

Title: Sámi literature in motion

Presenter: Liv Inger Lindi

Abstract:

Historically, the Sami people have a long oral tradition. The first book written in Sami language by a Sami was published in 1910. Two years later the first fiction book was published. A new Sami movement arose in the 1970's. Minorities and indigenous peoples demanded political and cultural rights, and Sami literature entered a new period of revival.

Although there have been published many books during the last 40 years, we still have some challenges. There is little money for publishing either original editions or translations. The market is so small that no company can hope to recover its costs through sales. In order to publish a book in the Sami language, it must be almost completely financed by government money. Even though the distribution of the support to Sami cultural projects is channelled through the Sámediggi (The Sami Parliament) the money for distribution still is granted by the national government.

There is a great need for more information about Sami literature to increase interest and more readers. Libraries are important institutions to promote Sami literature.

There are few fiction books in Sami language for young people, and studies show that they prefer reading books with topics that are not necessarily about Sami culture and traditional Sami life.

The Sámediggi regards Sámi literature as important in terms of language development and Sami self-understanding. A goal for the Sámediggi is to contribute to the release and development of qualitative Sami literature and to make it available to readers.