



Kristinestad – Kristiinankaupunki

Culture and Resilience Action Plan – Summary

Kristinestad, Finland's first and only Cittaslow town, has long been committed to sustainability, local food, and quality of life. However, in recent years, the visibility and relevance of the Cittaslow concept have diminished.

Despite formal membership in the international Cittaslow network, the concept has faded from public consciousness. The logo is rarely used in municipal communications, and the sustainability criteria—now over 70—have not been implemented in our organisation. Many younger residents and stakeholders are unfamiliar with the concept, and others have forgotten its purpose. The term “slow” has also been misunderstood, often seen as implying stagnation rather than intentional, mindful living.

There are currently no pedagogical materials for children and youth, and the inclusion of Cittaslow in education depends entirely on individual teachers' interest. This leads to inconsistent exposure and weak integration of sustainability values. Public engagement has also declined, with no active forums or participatory platforms to explore or develop the concept. Previous initiatives like “Cittaslow Week” have lost momentum, and new formats are needed to renew interest.

Kristinestad is now reimagining Cittaslow through a cultural lens, shifting the public focus from slowness to vitality, sustainability, and optimism. The city aims to reconnect with its community and inspire pride in the values that Cittaslow represents. This strategy is embedded in the city's Cultural Pearl application, which aligns closely with the Cittaslow philosophy and involves broad collaboration across municipal departments, education services, technical services, and civil society.

The working group behind the initiative includes cultural leaders and municipal staff, who work closely with the city's Cittaslow council—comprising representatives from administration, local businesses,



associations, and cultural actors. The initiative is supported by the City Director/Mayor and engages over 50 active associations and local entrepreneurs committed to traditional craftsmanship and sustainability.

To revitalize Cittaslow, Kristinestad has outlined three key strategies:

1. Raise Awareness and Clarify the Concept
2. Strengthen Educational and Community Engagement
3. Revitalize Public Participation

The strategy engages children, youth, adults, and seniors through schools, cultural events and creative workshops. It fosters intergenerational exchange, lifelong learning and civic participation, while supporting cultural vitality and sustainable local development.

Activities follow a structured process using an adapted DasArts (questions we focus on: What works for me? What do I need) method to ensure inclusion, transparency, and impact assessment. Long-term, the goal is to strengthen Kristinestad's identity and sustainability by embedding Cittaslow values into culture, education and civic life—making the city a model of quality living where tradition meets innovation.