

Foreword

Vibrant Indigenous economies are fundamental to self-determination. There are approximately 38 million Indigenous peoples living in 13 OECD member countries. Indigenous peoples make an important contribution to the culture, heritage, and economic development of these member countries. The diverse spiritual beliefs and worldviews of Indigenous peoples worldwide are rooted in connections to land and nature, emphasizing its stewardship. Indigenous worldviews illuminate the path to sustainable development.

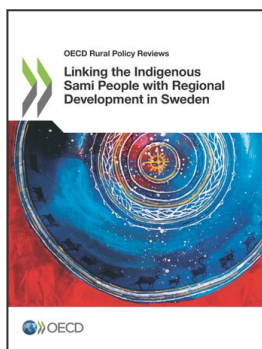
Across far too many indicators – income, employment, life expectancy, and educational attainment – there are significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in many countries. In Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand and the United States, Indigenous people on average have an annual household income that is 30% lower than the non-Indigenous population. They also live on average 6 years less than non-Indigenous populations. Indigenous rates of secondary school completion are 16 percentage points lower, and employment participation is 13 percentage points lower than the non-Indigenous population. Improving the well-being of Indigenous peoples is critical to achieving inclusive development.

Geography is a key factor shaping the economic development and well-being outcomes of Indigenous peoples. Traditional territories are fundamental to Indigenous languages, identities and livelihoods. Indigenous peoples also have assets and opportunities that are important to regional and rural economies. However, Indigenous peoples are often disconnected from efforts to promote regional development. This disconnect contributes to continued disparities in the socio-economic outcomes experienced by Indigenous peoples. This study – *Linking Indigenous Peoples with Regional Development: Sweden* – explores these issues.

The Sami are an Indigenous people who have lived for time immemorial in an area that today extends across parts of Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden – an area collectively referred to by the Sami as Sapmi (Samiland). The Sami have an important role in these northern economies due to their use of land, their involvement in reindeer husbandry, agriculture/farming and food production, and their connection with the regions' tourism industry. However, in Sweden, and in the other countries where the Sami live, the connections with regional development strategies are often inconsistent and weak. Better linking of the Sami and their local communities with regional development policies would help to preserve and promote Sami culture and create new employment and business opportunities.

This study offers policy recommendations in three main areas: i) improving data collection and dissemination on Sami livelihoods and well-being; ii) enhancing policies and programmes for Sami entrepreneurship and; iii) strengthening the linkages between the Sami – as a group of diverse individuals and institutions – and regional development efforts. It is hoped that this study, together with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) broader thematic work on these topics, provides

actionable recommendations on how to better include the Sami and other Indigenous peoples in regional development, learning from and incorporating their own perspectives on sustainable development in the process. This report contributes to the work programme of the OECD on regional and rural development. It was approved by the Working Party on Rural Policy [CFE/RDPC/RUR(2018)4] at its 21st Session on 6 November 2018.



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