



## Jakobstad

### Culture and Resilience Action plan summary

#### Background

Jakobstad (Swedish) - Pietarsaari (Finnish) is a town and municipality in Ostrobothnia, Finland. The town has a population of 19,353 (2023) and covers a land area of 88.52 km<sup>2</sup>.

The city of Jakobstad is a bilingual town, where Swedish is the biggest language (55 %) and Finnish (32 %) the second biggest. The town has traditionally and historically been predominantly Swedish speaking and a lot of Finnish speaking people moved to Jakobstad around 1900 to work in the Tobacco Factory and during the 1960 s– 1970 s as blue-collar labour to the prosperous forest and paper industry. Foreign languages in the town amount to 13 per cent. In Finland in general the amount is 9 per cent. Jakobstad has received quota refugees since 1989 and since 2017 the Jakobstad region has been prepared to receive 100 quota refugees yearly. Since receiving the first refugees in 1989, mainly Vietnamese people, we have a tradition of integrating our refugees in our local society.

#### Main challenges in the project

1. Quarrels between language groups
2. Finnish speaking people moving away from Jakobstad-Pietarsaari
3. Insufficient cooperation on many levels, between associations, between language groups (including ethnic minorities)
4. Prevent isolation and loneliness

#### Key events

- |              |            |  |
|--------------|------------|--|
| 1. Event I   | 8.5.2024   | Bring associations and citizens together   |
| 2. Event II  | 28.8.2024  | Integration of the different ethnic minorities in Jakobstad and the Swedish and Finnish speaking residents |
| 3. Event III | 10.10.2024 | Cooperation between Swedish and Finnish speaking associations  |

#### Main CCS partners and stakeholders related to Action Plan

Town of Jakobstad-Pietarsaari: department of Education and Welfare and cultural services, town executive office, central for technical services, integration services; Associations: Let's Grow Together Jakobstad, amateur theatres Teater Jakob and Pietarsaaren Näyttämö, Jazzoo rf. Private sector: Restaurant Station 23 and residents of Jakobstad.



## **Main participatory methods which will be used**

The main cultural tools Jakobstad-Pietarsaari intend to use are three social events held at the Old Fire Station. We work closely with residents and associations. Our operating environment is very similar to the so-called third-place concept. It's neutral ground, not expensive and it's near your home or job. We want to bring people together and create a platform for cultural associations where everyone can feel safe and welcomed regardless of their mother tongue. The social events will focus on increasing collaborative integration in the cultural sector between different ethnic minorities and the Swedish and Finnish speaking residents.

The Old Fire Station is the perfect space, but our vision is to make it the perfect place. Indirectly, we bring together actors of different cultural backgrounds and the majority population, with the aim to prevent loneliness and isolation. At the same time, the citizens get to know the town's actors, and the border fences between them become lower.

We intend to use the town's resident panel Jeppis Gallup (750 residents are in the panel) and invite all cultural and social sector associations (145+) to participate developing Old Fire Station to a low threshold culture house for everyone interested. In a previous Jeppis Gallup survey (in August 2023), we asked the townspeople about their interest in developing voluntary cultural events, and 160 people responded. They will be important actors in this work.