. You could park and walk 500-1000 meters, not more than that. This would create a vibrant avenue in the village, where you see people on the streets and not just going in and out of their cars. I can see us building a kind of promenade with stores from *Malingården* at the school past the old dentist office to the *Mårkansenteret* via the Coop hardware store and possibly further south.

Another idea would be *Villmarkssenteret*/sleeping accommodation. This is a very beautiful building located at a very central location in the village, but this is not being exploited properly today. This could have been *Guovdageaidnu's* grand hall, a house for the people or it could be rebuilt for shopping, commercial activities,

showrooms and in any case a cafe. There is ample space for cars and a spacious and great area with a nice view from the existing café.

The Sámi people are not known for their buildings/architecture. We cannot look to customs and architectural styles that have existed over time. Of course, we do have some constructions based on simpler structures, storehouses, drying racks, the old Sámi turf huts etc. There are many inspiring things to be found in these small structures. *Guovdageaidnu* has many fine buildings from the last 5 decades. We were very lucky there and this is a great advantage. I would consider this a motivator and inspiration for the work that is now being planned.

Perhaps the standard was set by the unique *Juhls' Silver Gallery* in 1959, 60 years ago. We hoped we could build better things than the architectural blunders we, unfortunately, see a lot of here, especially in Finnmark (Alta, Hammerfest). In the early days, we got buildings such as the *Villmarkssenteret*, a beautiful building in the heart of the village, in addition to the primary school and the Culture house/ "Beaivvaš National Theatre". One just popped up after the other. The *Siva* building, now occupied by the *Duodji* institute, *Rema*, the new health clinic, the residential care homes, *Diehtosiida*, *Thon* hotel and finally the dental clinic that I find particularly attractive. We also have the Coop hardware store and the *Esso* petrol buildings, being harmonious good buildings of good size and nice lines.

I do not want to see the village grow around ugly buildings such as *Coop Extra*; that would destroy our uniqueness as a very special site on the Finnmark plateau. Sámi traditions should be the focus, and it should be clear to visitors that they have arrived in a Sámi community that promotes and supports its heritage for the residents, as the village grows around us. I am hoping my words are taken into consideration. I am positive to innovative, youthful thinking and the ability to move dynamically towards a new era, but I fear at the same time the pride and certainty of young architects could undermine core values like humility, respect and the ability to listen.

Sunniva Juhls, *Guovdageaidnu*, January 2019

# Architecture – what good is it to Guovdageaidnu?

Svein Lund

An adventurous youth, I moved from Telemark to Guovdageaidnu in 1974 to spend a year at vocational school. After 13 years studying and working in Hammerfest, I returned in 1988 to work as a teacher. I've stayed ever since. Since 1998 I've been freelancing and writing books about Sámi school history, ironworking and mining. I've also been involved with the local branch of Friends of the Earth Norway and in setting up the Guovdageaidnu Meahcceguovddáš (Nature Centre).

Architects – we know what they do. They're the people who design buildings. Those who lived in the High North before us were largely shielded from them until the Germans went and burnt down every single building they'd knocked up. Then came the post-war reconstruction, and of course that had to be overseen by architects. Some of them remained in the south, where the powers and brains were concentrated; some were installed at the Finnmark reconstruction office in Harstad, and others were dispatched across the burnt-out country to educate an obstinate public. There is one well known story from Kåfjord in Troms county about an architect who was tasked with land surveying and planning the rebuilding effort but was sent packing by the locals and needed police protection to be able to finish the job. Another tale from the same area is the one about the man who spurned the architectural drawings he'd been given and refused point blank to pay for the "shithole of a shack" they'd ordered him to build.<sup>1</sup>

Things were slightly different in Guovdageaidnu. There a local municipal officer with no architectural training took it upon himself to design small houses with layouts to suit the needs of people who made their living from reindeer husbandry, farming, hunting, fishing, gathering and so on. His design meant that from the entrance you came straight into the kitchen, which was the biggest room in the house and could be used as a workshop for

anything from cutting carcass meat to crafting wood, horns, furs and fabrics. These houses were known as "Klemetshus" after the amateur architect Klemet Hermansen. Having lived in one, I can attest that it was certainly functional.

But then the Norwegian state in its wisdom found that people on the Finnmark Plateau were living in substandard housing, which was undeniably true. A house-building programme was launched, offering generous subsidies to those who wanted to build themselves a new home. All well and good, but there was a flip side or three. The first was that the houses had to be built in an easily accessible location, by a road and ideally in the town centre. There are numerous stories about people who wanted to build on their homesteads on the plateau but who were refused permission and others who were denied subsidies and loans unless they built where the authorities wanted them to build. The second problem was that the houses had to be of a pre-approved design, thought up by architects in the south and with a layout that was probably convenient for suburbanites in southern towns but much less so for people who were used to working in the kitchen. The kitchens in these houses were tiny and barely big enough to heat food purchased more or less ready made from the local neighbourhood shop that was assumed to exist everywhere. The worst designs saw the residents having to walk through the living room to get to the minuscule kitchen. The living room, on the other hand, was large with a dining area, sofa suite and room for the new domestic fetish: the television. The third

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dagbladet.no/tema/aldri-helved-jeg-gar-med-at-betale-2700-for-det-kaken/63218617>

snag was that even though the subsidies were generous, most of the cost would still have to be covered by the house owner, whose subsistence would often still be based on a natural economy with little cash to spare. This meant that many people took out bigger mortgages than they could manage. I'm not sure whether anyone has ever carried out research into the social impact of the house-building scheme.

Since then we have been visited by architects on many occasions. With varying degrees of success, architects have designed the monumental buildings that have sprung up in and over the town such as the two schools, the culture house and its neighbour the Loankogiella, an old and a new hotel, a new health centre and the monument to beat all monuments: the Diehtosiida. The homes are another story, and one that will be covered in a different chapter, but I will just briefly mention the newly built residential boxes that sit on both sides of the river – proof that to the local authority there is no limit to how ugly a house can be or how badly it can be allowed to spoil its surroundings.

Now, I'm not claiming that it's all failure. I can certainly see some good sides to buildings such as the Fjellstua (now being mistreated and run down under the highly misleading name 'Wilderness Centre'), the school from 1958, the 1970s Siva buildings and the culture house from 1981. And the hotel that was built when the old hotel burnt down does not look at all bad from the outside, but once you walk through the door it's a different matter. The upper secondary school extension

in the form of two workshops dating from the early 80s can be seen as a monument to how aesthetics trumps functionality. I've taught there myself and seen how impractical it is to have the drain at the highest point on the floor and use timber as the main building material for a workshop. The two workshops, one for carpenters and one for mechanics, are identical in design, and no detailed analysis was carried out of the needs of the users. It has frequently been said of the colossus that is the Diehtosiida that both those who designed it and those who approved the design should be locked up for a long time. That's an understandable reaction in my humble opinion.

I wrote earlier that an architect is someone who designs buildings. I've come to learn that an architect is in fact more than that, or at least can be more than that. People say that architects should plan buildings to fit in with other buildings, with the landscape and with traffic arteries. Some even claim there is such a thing as landscape architects. Who knows, maybe they are right. There are many weird and wonderful things in the world that have yet to reach Guovdageaidnu. Guovdageaidnu has probably been shielded from these aspects of the architectural profession. I'm not sure whether to say unfortunately or luckily.

In what was, or at least was intended to be, a kind of town centre the buildings have been erected and extended with no discernible coherence. The public space between them is mostly taken up by parking spaces with a small slot reserved for mobile vans selling



baked goods, more or less fresh fish, winter clothing and kebabs. The four largest buildings surrounding these car parks have continued to lose tenants in recent years.

One of them was once home to the Heaika shop but was extended until it became unrecognisable and shapeless and later came to house the police station or job centre or whatever it was. The shop later moved downstairs, where it continued to shrink until it passed away along with its keeper. The local radio station took up residence downstairs, while upstairs there was a café operating under ever changing names and at little profit until it finally accepted defeat when most other enterprises had fled the town centre. Both the café and shop premises now stand empty, and the owner is demanding such extortionate rent that he is scaring off anyone contemplating moving in.

The neighbouring building was once occupied in its entirety by the Coop. Once the Coop had moved out of the town centre, the hardware store moved in, leaving its old premises empty just like their neighbours.

The third and largest building in the centre is the town hall plus – that is, it has also housed a bookshop, a book and paper shop, bank and all sorts of other things. The bookshop first moved out, then closed down altogether, and now it's the book and paper shop's turn. You will soon have to drive to Alta if you want a ream of printer paper or a notebook. The bank has closed, and the premises have been available to let for a year without anyone having snapped them up. The town hall has closed all of its doors to the public, except one where citizens may cross the threshold to seek an audience with council workers. They call it service. The result is that nobody has any business going there. We can just email the council from the comfort of our own homes and hope to get a reply sometime next month.

In the past the space between the afore-mentioned town centre buildings was a hive of activity. Nowadays you can drive up there late Saturday morning to find a completely empty car park. Not even the fishmonger bothers to stop there; he'd rather take his van to the Rema supermarket, because people just don't go to the town centre any more. And if you have any political campaigning to do, where would you go? Not to the town centre, because there is no-one there.

I've not heard anyone say outright that the point of all this is to scare people away from town, but that is certainly what is happening.

The author of this small text has not been closer to the architectural profession than studying technical drawing at college. In the past 20 years I've made a living from writing about things I know nothing about, so I might as well talk about architecture in the same way that I've written about history without being an historian, about mining without being a miner and about Sámi people without being Sámi. I'm currently writing about nature without being a biologist. I'm doing it in conjunction with the effort to establish a nature centre in Guovdageaidnu.

I was in charge of the preliminary project where we looked at where to locate the centre, whether to go for a new-build or move into empty premises of which there are regrettably many. During this process I looked at and photographed – both inside and out – all the empty premises we could find before rejecting most of them and settling on the municipal culture house, at least for the time being.

The culture house was built almost 40 years ago and has housed a theatre, a library and a number of municipal and semi-municipal tenants, while the café, hall and foyer have been used for anything from confirmation parties to jumble sales. We have been given two rooms. One of them serves as an office and library and the other as a storage space. We have held meetings with other projects and centres currently in their early stages and agreed to move into the culture house and exhibit/decorate the vacant spaces and then take over the rest of the building when the theatre gets its own home in 2-3-4-5 years' time. If we and our partners are successful in implementing our plans, we will have filled the culture house to capacity sometime next year. The question then will be how to expand. Can we extend the culture house, should we build from scratch, or can we in some other way make use of the empty spaces that exist across town? I don't know whether it helps to be an architect when facing these challenges, but perhaps it wouldn't do any harm? Good luck!

PS! You can read more about the nature centre at <http://meahcci.info>

Best regards,  
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# Kautokeino as a brand name

**Inger Marit Bongo**

I was born and raised in the Municipality of Kautokeino (Guovdageaidnu in the Sámi language). My parents stopped working with reindeer and started a company that manufactured the traditional 'Lávvu' tents. After graduating with a degree in engineering, I moved back to my home municipality and have worked here ever since. I run a store and a web shop in Kautokeino. I am also active in local politics; I see many opportunities for business development based on our local expertise and special advantages.

Kautokeino is in a unique market position when it comes to selling goods and offering services based on nature, Sámi culture and language. The name itself, Kautokeino, is already a well-known brand name, associated with reindeer and the Sámi language, clothing, the cold, and rich nature areas. A few keywords; films about the Kautokeino Rebellion and the Oscar-nominated film Pathfinder, the Reinlykke TV Series and the 168 hour long, minute by minute, reindeer migration documentary, our colourful Easter festival etc.

My company runs an online store ([www.gavpi.com](http://www.gavpi.com)), and our location in Kautokeino is very important for the sale of our Sámi-based products. Kautokeino is a strong brand name and important when it comes to sales and marketing.

We have a multitude of products that can provide jobs by increasing sales outside the municipality. We should mention that Guovdageaidnu is the cultural capital of Sápmi, with the Beaivvaš National Theatre, the Sámi Film Institute, Sámi Artist Collective and our live music and joik culture. The sports community encompasses many volunteers, including our reindeer-racing track. Sámi handicraft traditions - duodji - are very strong, and the world's largest duodji trade fair is held every year before Christmas time.

Guovdageaidnu is the heart of Sámi education in Sápmi. (Sápmi is the cultural region traditionally inhabited by the Sámi people). The village has a Sámi high school

and is home to the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. About 90% of the population speaks Sámi daily, and for children in kindergartens and primary school, Sámi is the main language. The village offers education, workshops and distance education in the Sámi language. The Sámi language and culture are alive and part of everyday life in the municipality, so we are also a destination for people who want to be 'smothered' in an intensive learning environment where Sámi is used all day long, on all areas.

Guovdageaidnu offers a true Sámi tourism context. Few other tourism companies in the north can compete with Guovdageaidnu as a tourist venue with all the genuine Sámi culture and reindeer experiences Guovdageaidnu provides.

The municipality is 10.000 sq.km, with pure nature and good raw materials for food production such as reindeer meats, fish, berries, mushrooms, and others. This is a great natural basis for food export.

Guovdageaidnu is the capital of Sámi handicrafts (duodji is traditional handicraft using materials such as leather, wood, horn). The municipality has shops that sell raw materials for production, and many producers have offices here. The head office for the Duodji Institute is here (a foundation whose main objective is to promote business development based on traditional duodji crafts).

All these features make Guovdageaidnu an important centre for Sápmi. One challenge to local development is making our municipality and products more visible to the rest of the world and also create a functional village centre to better facilitate business.

In addition to making our institutions more visible and attractive, it will be important to create life in the village centre for the locals and for visitors and tourists.

The Márkan zone needs to improve to facilitate cultural activities such as outdoor theatre and concerts, outdoor exhibitions (e.g. ice sculptures) and various events.

The Márkan area needs better tourist attractions and activities for tourists, whether organized activities (reindeer sledging, lávvu-tent dining) or individualized (ski trails, activity trails etc.) Márkan needs areas for sports, exercise, and play, with specific activity areas.

There needs to be more lay-bys and picnic areas for road travellers so they can stop and get a bite of food or just rest a while.

Last but not least, we need an area to sell our local products. Such as foods and duodji products. It would be a good idea to use the local áiti building method as a resilient point of departure. (An áiti is an outhouse, and it is common to build an áiti when extra storage is needed. The outhouses are located next to each other, and may be different sizes, differing roof angles etc.). This can be a nice solution for e.g. a duodji courtyard (Duodješillju) with many small buildings for each outlet and a common area for common functions, such as online store operations and real stores on site. A duodješillju would allow each duodji artisan to run affordable individualized operations, but facilitating cooperation in exhibitions, and group marketing and investments in machinery.

It is important that the design of the Márkan is based on the expectation we have for the Kautokeino brand name – a vibrant centre for Sámi culture, language, artisans and small industries.

Inger Marit Bongo



# Tourism development Kautokeino – the Sámi way

**Antje Schlecht**

I'm working at Sápmi Næringshage AS as a business consultant. In addition I am the project leader for the tourism development project started in Kautokeino municipality August 2018. Before my current position I was working at the social welfare office in Kautokeino as well as within cruise tourism and Hålogaland court of appeal in Tromsø. I have been living in Kautokeino for the last four years and for a period in 2010. I moved here from Germany after having worked at Juhls Silver gallery several times as a student and having finished my degree within leisure and tourism management.

## **My vision for Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino as a tourism destination**

Representing the heart of Sápmi with truly sustainable tourism that contributes to the preservation of the Sámi culture, traditions and language and that is leading within indigenous tourism.

## **The tourism development project**

Within the tourism development process, we have entered we intend to emphasize the idea of sustainable tourism. The first workshop we had with tourism enterprises showed that this is an idea that is mirrored by the local players which I assume derives from their close connection to nature through their cultural heritage.

The tourism project is divided into several phases/stages such as analysing, strategy and implementation phase. The aim within the first stage (analysing and strategy) is to create an overall plan for what kind of destination we want our Sámi village Kautokeino to be, what kind of profile do we want to create and what do we intend to stand for with regard to visitors. Another aspect we need to address within this strategy and planning phase is to determine what type of tourism and hence tourists we want and can welcome. First, when we have set our goals for the future development and agreed upon how to reach them, we can set off to work upon single projects that contribute to the overall strategy and goals.

## **What do we want? – some brief outcomes of the first workshop**

Quality tourism instead of mass tourism

Using the natural and cultural resources and traditional knowledge of the Sámi in order to create meaningful and engaging experiences for tourists with quality and consistent

## **Today's challenges -> tomorrows possibilities?**

Lack of cooperation both internal, within Kautokeino municipality amongst suppliers and external with regard to Hetta in Finland (approx. 8 miles away) and Alta, Norwegian coast (approx. 14 miles away). But with new players in the incoming sector in Alta who are genuinely interested in Kautokeino and its Sámi population, and local tourism development projects in Hetta new possibilities for cooperation have appeared for our local tourism businesses both within experiences but also transportation, accommodation and hospitality.

Another challenge as of today is the lack of packages for tourist that contain both the service level of a holiday as transportation, accommodation and hospitality and the experience level such as reindeer sledging, snowmobile safaris, guided fishing trips, events as Easter Festival etc. Furthermore, are many of the experiences available but not necessarily "bookable". But there are solutions that could be used to minimize this challenge such as booking websites Visit Alta, visit Finnmark, trip advisor

etc. Through the tourism development project and the work as a business consultant, Sápmi Næringshage can help businesses discover the advantage but also point out the importance of investing in those kinds of sales channels.

The hotel has and is functioning as a catalyst for many of the businesses due to its size and the fact that it belongs to one of Norway's largest hotel chains. Hence the economy for larger marketing efforts and the ability to use a large network is given. In addition, it is to be said that Kautokeino is one of Olav Thon's (founder of Thon group) favourites even though it has since its opening in 2007 not seen black numbers when it comes to return on investment.

The hotel's role as a catalyst and in some cases even incoming operator derives from the fact of a missing destination management organisation, which was tried developed several times but failed due to missing collaboration efforts. My thought regarding this issue is rather to concentrate on trying to generate tourism traffic through collaboration and networking across municipality borders directly to the local companies by helping to build their business and getting good at experience design, packaging, pricing, marketing, selling etc., because in the age of experience economy where the customer is your "personal" marketer, tourism enterprises can actually market a destination by delivering meaningful experiences to the customer. What is important however is to at least have a local tourist information that should also inherent some functions of a destination management organization. Such an organization should furthermore be funded through both provision based direct sales, private as well as public funds in order to assure consistency and ownership amongst municipality and private tourism players.

We are currently also working on establishing a business model for an entrepreneurial innovation hub where we intend to gather both practical competencies with regard to business development and funding as well as linking this business competence to the academic and knowledge institutions in Kautokeino. Furthermore, we want to provide office space to local business owners since we know that the main business size in Kautokeino municipality is consistent with micro businesses. Within this house of entrepreneurship and innovation, we could provide founders a base for business development and contribute to collaboration and networking.

In my opinion, one key element for the success of today's existing and future (tourism) enterprises is to come even closer together and get to learn to be experts within networking and collaboration. In addition, greeting investors welcome and recognising the potential they could have to boost tourism development by adding fresh (and sorely needed) capital into the market is essential. But this is a development process and literally, it will therefore take time as well as needing efforts from competence players like Sápmi Næringshage, Innovation Norway, Sametinget to guide and learn our enterprises how to do so for greater development and of course economic benefit.

Altogether I personally feel that Kautokeino is entering an era where great possibilities for development are up and coming, which is reflected by the local business owners. We have young people that take the step to create something of their own, we have a vibrating and creative cultural sector with many young artists, local business owners are seeking to develop their businesses and so forth.

In my line of work, I feel Kautokeino has throughout the last year changed in a positive direction and I have been told that business owners who have been working for a long time, are getting back their confidence and a much more positive attitude.



# Business and industry at the intersection of tradition & commerciality

**Johan Ailo Kalstad**

Johan Ailo Kalstad is the director of Sámi University of Applied Sciences (Sámi allaskuvla). He holds a master's degree in economics from the Norwegian School of Economics Business Administration and a bachelor's degree in journalism from Sámi University of Applied Sciences. His career has led through the fields of management, strategy and communications for companies like Statkraft, Geelmuyden.Kiese and NRK Sápmi.

*Disclaimer: This article does not necessarily represent the views of Sámi University of Applied Sciences.*

Sámi traditions and business go hand in hand in Guovdageaidnu. The business community provides the necessary finances to maintain our Sámi traditions and lifestyle while our traditions form the basis for most business and industry in the region. Going forward, there will be limited opportunities for growth within industrial activities or within the public sector. That is why Guovdageaidnu is investing in entrepreneurship and innovation based on the community's solid position in the Sámi society and the global indigenous community based on our population's unique traditional knowledge, language and culture, combined with a high level of competency in the municipality and institutions with distinctive expertise.

Let us then begin with the traditional primary industries. Natural resources on the Finnmark plateau and the advanced traditional knowledge necessary to exploit these resources have been the mainstay for the community until now. Among these resources, reindeer husbandry is by far the most significant and also the largest individual industry in the municipality. Reindeer are perhaps the animal best suited to conditions in the Arctic, having provided the locals with a stable resource base for a very long time. Today, reindeer are primarily of commercial interest. They provide incomes via the sale of animals for slaughter to industrial processing plants, which in turn sell the meat on markets outside the municipality. The other parts of the animal have traditionally been important and are still utilised in Sámi handicrafts (duodji), making them a source

of secondary income. Increasingly more people within the reindeer industry have acquired several foundations by also working with tourism and similar activities. Most, however, depend on government subsidies because these operations are not profitable standing alone.

Today, every sixth employed person in the municipality gets his or her main income from reindeer husbandry (Statistics Norway 2017). Many more people have a strong affiliation with the industry and the money it provides. About half of every person living in Guovdageaidnu has a reindeer earmark that provides a connection to the siida (reindeer pastoralistic districts) and the right to own reindeer. Reindeer husbandry is seen as a family business, even though only a few (mostly the men) in the family are in the mountains with the herd. The other family members help when needed and when they have time, especially in the labour-intensive periods such as separating, marking and moving the herd.

Many will say that reindeer husbandry not only provides income in the form of money; it is also a distinctive way of life that is particularly related to tradition and identity. Many of the Sámi who work in the reindeer industry feel pressured by land interventions from outside, higher costs and greater demands for profitability, as well as the government's attempt to reduce the number of reindeer the operators are permitted to keep. The courts are discussing the case of a young reindeer herder Jovsset Ante Sara, who defied state orders to reduce his herd and brought his suit to the Supreme Court (where he eventually lost). He then brought his complaint to the international

courts. His case illustrates the willingness of young people within the Sámi community to establish themselves in the industry even when the economic outlook must be said to be highly uncertain.

Reindeer husbandry also provides a basis for other activities in the municipality. There are three snowmobile enterprises and three petrol stations here, among other things. These would have had a significantly weaker income base if not for reindeer husbandry. The local slaughter and processing plant is one of the largest employers in the municipality during the slaughter season. The slaughterhouse is also the most effective reindeer slaughterhouse in Norway, measured in number of animals processed annually. History however has shown that reindeer slaughter can be a highly uncertain affair due to natural fluctuations in access to raw materials and market forces that prevail far beyond Guovdageaidnu. The slaughterhouse has struggled at times with low profitability and passed through the hands of several owners. The current owner, Finnmark Rein, is still among the largest and most solid companies in Finnmark. In 2017, the company had an annual turnover of MNOK 116, realising a profit after tax of six million kroner.

Although reindeer operations are predominantly a traditional Sámi trade, it would be very wrong to leave an impression that everyone living in Guovdageaidnu is or has been involved in the reindeer industry. Many Sámi who live in Guovdageaidnu define themselves as permanent residents who do not follow the reindeer migrations. These permanent residents have subsisted mainly through small-scale farming combined with different endeavours that

took income from nature such as hunting and fishing. Take a look around Guovdageaidnu and you will quickly discover several abandoned barns. The size of these testify to a past with few domesticated animals – usually a couple of cows, horses and some sheep. Hunting, fishing, harvesting natural foods and associated activities such as duodji have therefore been important for the non-nomadic residents. There are not many farmers remaining in the municipality today, while hunting and fishing still play an important role for the locals. Very few people make money from this, but it is an important source of recreation and a supplement to the household economy and directly tied to the Sámi identity.

Apart from the local reindeer slaughterhouse, Guovdageaidnu has never had any lasting industrial activity of great significance. The Finnmarksvidda plateau has significant mineral deposits. Several attempts at mining have been made in the municipality. The largest operation took place in Biedjovággi, about forty kilometres northwest of the village, where auriferous copper ore was mined during two relatively short periods from 1970 to 1975 and 1985–91. The mine employed approximately 100–120 people in its best year. But operations were repeatedly shut down as a result of the low mineral prices.

The company Arctic Gold worked for several years to establish a new mining site in Biedjovággi. The Guovdageaidnu municipal council rejected granting the company a license and creating a so-called mining plan programme for the area. In practice, that meant Arctic Gold would not be permitted to continue with its mining



plans. The case was very controversial and disputed. Those who supported mining argued that the municipality needed the revenue and the jobs mining would bring. The No-side on the other hand pointed out the negative consequences mining would have on nature, particularly reindeer herding in the area. The last time the municipal council discussed the matter was in December 2013, when the No-side won by the slightest margin – ten votes to nine.

Guovdageaidnu has a relatively large public sector. To be exact, half of all people employed in the municipality either work for the municipal government or have one of the many public institutions as their employer (Statistics Norway 2017). Guovdageaidnu is regarded as a Sámi power centre and is one of the very few remaining communities where the majority of people speak the Sámi language as the main language of communication. It has become an essential location for building a modern Sápmi culture region. Several key institutions are located here with either a central administration office or satellite offices: among which are the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, the Duodji institute, the Sámi Parliament, NRK Sápmi, the International Sámi Film Institute, the International reindeer husbandry centre, and others.

This has led to a dominant public sector, but it has also stimulated to a relatively high level of education. 31 % of the population has a college or university degree. This is far above levels elsewhere in Northern Norway. It should be said that it is the women in Guovdageaidnu who keep the level up. 41 % of the women have a higher education, compared to 18 % of the male population. This is quite illustrative of the Guovdageaidnu society. The women take higher education and get jobs in the public sector, while the men dominate in the mountains and in natural resource occupations.

The public institutions create ripple effects for the business community in Guovdageaidnu. There are a large number of enterprises, which offer translation as their main activity, due to Norway having two official languages, Sámi and Norwegian. The institutions are also an important source revenues for secondary services like accommodations in Guovdageaidnu (the village has a hotel, a motel and three caravan sites). There are also a number of service and grocery stores that would have had much less income if not for the public institutions here. More stringent government requirements for purchasing processes make it increasingly more difficult for local suppliers to compete. Last fall (2018) the local bookstore had to close because it lost the municipal government as a customer. The state institutions were tied to state purchasing agreements that limited purchases from the bookstore.

Although Guovdageaidnu has a relatively large public sector, the village still has an unusually high number of private businesses. The national Brønnøysund Register Centre names 923 business enterprises registered here. Over two-thirds of these are sole proprietorships, where most are associated with reindeer husbandry. Furthermore, several of the enterprises are consistent with what one would expect to find nearly everywhere in the Nordic region – restaurants, grocery stores, machinists and mechanics, construction contractors etc. Some however are unique to Guovdageaidnu. Among others, there are three silversmiths and several companies that specialise in the art of duodji. Most of the companies in Guovdageaidnu are relatively small. Only 72 enterprises have more than three employees and few have a turnover of over one million kroner.

Many people in Guovdageaidnu ask themselves how they will earn a living in the future. That is a good question if we look at the challenges faced by the reindeer industry and the limited political willingness to establish new public enterprises. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that mining activities or other major industrial operations will be permitted to operate here in the immediate future. Statistics Norway anticipates a reduction in the population of Guovdageaidnu by almost 20 % before 2040. This would have significant negative consequences, not only for Guovdageaidnu but for all of Sámi society. It is therefore important to find answers on how this can be counteracted.

Given the challenges and limitations that are described above, it seems natural that Guovdageaidnu would focus on entrepreneurship and innovation. This process should be based on the region's comparative advantages. Industrial policy is demanding and politicians seldom come up with the best commercial solutions. Efforts must have a solid support among the inhabitants of Guovdageaidnu and utilise local expertise. At the same time, there is a need to supplement that expertise with outside forces to create effective and resilient enterprises that understand their commercial markets. One must however proceed with caution and great respect for Sámi culture and not compromise the uniqueness, authenticity and identity of the region. The Sámi institutions could play an important role here to find good solutions at the intersection between language, culture, traditional knowledge and commercial expertise. If this is successful, Guovdageaidnu could be a more robust and sustainable Sámi nexus for the future.

# Guovdageaidnu and Volunteer Work

## Maia Hætta

Maia Hætta is 51 years old.  
She works with languages in the Municipality of Guovdageaidnu.  
Graduated cand.mag. from the University of Tromsø.  
Grew up in a family with a smallholding farm at Finnmarksvidda

The Guovdageaidnu community would not exist without all the voluntary work being done to get something to happen here.

All the work done by the sports teams is volunteer work. Sports activities for children, preparing of ski trails, and events such as football matches and the Sámi Ski Race would not have been possible to arrange without volunteering or so-called volunteer work.

The sports team also arranges an ice fishing competition during Easter and a bazaar during the Christmas holidays to raise money for the teams' activities. It is necessary that people come together and work diligently to earn income; it is also an arena for meetings, across generations and cultural differences.

Other events based on volunteering are OffRoad Finnmark 700, which has an important checkpoint in Guovdageaidnu, and completely new is the 'Finnmarks Race' (Finnmarksløpet), a long dog race, which yet again passes by Guovdageaidnu after several years away from the municipality. Spring's most beautiful adventure, the bike exercise, also needs volunteers to organize the event. The local businesses give prizes to several of these events mentioned, and this is a nice gesture of goodwill for the volunteer work.

Events such as the celebration of 17th of May, the celebration of the Sámi National Day and the Duodji Market before Christmas are events that are arranged by school classes. For the first two mentioned events, the school

classes receive a small allowance, and the municipality offers the premises. The school classes earn income from the café. If there were no groups, teams and associations taking on the role as organisers of these events, it would have been very quiet in the village on these occasions.

There are also other sports associations/teams in Guovdageaidnu, such as the sports shooting team, the Guovdageaidnu Motor Club, the Reindeer Racing Team. These I do not know so well, but they are also run by volunteer work.

At Easter, Guovdageaidnu is hosting the Easter festival. This is a music and cultural festival, which lasts for about a week. To pull it through, a large number of volunteers for many different tasks are needed.

The sports hall is central to many of these events. On May the 17th, the parade goes here, and on the 6th of February, this is where the local people gather, here is the finish line for the Sámi Ski Race, the checkpoint for OF700 is here, the Christmas Bazaar and the checkpoint for the Finnmark Race too. Sámi Music Festival at Easter has as their main scene in the sports hall. Many children have the sports hall as their training arena.

We also have a local community organisation (bygdslag) who arranges fishing competitions, mostly to get income to run their organisation, but also to create a social arena. These events are in the local neighbourhood, with nature as an arena.

Tuvrrahasat is a hiking group who also uses nature as an arena, but not just in the local community. They arrange hiking trips both in their local surroundings and in other areas. They also work on a voluntary basis, to create an arena for the hikers. Tuvrrahasat does not have a permanent office space or clubhouse, which goes for almost all of the above mentioned.

The movie theatre in Guovdageaidnu is also based on volunteerism. None of those who are on cinema duty on Sundays, receive salaries.

Sunday school is also based on volunteer work - nobody who works at Sunday school receives salaries for the work they do.

So, what does this have to do with architecture? It is important that our landscape is facilitated for voluntary work. Is it right just to consider buildings, when what we really need are areas where we can create activity? As an example, if more buildings are squeezed into the area by the sports hall, there is suddenly no room for what the area was originally intended for, sports.

Those who engage in voluntary work have no chance of competing with private actors, and for landlords, the most important thing is to bring in revenue.

In the spring of 2018, many people were occupied with beautification of our own surroundings. After the snow disappeared, one year of litter appeared. There were many who went out and picked trash on their own initiative, even though it was not their own. But as soon as they had picked it up, it became their own, and they had to get rid of it at their own expense. When you have filled four garbage bags with waste no one owns, it is not just to throw it in your own garbage can. Such initiatives must be valued and maintained, by facilitating and explanations if needed. Return points for glass and metal waste must be easily accessible near residential areas. Trash cans near walkways is a measure to prevent litter.

If only money and money interests are allowed to predict the development of Guovdageaidnu, our society, as we know it today, will slowly die out. We get fewer cultural events and activities, with less space for spontaneity and interaction.





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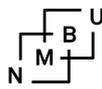


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