

## **Siida looks forward, with reforms and an extension in view**

**A great deal of water has run in the River Juutua since April 1998, when the Sámi Museum and Northern Lapland Nature Centre Siida was opened for the public. The number of employees in Siida has doubled, almost all the shelf metres of the Sámi Museum's collections are in use, and there is a need to update the contents and the display technology of the exciting permanent exhibitions of the house. Siida needs an extension and alterations in the present service rooms, if the house wants its facilities to fulfil the requirements of today's activities and their scope. Now, Siida is being developed with a focus on the integral themes of ecology, accessibility and flexible space use.**

Siida is a beautiful building that was designed by Architect Juhani Pallasmaa with functionality in mind. However, with a growth in visitor numbers and expanded activities, the spaces of Siida have often been used for other purposes than what they were meant for. A visible example of this is the cramped lobby, where the house now has the ticket office, both a hiking information and the Inari Tourist Information, and the Siida Shop. Originally, the architect designed Siida's lobby to be a roomy, cosy and simple space in which the personnel of the Customer Service would provide information on hiking and guide visitors to the exhibitions.

Now, Siida is being reformed, and the work is done by the personnel of the house and visiting experts during an intensive preliminary study period that began in September and will end in January. Together with external collections experts, the collections staff of the Sámi Museum has come up with ideas for communal collections spaces that will enable the house to make the collections activities of the museum and its artefacts more visible. The extension of the Siida Building is being planned with the collections spaces in front, and Senate Properties, the owner of the building, is also engaged in the work.

The structure of Siida's permanent exhibitions and the thread running through their contents are downright genius. Therefore, reform work focuses on how to analyse and clarify the information presented and how to bring forth topical themes on Sámi culture and Arctic nature. There will be an increase in the amount of exhibition content tailored for children. The customers of Siida and the residents of the village of Inari have also been heard on how they feel Siida should be reformed.

By the end of October, the Sámi Museum and Northern Lapland Nature Centre Siida had had almost as many customers as in the whole year of 2014. "We've had a super year," Museum Director **Sari Valkonen** says, pleased.

**Pirjo Seurujärvi**, Metsähallitus's Park Superintendent, says: "Siida is also an internationally important sight and scene of events in the municipality of Inari. In addition, Siida is an extremely important provider of services in the village of Inari." It is a good moment for the Sámi Museum and Metsähallitus to draw up a common, long-term development plan for Siida and start, at the beginning of 2016, to look for financing for the plan. The personnel of Siida hope that in three years – when Siida celebrates its 20th anniversary – the construction of the extension will already be under way.

### **More information**

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