



Report presentation

# Challenges and opportunities for a shrinking municipality: The case of Paltamo

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# Outline

Research  
questions  
and aim

Study area:  
Paltamo

Data and  
methods

Results and  
analysis

Discussion and  
recommendations





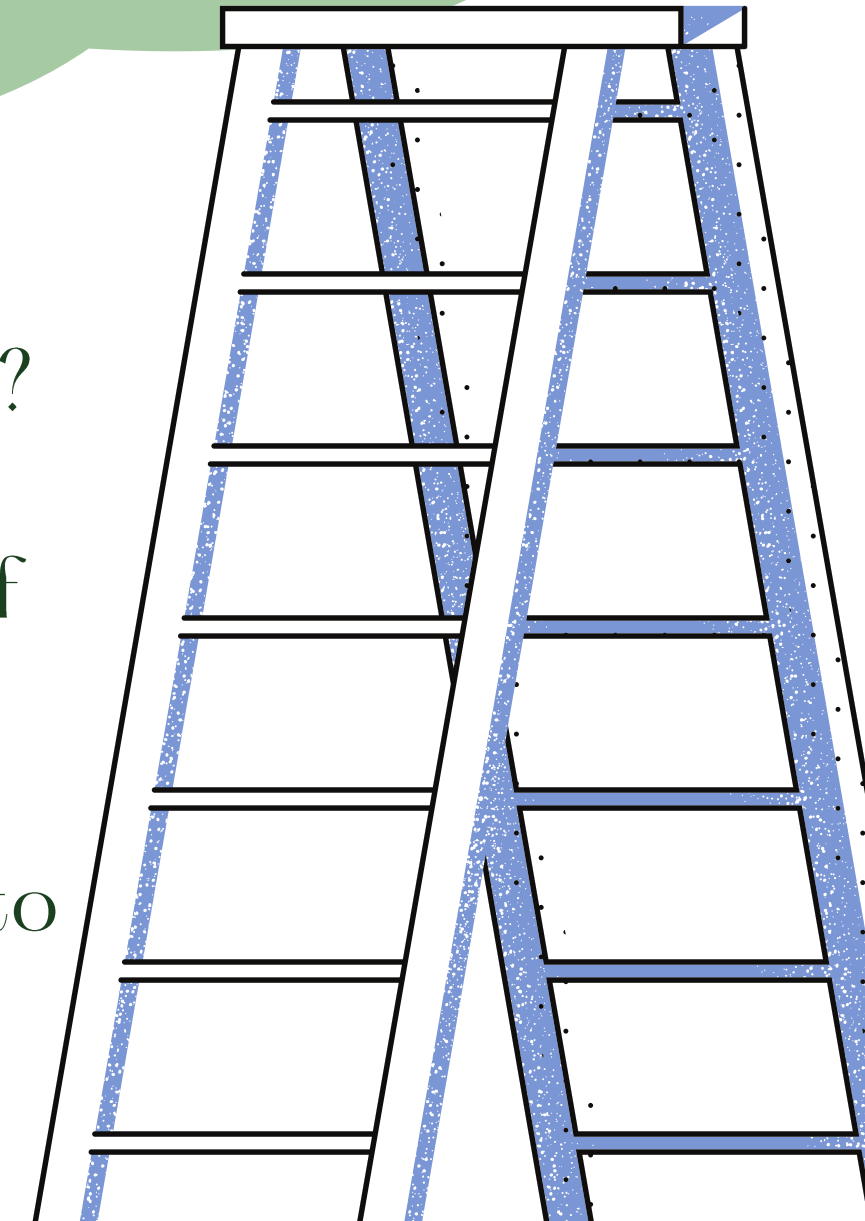
# Research questions and aim

To create a vision of sustainability and smart shrinkage in Paltamo based on the opportunities and challenges present to promote a better quality of life.

How do people feel about living in Paltamo?

What can be done to improve the quality of life in Paltamo?

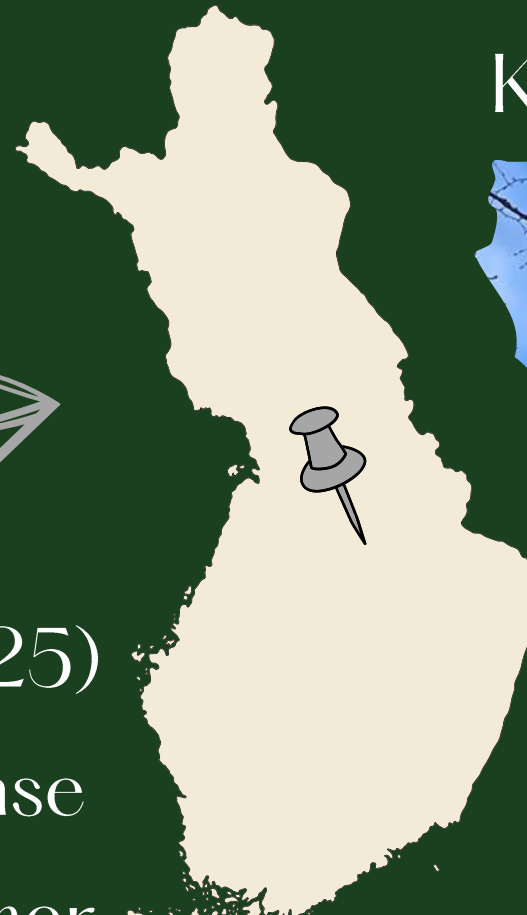
How is (or could) sustainability be applied to Paltamo's smart shrinking/development strategy?





# Study area: Paltamo

Kainuu region, Eastern Finland



- Area of 1,139.74 km<sup>2</sup>
- 2990 inhabitants (Statistics Finland, 2025)
  - Over the last 20 years –29% decrease
  - Population increases during the summer

## **Main industries:**

- Bioeconomy (forest sector, energy production, tourism)
- Mining
- Technology

## **Main employers in field activities:**

- Administration
- Education
- Rail transport
- Social services
- Engineering and construction





# Data and methods

Primary raw data

Secondary data

Multiple methods: qualitative and quantitative data

## Interviews

- Views and experiences of the locals
- Semi-structured
- Some prearranged and some spontaneous
- Hand notes
- 16 interviews
- English and/or Finnish

## Survey

- Broader and generalized understanding
- 2 parts:
  - demographic
  - likert-scale
  - open question
- 45 responses
- English and Finnish

## Observations

- Watching and recording a phenomenon
- Pictures, videos, and sketches
- 3 dimensions:
  - space
  - objects
  - social interaction

## Content analysis

- Create a picture of the phenomenon and its meaning

## Inductive coding

- Inductive Qualitative Coding
- 2 steps:
  - participants' responds
  - Codes and themes

## Cartographic method

- Provide spatial context for the study location
- ArcGIS Online platform



# Results and analysis

Added value:

- Environmental elements

Moderate satisfaction:

- Nature and recreation

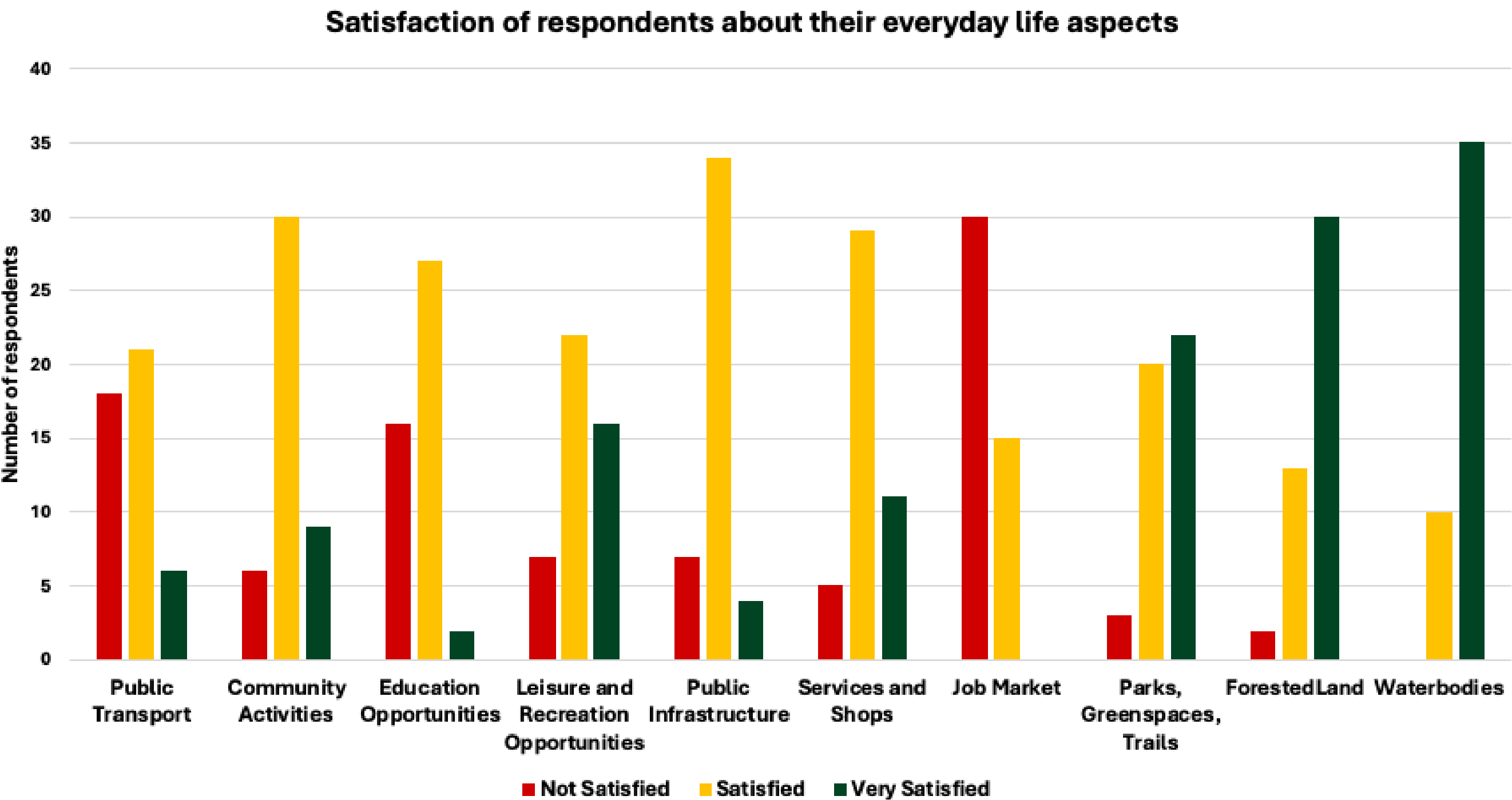
Potential improvements:

- Job market and public transport

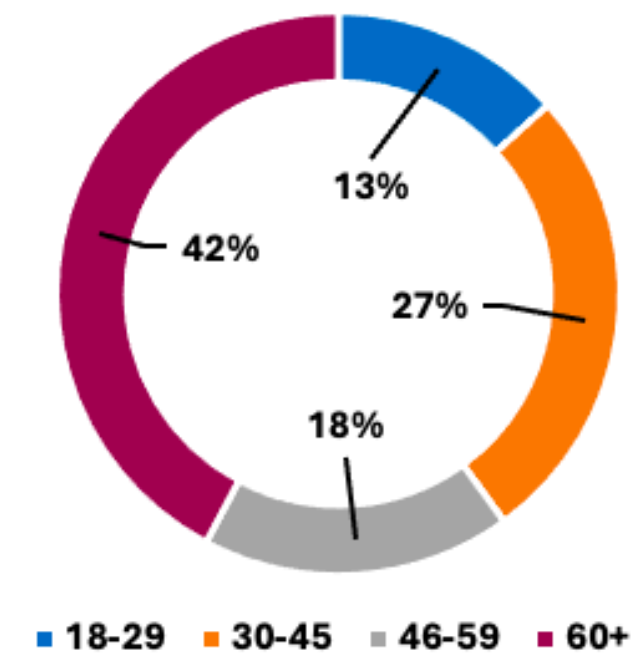
Main Themes Survey	Main Themes Interviews
Opportunities and services Employment and economy Nature and outdoor activities Infrastructure and public spaces Local governance Development concerns	Migration and mobility Sense of community Rural livelihood Sustainability Education and learning Public infrastructure and services Entrepreneurship and economic life Belonging and identity Nature appreciation Active lifestyle Human–pet bond



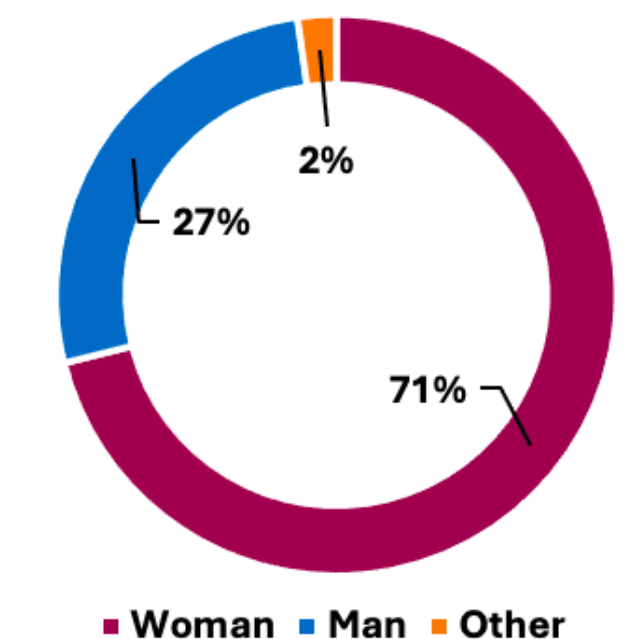
# Results and analysis: Survey



**Respondents by age group**



**Respondents by gender**





# Results and analysis:

## “It’s happening everywhere”

- Paltamo is also a challenging place for working-age people to live, and many of them choose to move away
- Realistic perspective:
  - It seems that people had accepted the fate that Paltamo would keep aging and shrinking, and with that, the economy would continue to decline







# Results and analysis: “We need industry”

- Municipality wishes to attract significant investments in bioeconomy and renewable energy
- Echoing the Kainuu regions efforts in green transitioning
- Paltamo's goal:
  - remaining an independent municipality and continuing to provide the required public services to its residents
- Most interviewed people were pro–development



# Results and analysis: “Home is here”

- A high quality of life:
  - Good place for raising a family
  - Good access to essential services and proximity to Kajaani
  - Accessibility to nature-based recreation opportunities
- Mieslahti example and the village association





# Discussion and recommendations

- Prioritize training and education for residents and newcomers to prepare them for new job positions in the bioeconomy and renewable energy sector;
- Develop flexible mobility solutions;
- Continue the collaboration between municipalities and work sectors;
- Collaboration between municipality and Kainuun Opisto or other educational institutions;



- Promote micro entrepreneurship in local community;
- Prioritize environmental preservation as a key value in local development.
- Revitalize rural areas of the municipality





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# Kiitos!

