

SVERKER ÅSTROM FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP 2021
REPORT OF ILIANA VALIULLINA

Dear representatives of the Sverker Åström Foundation,

My name is Iliana Valiullina (Иляна Валиуллина). I completed my Ph.D. studies in International and European Law at the Ural State Law University in October of 2020. I defended my Ph.D. thesis which was devoted to the international legal protection of regional languages and languages of minorities at the Kazan Federal University in March of 2021 and received an academic title “Candidate of Legal Science”. After having defended the thesis, I decided to develop new research about minority languages in Sweden.

I am very grateful for the Sverker Åström Foundation scholarship and the opportunity to conduct my research in Sweden during 3 months (25th of June – 26th of September) in Sweden. My research was devoted to the legal protection of minority languages in Sweden. As it is well known, in 1999, the Swedish Minority Languages Committee officially declared five official minority languages: Finnish, Sami, Yiddish and Meenkieli (Finnish Tornedal), and Roma. Moreover, Sweden ratified the European Charter on regional or minority languages of 1992.

My research trip started in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. It is located on 14 islands, which are separated by the waters of the Baltic Sea and Lake Melaren. Birger Jarl is considered to be the founder. Stockholm officially became the capital of the Kingdom of Sweden in 1634. Not only does Stockholm have tourist attractions, but also many organizations which promote minority languages. Despite the fact that most of them were closed this summer, I managed to visit many of them:

1) National Library. The library accommodates about 40,000 books, and on the shelves can be found literature in the various Nordic languages, Sweden’s national minority languages, and the “classical” school languages of English, German and French.

2) Nordic Museum has an exhibition about Sami language. It is commonly believed that Sami language has been primarily an oral language, with many different dialects. It long

lacked a written language. Johan Turi was the first Sami to write a book about the Sami in Sami. It was published in 1910 and has been translated into several languages. There were other Sami writers, but it was not in the 1970s that Sami literature made a breakthrough.

3) National association of Finns (RSKL). This organization was closed till the middle of August. Later, I met one of the workers, Laura, who informed me about the activities of this organization. I was told that the National Association of Finns in Sweden «has a voluminous educational activity. RSKL arranges different seminars, lectures, and courses annually. During the years 2009-2010 there were altogether over 90 events. Many of the member associations have educational activities of their own and the amount of study hours was a total of 31 000 in the year 2010. Axevalla Folk High School and its local branch in Stockholm work under the mandator ship of RSKL. The Swedish Finnish Folk High School, Svefi, is a member of RSKL. Several major cultural events are organized by RSKL. The Summer Festival, organized together with member associations, is gathering many people interested in music and dance. In the autumn, around the time for the annual Baltic Herring Market in Helsinki, the Sweden Finnish Pensioner's Association, which is one of the so-called special associations of RSKL, arranges a trip to Helsinki with a voluminous program. These trips are very popular; over 500 people participated in 2010. The Theatre Association of RSKL arranges so called Theatre Days during which the local theatre associations feature their performances. The Sport and Motion Association of RSKL arranges sport events and other health care activities. The Swedish Finnish Women's Association of RSKL works, among other things, for gender equality. The karaoke has become a great interest for the Swedish Finnish associations and many of them arrange dance evenings with karaoke as a live accompaniment. The National Association of Finns follows the trend and arranges Karaoke Championships that are held annually»¹.

Next city for conducting my research was Harapanda, where I spent more than 1 month. I visited one local school, namely Marielundsskolan, met its director, and teachers of

¹See more at URL: <https://www.rskl.se/handelser.html>.

primary level of education. I developed a test for minority languages' speakers². Most of pupils are Swedish and Finnish. The school provides the opportunity to learn several languages such as: English, German, Finnish, French, Spanish, and Russian. Pupils can also learn minority languages for 1 hour per week. The school buys books in Finnish and Meankieli.

The cultural and linguistic unity of the Thorn River Valley has been preserved despite the demarcation of the border in 1809 and decades of national legislation. The Swedes of the Thorn Valley are balancing between their Swedish and Finnish language identity. In recent years, the linguistic identity and self-esteem of the region have increased due to the recognition of Meankieli as an official minority language. Some Finns of the Torne Valley also wished to consider themselves native speakers of the Meankieli language. Meankieli is of great importance in cross-border cooperation, as well as in the preservation and revival of the language and culture in the area. Bilingualism is still a part of everyday life in Sweden's Thorne Valley. On the other hand, fewer and fewer young people speak Meänkieli in the Swedish Thorne Valley, at the same time Swedish is losing its position as a second language of Finland. English is increasingly becoming the common language of young people.

Next city was Pajala, where I visited the National Association of Swedish Tornedalians. It was «formed in 1981 and is based in Tornedalen, in Pajala to be precise. It is an association for linguistic, cultural and societal topics. The association is an interest organization for all who feel connected with Meänkieli as well as the culture and history of the language. The association is a language representative for original native, linguistic and cultural minorities and constitutes the government referral body on these minority topics. The goal is to promote linguistic and cultural development and to strengthen the identity of the minority³».

²Questionnaire on minority languages in Sweden. URL: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1kYmjWhH7TMfw0FtmTU0ZjpAfMK72yffqI95HBUS7Brk/edit>.

³ See more at URL: <https://www.str-t.com/the-national-association-of-swedish-tornedalians-tornionlaaksolaiset/>.

Jokkmokk, just north of the Arctic Circle, has always been an obvious meeting place for trade, gatherings, festivals and meetings between friends from far and near. In Jokkmokk, on the 2nd and 3rd of September, I was a volunteer at the third «Festival of Minority Languages» took place on September 2-3, 2021. The sponsors of the festival were: Institute of Languages and Folklore of Sweden, Norrbotten Region, Sparbanken Nord and the Swedish Arts Council. The Festival of Minority Languages is an event held annually in Gällivare and brings together representatives of linguistic minorities in Sweden. The idea of this festival belongs to three friends who at the end of 2018 for the first time decided to invite various representatives of minorities for performances, master classes, songs in their native language. Gällivare is one of the most multilingual areas in Sweden, where several varieties of Sami and Meankieli, as well as Swedish and Finnish are represented. All performances took place outdoors, in a spiral clearing and in a stage hut.

There is Ajtte svensk fjäll and the Sami Museum. Ajtte – the principal museum of Sami culture, a special museum for the mountain region, and an information centre for mountain tourism. I was amazed by the exhibitions and the quality of presented materials, and tools.

In Ostersund, I visited the Sami information center (Samiskinformationscentrum). The construction of the Southern Sami Cultural and Information Center began in 1998. The goal was to create a permanent institution for the Southern Sami region. The organization conducts events in a variety of areas: language, history, and culture; economic and social life; Sami arts and crafts; and transfer of information and knowledge. There were only 3 workers, who showed me some recent books that they published in Sami languages, and they informed me about their plans to gather Sami people and organize competitions.

It is worth noting that the Swedish people are hospitable and always smiling, speak excellently and good English. If you speak this language, it will not be difficult for you to find a particular place or even ask for advice, they are always ready to help. Moreover, it is a pleasure to communicate with them since they study throughout their lives. Of course, they are studying whether it is professional development or playing the guitar. To avoid disputes and disagreements, the Swedish people are trying to get away from the topic of salaries.

In addition to professional development, the Sverker Åström Foundation has given impetus to personal growth. The research internship was an important milestone in my life, which expanded my horizons in many areas and allowed me to study and grow to love Swedish culture. I think it is a huge success that, despite the pandemic, not only has this internship given me research experience of minority languages in Sweden, but also allowed me to meet kind and interesting people. I visited the beautiful cities of Sweden, such as: Malmö, Helsingborg, Stockholm, Sigtuna, Uppsala, Umeå, Jävre, Piteå, Luleå, Haparanda, Gränvik, Mattila, Nedre Vojakkala, Overtorneå, Juoksengi, Pajala, Kiruna, Gallivare, Jokkmokk, Östersund, Sveg and several other small towns and villages inbetween.

It is important to say that there are some institutions and organizations in Sweden that truly promote and develop minority languages and serve as the basis for the necessary efforts. Sami and Finnish institutions, their work is visible, and deserve respect and appreciation. I would like to hope that public and private attention to the other three languages will be increased and perhaps the results will not be long in coming.

I would like to thank you for this research opportunity, which has changed my life and gifted so many Swedish friends who became a big family for me.

I want to express my deep gratitude to:

- Disa Hastad (it was a great honor for me to get acquainted, meet, talk to her) for her valuable help and thanks to which the stay in Sweden was as comfortable and exciting as possible.



- Lotte Olsson for her help.

-Seija Fjellvind, a director of Marielundsskolan, and a teacher, Maria Snall, for meeting and answering my research questions at school.

- Jan Sankela and his family for completing my questionnaire, sharing it with local people, being very kind and helpful all the time.

- Eva, Mike Isotalo, and Fredrik Wells for sharing my questionnaire and being very supportive.

- Liza Pava, Matilda Niva, Sara Omma Simma, Adam Sellden, Carin Wennstrom, Fredrik Larsson, and Julia Palo for being a team and conducting together the Minority Language Festival in Jokkmokk (3rd-4th of September 2021).

I think this scholarship is an excellent opportunity that helps young people to get an extremely useful experience of studying and working in Sweden, as well as to learn more about Swedish culture and the peculiarities of the local mentality.

More information and photos about my research trip can be found in the presentation, which I attach bellow. Scientific articles about this research stay are going to be published. One of the articles will be available in a Russian journal “Sociolinguistics” in December 2021.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Ilana Valiullina (Иляна Валиуллина)



Sverker Åström Foundation

Sverker Åström Foundation is independent of government support.
Its main purpose is to invite young Russian citizens to Sweden to
further good contact between Sweden and Russia.

RESEARCH ON MINORITY LANGUAGES IN SWEDEN

Created by Iliana Valiullina

Summer, 2021



NATIONAL LIBRARY IN STOCKHOLM

The library accommodates about 40,000 books, and on the shelves can be found literature in the various Nordic languages, Sweden's national minority languages, and the "classical" school languages of English, German and French.



NORDISKA MUSEET (STOCKHOLM)



Sami language has been primarily an oral language, with many different dialects. It long lacked the written language. Johan Turi was the first Sami to write a book about the Sami in Sami. It was published in 1910 and has been translated into several languages. There were other Sami writers, but it was not in the 1970s that Sami literature made a breakthrough.



RSE - SFP

Ruotsinsuomalaiset Eläkeläiset
Svenskfinska Pensionärer

*Täyttä elämää harrastuen,
viihtyen, vaikuttaen*

Kun Suomi Ruotsiin muutti...
När Finland kom till Sverige...

1880- ja 1970-luvulla Suomesta muutti Ruotsiin yli 320 000 henkilöä. Kärsivällisesti muuttaneita oli eläkönsaantia varten.

Sen jälkeen 1980- ja 90-luvun tuloista lähti yli 320 000 henkilöä Ruotsiin. Vielä tänään 30 vuotta täyttäneitä on noin 100 000.



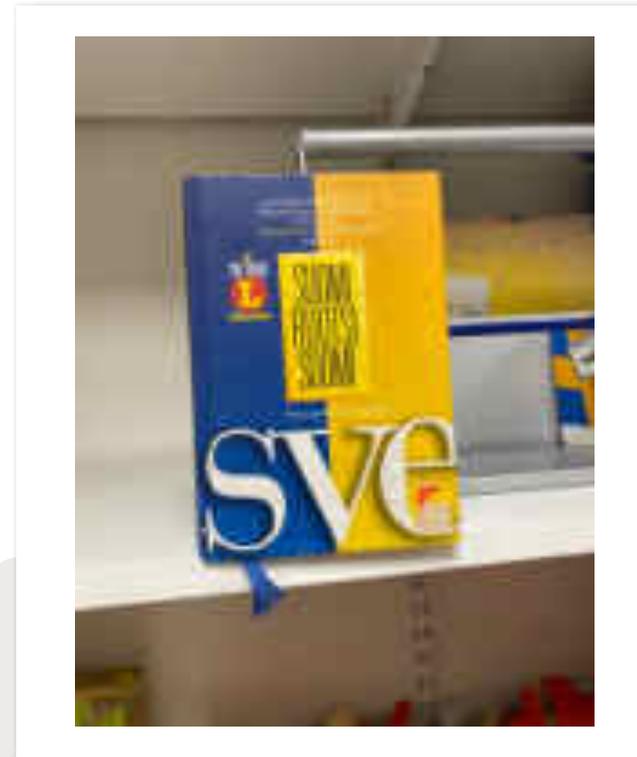
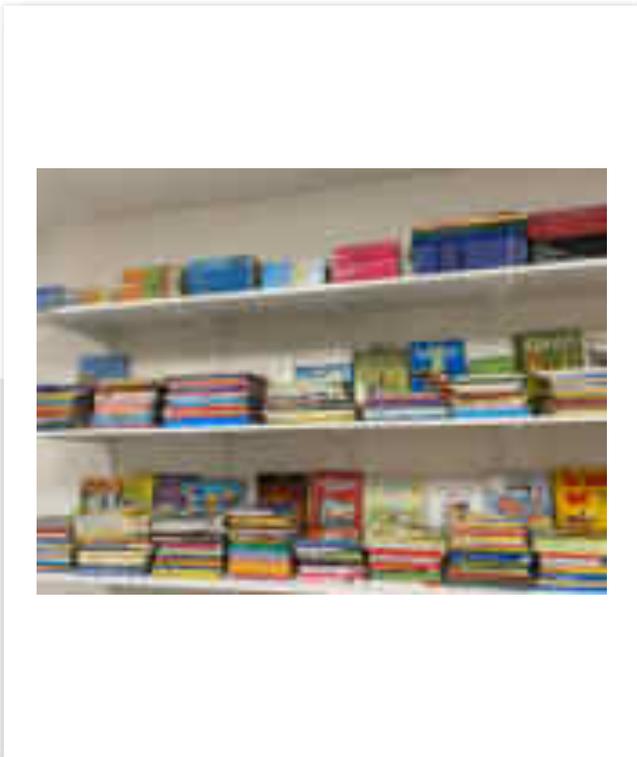

The rack contains several items, including:

- Brochures with logos like 'RBIKL' and 'KIELIPARETTI'.
- Booklets with colorful covers, some featuring photos of people.
- A booklet with a large blue cross on a white background.
- A booklet with a photo of a young girl in a red shirt.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FINNS IN
STOCKHOLM



MARIELUNDSSKOLAN IN HAPARANDA



TEXTBOOKS IN FINNISH AND SWEDISH
LANGUAGES IN MARIELUNDSSKOLAN

TORNION KAUPUNKI TORNIO LAAKSON MAAKUNTAMUSEO TOIMISTO

Today's cross-border cooperation can be seen as an identity process, where the inhabitants, consciously or unconsciously, build and renew their regional identity. The cultural and linguistic unity of the Torne Valley, and thereby its distinctive character, has been preserved despite the border demarcation of 1809 and decades of national legislation. Even if the identity is today multi-faceted, it is still the most important resource in cooperation. Torne Valley Swedes have balanced between their Swedish and Finnish linguistic identities. In recent years the area's linguistics identity and self-esteem have been boosted by the acknowledgement of Meänkieli as an official minority language. Some Torne Valley Finns have also wished to count themselves as Meänkieli speakers. Meänkieli is of great importance in cross-border cooperation and in the preservation and revitalization of the language and culture in the area. Bilingualism is still part of everyday life in the Swedish Torne Valley. On the other hand, fewer and fewer young people have a command of Meänkieli in the Swedish Torne Valley, at the same time as Swedish is losing ground as Finland's second language. English has increasingly become the common language of the young people. It is difficult to foresee how developments will affect the self-identity of the Torne Valley people





SVENSKA TORNEDALINGARS RIKFORBUND (PAJALA)

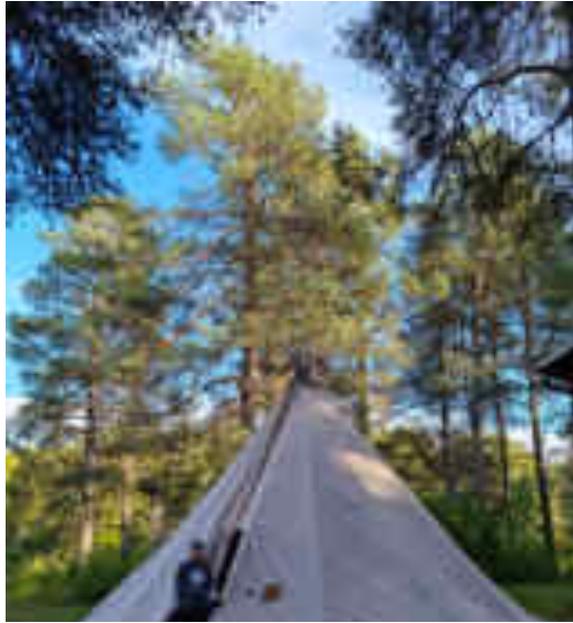
Svenska Tornedalingars Riksförbund - Tornionlaaksolaiset (STR-T) was formed in 1981 and is based in Tornedalen, in Pajala to be precise.

The National Association of Swedish Tornedalians, Tornionlaaksolaiset, is an association for linguistic, cultural and societal topics. The association is an interest organization for all who feel connected with Meänkieli as well as the culture and history of the language. The association is a language representative for an original native, linguistic and cultural minority and constitutes the government referral body on these minority topics.

The goal is to promote linguistic and cultural development and to strengthen the identity of the minority.



SAMILAND (UNESCO)



MINORITY LANGUAGES FESTIVAL IN
JOKKMOKK (3RD-4TH OF SEPTEMBER 2021)

AJTTE SVENSK FJALL – OCH SAMIMUSEUM (JOKKMOKK)

- Ájtte – principal museum of Sami culture, special museum for the mountain region, information centre for mountain tourism.
- Jokkmokk, just north of the Arctic Circle, has always been an obvious meeting place for trade, gatherings, festivals and meetings between friends from far and near. This is the site of Ájtte, Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum, a gateway to the high mountains, to Lapponia and to the Sami culture. Here, we tell the story of Sápmi, the land and the people, of life and survival in a demanding climate and environment. It is a story set in the wetlands, forests and mountains.





AJTTE SVENSK FJALL - OCH
SAMIMUSEUM (JOKKMOKK)

SAMI INFORMATION CENTER (SAMISKINFORMA TIONSCENTRUM) IN OSTERSUND

It is important for the Sami society and its cultural and business circles that there are institutions that can serve as the basis for the necessary development efforts. Sami institutions are located in the northernmost part of Sweden. However, there are currently no institutions with fixed funding in the Southern Sami region.

In 1998, the construction of the Southern Sami Cultural and Information Center began in Ostersund. The goal is to create a permanent institution for the Southern Sami region. Events are held in a variety of areas:

- Language, history and culture
- Economic and social life
- Sami Arts and Crafts
- Transfer of information and knowledge





PUBLICATIONS IN SAMI LANGUAGE IN THE SAMI INFORMATION CENTER (SAMISKINFORMATIONSCENTRUM) IN OSTERASUND

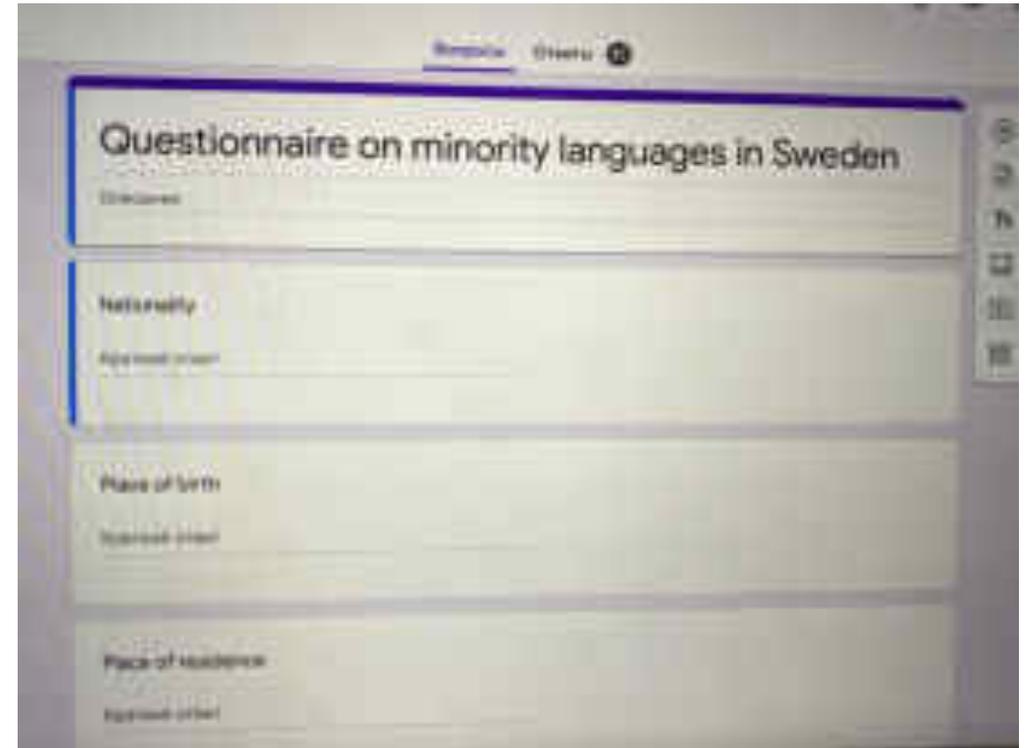
QUESTIONNAIRE ON MINORITY LANGUAGES IN SWEDEN

The link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1kYmjWhH7TMfw0FtmTU0ZjpAfMK72yfFqI95HBUS7Brk/edit>

It covers 5 minority languages of Sweden.

It consists of several questions including information about parents' native language, languages of education, work, years of learning minority languages.



The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "Questionnaire on minority languages in Sweden". The form is displayed on a mobile device, with a navigation bar at the top showing "Forms" and "Share". The form content includes a title, a "Discard" button, and several question sections. The visible sections are:

- Nationality**: A section with a "Response area" for text input.
- Place of birth**: A section with a "Response area" for text input.
- Place of residence**: A section with a "Response area" for text input.

On the right side of the form, there is a vertical navigation bar with icons for "Back", "Next", "Share", and "Print".

Sweden : Northern lights (Aurora) in Haparanda





SWEDISH NATURE: REINDEERS



SWEDEN: WONDERFUL NATURE LANDSCAPES



SWEDEN: WONDERFUL NATURE LANDSCAPES (2)



SWEDEN: WONDERFUL NATURE
LANDSCAPES (3)



*THANK YOU VERY
MUCH FOR
ATTENTION!*