

Kuhmo Citizens' Jury Statement

30.11.2025

Introduction

This citizens' statement was prepared by the Kuhmo Youth Citizens' Jury, which consisted of 13 municipal residents aged 16 to 34, selected through random sampling and open call. An invitation to participate in a study was sent out in August–September to all Kuhmo residents within the age group. Those who responded to the survey had the opportunity to volunteer for the Jury. In addition, participation in the Jury was open to all volunteers in the age group. The purpose of the Jury was to assess the challenges related to Kuhmo's attractiveness and retention and to consider solutions to them.

During the guided work, the Jury heard from experts and discussed the topic in small facilitated groups. Based on the discussions, the participants wrote a statement that includes the challenges and problems identified by the Jury and proposed solutions. The statement is prepared by the Jury members, and the organizers of the Jury did not produce or edit its content. Individual statements or arguments do not reflect the opinions of any individual panel member; rather, the statement is the collective position of the Jury.

The Kuhmo Youth Citizens' Jury was organized by researchers from the University of Turku in collaboration with the City of Kuhmo.

Challenges identified and solutions proposed by the Citizens' Jury

Challenge 1. There are several challenges in secondary education: uncertainty about the future of upper secondary education, fragmentation of facilities and a shortage of vocational education, and students' lack of awareness of educational opportunities.

Solutions:

- Mandatory survey for students in grades 7–9 of basic education regarding secondary education opportunities: would you stay in Kuhmo, if there were vocational education and/or upper secondary school here? Which fields are you interested in? The survey will guide decision-making and provide up-to-date information on the situation, concerning, for example, the restoration of vocational education.
- Build an innovation centre where all secondary education could be combined under one roof in sensible facilities. The same facility could also include spaces for higher education, such as an Exam room for electronic exams, as well as for hobbies, remote work, and business.
- Communication about the study opportunities at Taitotehdas must be improved, for example by creating a website. A clear list of the fields that can be studied at Taitotehdas. Students of Taitotehdas should share, among other things, information about tailored study opportunities and what they have studied there.

Challenge 2. Services and activities are not communicated in an informative, clear, and appealing way. Communication and marketing are mainly targeted at tourists and travelers, and not enough at current and potential residents of Kuhmo.

Solution:

- The city's website will be targeted at current and potential residents of Kuhmo, and the style is appealing and clear. On the same site, a calendar system will be implemented, where Kuhmo's leisure activities and events can be announced weekly. A Kuhmo app will be developed as a thesis project, which will include, among other things, the above-mentioned features. The roles of tourism coordinator and communications specialist will be separated.

Challenge 3. The shortage of people with higher education degree and young women, and suitable jobs for them, is a problem. In addition, there is a lack of healthy business premises.

Solutions:

- Kuhmo should join UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative.
- The city could attract new residents with financial incentives, such as student loan compensation and a baby bonus, as well as free early childhood education. Model can be taken from municipalities where these are in use.
- The city should leverage remote work and study opportunities as a key advantage, utilizing existing facilities.
- Educational, social, and cultural projects could employ highly educated individuals and young women.

Challenge 4. When discussing initiatives, the city of Kuhmo often cites a lack of money as an obstacle to their implementation.

Solutions:

- Focus on applying for project funding using existing resources.
- A list should be made of projects that the city cannot implement and finance (such as a truck park), which can be used to inform and seek other parties, such as companies, crowdfunding, EU subsidies, to implement them. Potential financiers and partners should be sought through, for example, email marketing.

Challenge 5. Cultural offerings do not reach young people, and the threshold for participation is too high for the young.

Solutions:

- The idea of a youth pass should be further developed to also cover cultural services. A few free trial sessions should be offered each year, followed by youth discounts. In cooperation with associations, companies, and events. The age limit should be raised to include everyone under 30.
- Young people need to be asked what kind of cultural offerings and events they want, and these should be implemented accordingly. Students will be required to respond to a survey during school hours, while other young adults respond online.
- The city should support "cultural education," for example, by continuing to take young people to cultural events, for example, through schools. This would also support local cultural actors and the vitality of the sectors.