



Brief

Cultural sustainability – daily practices in Sámi ECEC

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The United Nation's sustainability goals reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development: climate and environment, economic conditions and social conditions. On a general basis, kindergartens play an important role in preparing the coming generations for building a sustainable society (Kunnskapsdepartementet [Ministry of Education and Research], 2017; Wals & Benavot, 2017).

In Norway, the approximately 1,000 children attending Sámi kindergartens are spread across the country (Statistisk sentralbyrå [Statistics Norway], 2016). Research findings show that the kindergartens attach importance to such traditional values as close contact with nature and sustainable management of natural resources as the basic foundation for a health-promoting programme (Åmot & Bjerklund, in press). In this context, and on a more general basis, the values of Indigenous peoples are often based on five principles: (1) the connection between past and present, (2) respect for traditions that impart a respect for nature, (3) attachment to nature and the understanding that health and well-being depend on the environment around us, and (5) understanding that the environment around us supplies our food (Gratani et al., 2016). As we see it, these perspectives are based on important fundamental values for sustainable development.

In this article we explore how the underlying values in Sámi kindergartens can be linked to the concept of cultural sustainability by examining qualitative data material from interviews with kindergarten staff and observations in six Sámi kindergartens in Norway. Cultural sustainability refers to the right to self-determination over one's own culture, cf. Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The economic, ecological and cultural sustainability goals are intertwined: ecological sustainability provides the

grounds for economic sustainability, and together, ecological and economic sustainability make it possible to protect and develop cultural sustainability (Landbruks- og matdepartementet [Ministry of Agriculture and Food], 2018). Our study points out how the practices in Sámi kindergartens can be understood as cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2006) and as sustainability indicators. This is based on an understanding that culture is a necessary anchor for creating a sustainable society that develops an eco-cultural civilization (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Our study also points out how Sámi kindergartens' emphasis on Sámi culture through practical actions and mythical narratives provides a foundation for sustainability in practice. We conclude by outlining how kindergarten pedagogy in general can draw on this.

Keywords: *sustainability indicator; cultural sustainability; cultural capital; Sámi kindergartens*