

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

*Ekaterina Zmyvalova**

This report provides an overview of the Symposium for Early Career Researchers Working with Indigenous Issues, held at Mid Sweden University (Gaskeuniversiteete) on 26–27 August 2025. The event gathered Master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral researchers focusing on Indigenous-related topics across a range of academic disciplines. Jointly organized by the Subject of Law and the Network for Research on and with the South Saami Society, the symposium aimed to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and strengthen scholarly collaboration in Indigenous studies. The initiative is part of Mid Sweden University's broader strategy to enhance Saami-related research and education and is intended to become an annual gathering connected to a forthcoming summer course on Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Researchers working with Indigenous topics often find themselves academically isolated, with limited opportunities for collaboration or exchange with colleagues who share similar research interests. Consequently, platforms that encourage dialogue, networking, and cross-institutional cooperation are vital to sustaining and developing this field.

Recognizing this need, the Subject of Law and the Network for Research on and with the South Saami Society at Gaskeuniversiteete (Mid Sweden University) organized the Symposium for Early Career Researchers Working with Indigenous Issues on 26–27 August 2025 at Campus Staare (Östersund). The event formed part of the university's 20th anniversary activities and received funding from both Mid Sweden University and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

Mid Sweden University's engagement with Saami issues is central to its mission. Saami-related research and education are among its key academic priorities. Within the law discipline, particular attention is given to Saami law and Indigenous and minority rights, now integrated into courses in the Administrative Law program. In addition, a summer course on Indigenous Peoples' rights in international and Swedish law is currently under development and scheduled to start in 2026. The symposium was conceived as a step toward strengthening cooperation in this area and fostering a university environment that

actively supports Indigenous-focused research and education.

The symposium brought together 16 emerging researchers—at Master's, PhD, and postdoctoral levels—from various disciplines, including law, linguistics, history, and other fields. Participants represented universities from across Saepmie and other regions. The two-day program combined academic presentations and discussions at the university with study visits to Jamtli Museum and Gaaltije Saami Museum. The sessions centered on questions such as the university's role in Indigenous research, its educational initiatives in this field, and its engagement with Indigenous communities.

This was the first edition of the symposium, designed to create a lasting forum for collaboration in this academic area. Given the limited institutional platforms available for Indigenous research, the event filled an important gap by providing a structured opportunity for scholarly exchange and networking. Future symposia are planned on an annual basis and will be linked to the upcoming summer course on Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Plans for the next year include inviting local Saami representatives from Östersund as well as external speakers from other academic environments and Indigenous organizations to share perspectives on current developments in Indigenous research and advocacy.

At present, the Network for Research on and with the South Saami Society at Gaskeuniversiteete is seeking formal recognition as a university forum, which would further consolidate its position within the institution and reinforce its contributions to Saami-related scholarship and education.



PC: Ekaterina Zmyvalova