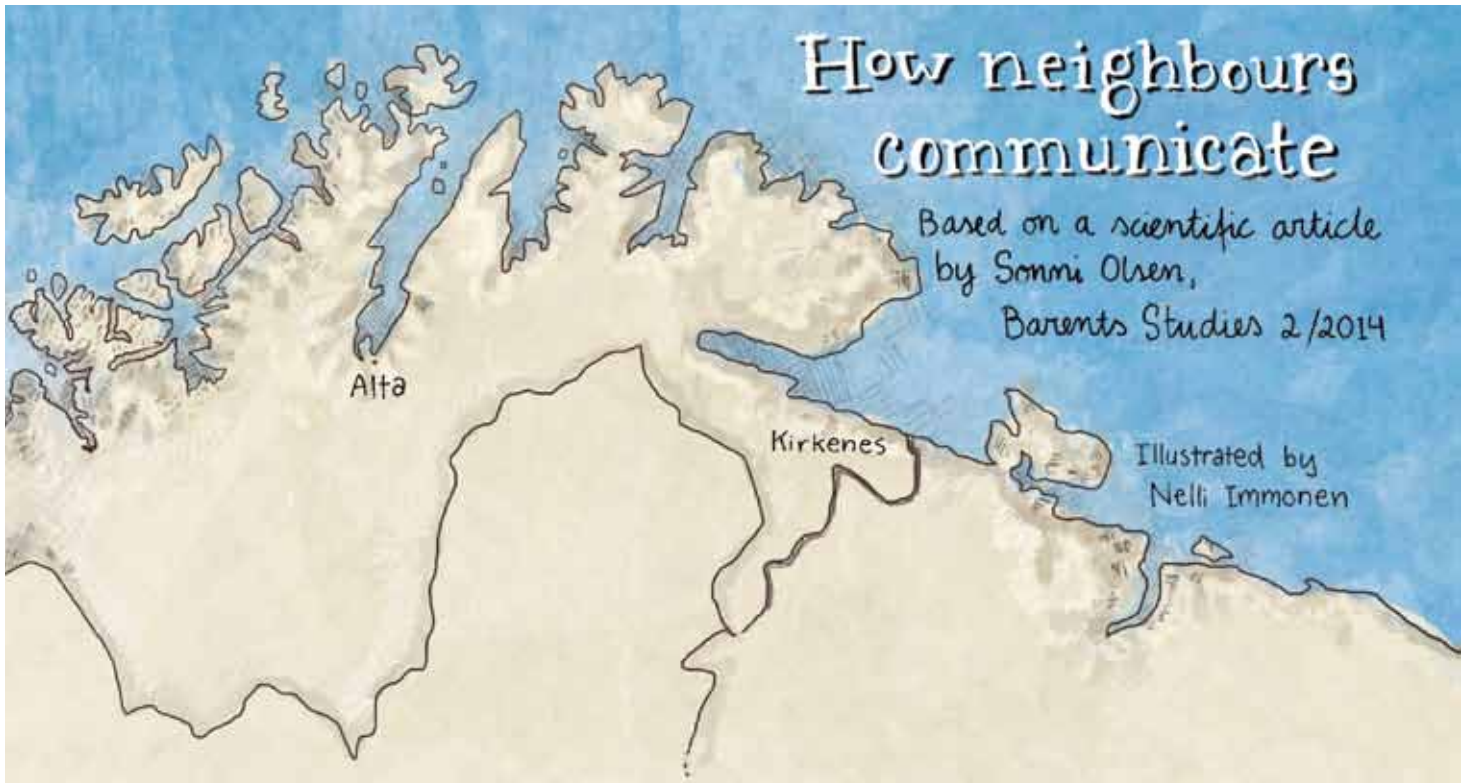


# How neighbours communicate

Based on a scientific article  
by Sommi Olsen,  
*Barents Studies* 2/2014



Illustrated by  
Nelli Immonen

After being closed for most of the 20th century, the border between Russia and Norway was opened in the 90s. The interaction between these countries has been increasing ever since.



*"I can change my national identity, I can change my passport. I can change my religious identity, from Christian to Jew, for instance. But I can never change my mother tongue. For this reason I will always be a Russian, never anything else."*

Many Russians living near the border are encouraged to learn Norwegian as children. The language is seen as a door to the West.

Learning a new language and moving to a new country doesn't however erase your roots.

The Russian immigrants in Norway still remember how speaking Russian in Norway was frowned upon, making it essential to learn Norwegian.

Now, especially near the border, speaking Russian can be seen as an asset on the job market. The old attitudes are quickly vanishing.



The interaction of the two cultures is increasing by the day. Will this mixture give us a wholly new type of an identity - something that is unique to the Barents' region?

