

Briefing Note

Symposium for Early Career Researchers Working with Indigenous Issues at Mid Sweden University, 26-27 August 2025

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This note introduces the Symposium for Early Career Researchers Working with Indigenous Issues, held at Mid Sweden University on 26–27 August 2025. The event brought together Master's, PhD, and postdoctoral researchers working on Indigenous topics from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Organized by the Subject of Law and the Network for Research on and with the South Saami Society, the symposium aimed to facilitate academic exchange and interdisciplinary dialogue in a field where researchers often work in isolation. It is part of broader institutional efforts to strengthen Saami-related research and education, and it is planned to become an annual event integrated with a forthcoming summer course on Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Researchers working on Indigenous issues are often spread across different departments and universities, with few colleagues who share their focus on Indigenous and minority matters. As a result, opportunities for regular discussion, collaboration, and joint work are rare. In this context, cooperation between universities and the creation of platforms for knowledge exchange, networking, and building professional relationships is of crucial importance.

In light of this, the Subject of Law (Mid Sweden University, 2025, “Law”) and the Network for Research on and with the South Saami Society (Mid Sweden University, 2025, “BÅSKOES”) at Gaskeuniversiteete (Mid Sweden University) organized and hosted the Symposium for Early Career Researchers Working with Indigenous Issues on 26–27 August 2025 at Campus Staare (Östersund) (Mid Sweden University, 2025, *Symposium for Research on Indigenous Issues*). The event was held as part of the university's 20th anniversary celebrations and received financial support from Mid Sweden University and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

The university's “commitment to Saami issues is a cornerstone” (Fällström, Ravna, & Zmyvalova, 2025, p. 177) of its mission. Saami-related research and education are key institutional priorities, with

the Subject of Law focusing in particular on Saami law. Courses within the Administrative Law program now include components on Indigenous and minority rights. Furthermore, a summer course on Indigenous Peoples' rights in international and Swedish law is currently being developed and is planned to launch in summer 2026. The high priority given to this area, and the need to act as a driving force for collaboration, were among the main motivations for organizing the symposium.

The symposium gathered 16 early career researchers-at the Master's, PhD, and postdoctoral levels-working on Indigenous issues from disciplines such as law, linguistics, history, and related fields. Participants were affiliated with universities across Saepmie and beyond. The program included academic sessions at Gaskeuniversiteete as well as visits to Jamtli Museum and Gaaltije Saami Museum.

This was the first time the symposium was held. Given that Indigenous research remains a relatively small field, researchers often lack structured opportunities for collaboration. The symposium sought to address this gap by creating a dedicated space for academic exchange and network-building. It is planned as a recurring event and will be integrated into the new summer course being developed by the Subject of Law for launch in 2026.

In parallel, the Network for Research on and with the South Saami Society is applying for formal recognition as a university forum, which would strengthen its institutional position and support ongoing Saami-related research initiatives.

References

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