

Report from site visit in Guovdageaidnu

The site visit in Guovdageaidnu was held on May 08th , 2019.

The 9 visiting participants were introduced to Guovdageaidnu and Márkan by Deputy Mayor Anders Buljo, Councilman Kent Valio, Development Advisor Nils Runar Hætta and Area Planner Pål Norvoll. Participants and representatives from the Municipality was given a guided tour at Juhls Silver Gallery by the founder Regine Juhls, an inspection at Diehtosiida followed by a presentation by The Sami Pathfinders Elle Karin Inga Skum and Eli Karianne Vesterheim Hætta at the Sami University College and a guided tour at the local museum in Guovdageaidnu, Riddoduottarmuseat, by Ellen J. Bals. The site visit ended with questions in Guovdageaidnu Town Hall.

Participants and representatives from the Municipality was given a guided tour by bus through Márkan with eight stops, within the project site and study area. The first stop was at Sáttomaras followed by Guovdageaidnu Church, Guovdageaidnu primary school, Juhls Silver Gallery, The Old Skijump, Diehtosiida, the local Museum and Guovdageaidnu Town Hall.

Images from the site visit will be made available online with the following labels, in the 'New Docs after Launch'-folder:

Photos: NO-Guovdageaidnu-X-PS-P67 (etc.)

During the event the following topics came up:

Religion

Christianity has been an important religion in Kautokeino for decades. Almost all inhabitants in Guovdageaidnu are members of the congregation. Traditional Sami religion is not practiced widely anymore.

Identity

At Diehtosiida the participants were given a brief presentation about Sami identity and origin by the Sami Pathfinders Elle Karin Inga Skum and Eli Karianne Vesterheim Hætta where held. They travel around at schools in Norway to give an introduction about Sami people and Sapmi. They gave information about the consequences after the assimilation where many people have tried to forget their Sami identity. The importance of a Sami community in Kautokeino is highlighted as a safe place that people move back to after i.e studies. The introduction was followed up by a short presentation about the society and people in Guovdageaidnu – a proud Sami society.

The political involvement in art, such as the artists at Dáiddadállu, and their role in political issues became a subject later during the site visit. There are different types of art in Guovdageaidnu. Duodji is one type of art which is important regarding Sami identity. Artists with a strong voice in political issues from Dáiddadállu is important to get the Sami art communicated, both as Sami art and as a possible connector in a bigger network. The voices from the artists are important voices from Guovdageidnu and the Sami people in general. Joik was mentioned as another type of art with strong roots. Reindeer herding is very important for the joik and vice versa. They are used to remember people and to mock each other.

In Guovdageaidnu the inhabitants are involved and engaged in the development of their village. There are public meetings every month. Who attends the meetings depends on the subject of the meetings.

Traditions and the use of nature

At Juhls Silver Gallery it was given an introduction to the necessity of a silversmith in Finnmark and how Regine Juhls from Germany and her husband from Denmark were received by the inhabitants at that time, as well as a guided tour in the house of Juhls Silver Gallery that they have had for sixty years. Sami people were good hunters which is how they traded the silver, but when it broke they had nobody to fix it. The old Sami nomadic lifestyle made trade an important good for food, tools and silver. Sami people never made their own silver since they were constantly on the move. Before Juhls Silver Gallery came to Guovdageaidnu there were no silversmiths in Finnmark. At Juhls Silver Gallery the nature became a part of the house and laid important grounds for further add-ons, where each part of the house has its own history. The nature decides how the ground will be which is an important groundset in Guovdageaidnu.

Infrastructure / Permanent Snowmobile Routes

There are more snowmobiles than cars in Guovdageaidnu. The importance and need for permanent snowmobile-routes were mentioned several times during the guided site visit. The accessibility to the river is difficult without permanent routes. The distance between the river and the road is far and people have to drag their boats by hand.

An issue relating to the movement of people in Guovdageaidnu were brought up. There is a need for people to move more and exercise, but with -40 degrees in the winter many people drive their cars or snowmobiles. They used to have a café in Guovdageaidnu, but it no longer exists because of the lack of customers. The participants are encouraged to still pay attention to parking as parking is needed, and especially snowmobile-parking. During summer people drive their cars and ATV's, and during the winter they drive their cars and snowmobiles.

Tourism

The people in Guovdageaidnu need more to live by than reindeer herding and businesses only. Tourism is a possibility and can be a start. Help is needed from the outside, and the Guovdageaidnu Municipality is happy that European is involved. The Municipality need tourists. They do not want a million tourists, but they want people who would stay for only a day or more. Tourism should perhaps not be gathered on one site, but rather at different sites that relate to different qualities.

Restructuring

As mentioned in the program, Guovdageaidnu is a part of a governmental restructuring program, which is an important reason in their decision on entering European. There is a crucial need to renew the Primary School in Guovdageaidnu. The Municipality needs smart solutions that are functional, long-lasting, sustainable and inexpensive as they do not have big financial resources. This is regarding all fields of explorations. The Town Hall is the last thing the politicians would spend money on. A big part of why Guovdageaidnu is involved with European is because they need professional input on the future of the Primary School. They are open to keep parts of the building. If the ideas are too large they do not have financial funding. Four years ago Guovdageaidnu had a large deficit, but it is now under control.

Area Development, Industry and Visibility

Finnmark Rein is the largest reindeer slaughter house in Finnmark with 70 employees. The people in Guovdageaidnu do not buy their reindeer meat from Finnmark Rein, they buy it locally. The reindeer meat from Finnmark Rein is sent to different, large super markets such as Meny, as well as being exported abroad. They use almost all of the reindeer meat in the production.

Housing

The first stop during the site visit was Sáttomarás on the east side of the river. This was mentioned as a suitable area for housing with a great view over Markan, the river and the plateau. It could also be possible to establish a connection between the west and the east side of the river, but it is important to have the flood in mind. The most attractive housing plots are on the left side of the ski jump because of the view, but these plots are expensive. There is an unspoken trade agreement called "Verdde", which makes it possible to trade goods and services without the need for money. This also has an effect on housing where a lot of families live on the same plot, like a quilted housing effect.

Demography / Healthcare / Population (de)growth

There are five kindergartens in Guovdageaidnu. At the same time there is a high increase of elderly people, with 60% during the last five years. It is crucial to reinforce this sector. The municipality opens for the possibility that some of the kindergartens can be replaced by or reused for healthcare purposes. The Municipality needs to attract more young people in Guovdageaidnu.

Meeting places

Earlier, there were no public buildings in Guovdageaidnu. Today Bakteharji, the Sports Building, is used for large events such as weddings, different events during the Easter Festival and Music events. There are no other building large enough to host such large events. There are a lot of markets during the year, especially in Easter-times. There are several libraries in Guovdageaidnu. There is however a need for new meeting places.

The Quarry and Mines / Seasonal Changes

During spring and summer many people from Guovdageiadnu follow the reindeer migration to the coast. This means that Guovdageaidnu is almost empty during summer. Not all of the reindeer migrate to the coast, some stay because of illness, age or tourism. Guovdageaidnu municipality is an indigenous municipality. The municipality has to take the lead as a good example and protect the needs of the municipality's own population, culture, natural environment and industries for the future. There has been, and still are, conflicts regarding the use of nature, reindeer herding and quarries and mines in Finnmark. This has been the case in Guovdageaidnu where the Biedjovággi mines(previous copper and gold mine) has left a wound in the landscape, and today inhabitants in Guovdageaidnu, especially the reindeer herders, claim the Náránaš mines are seizing important grazing areas, calving areas and migration corridors for reindeer. In the Náránaš -mine they are excavating masi quartzite.