

Finnish model for leisure activities increases equal access to activities for children and young people

The aim of the Finnish model is for every schoolchild to have an extracurricular activity which they enjoy, provided free of charge as part of the school day.

The Ministry of Education and Culture awards around EUR 14 million annually in discretionary government grants to municipalities for organising extra-curricular provision. The first government grants for this purpose were awarded in 2021. The 258 municipalities receiving grants have 511,000 students attending comprehensive schools. The municipalities

estimate that 143,000 students have taken up an organised activity provided by the Finnish model. This would account for one quarter of the 560,000 comprehensive school students in Finland.

During the 2024–2025 school year, We Foundation will assess the impact of the Finnish model for leisure activities together with the Ministry of Education and Culture, the model's contact point (Finnish National Agency for Education), the regional state administrative agency, and municipalities of different sizes.

Data will be collected directly from the parents and guardians of the children taking part in the activities.

The first phase of this impact assessment pilot examined whether the Finnish model for leisure activities could reach children and young people from different family backgrounds in eleven municipalities. The next phase, launched in December 2024, will assess whether the activities have increased wellbeing and the experience of inclusion among schoolchildren in twenty municipalities.

16% of the students enrolled in the clubs had not participated in extra-curricular activities in the previous six months.

62,000

students attending comprehensive schools during 2023* pilot project

* Finnish National Agency for Education/Education Statistics Finland

9,900

students participating in extra-curricular activities

1,500 students had not participated in extra-curricular activities in the previous six months.

900 + of them were vulnerable based on one or more socio-economic factors

Nationally, this would mean that the clubs provided in the Finnish model reached **23,000** students who had not pursued any extra-curricular activities during the previous six months.

511,000

students attending comprehensive schools in municipalities receiving government grants

23,000 students who had not taken part in extra-curricular activities in the previous six months

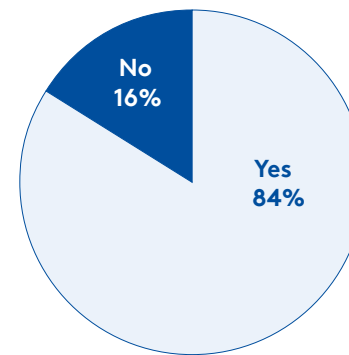
14,000 of them were vulnerable based on one or more socio-economic factors

143,000

students participating in extra-curricular activities

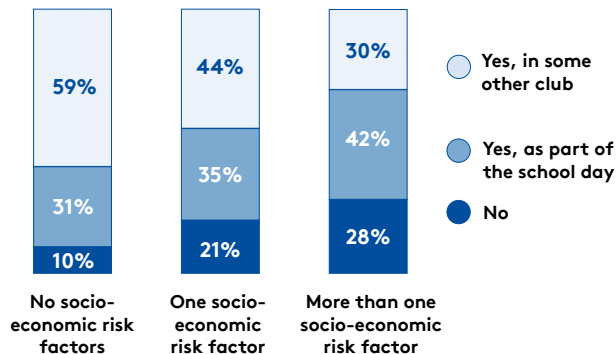
* The estimate is based on data on government grant applications submitted by municipalities for the 2024–2025 school year and on the results of We Foundation's survey carried out in autumn 2024.

If your child did not take part in an extra-curricular activity as part of the school day, would they be able to go to a club elsewhere?



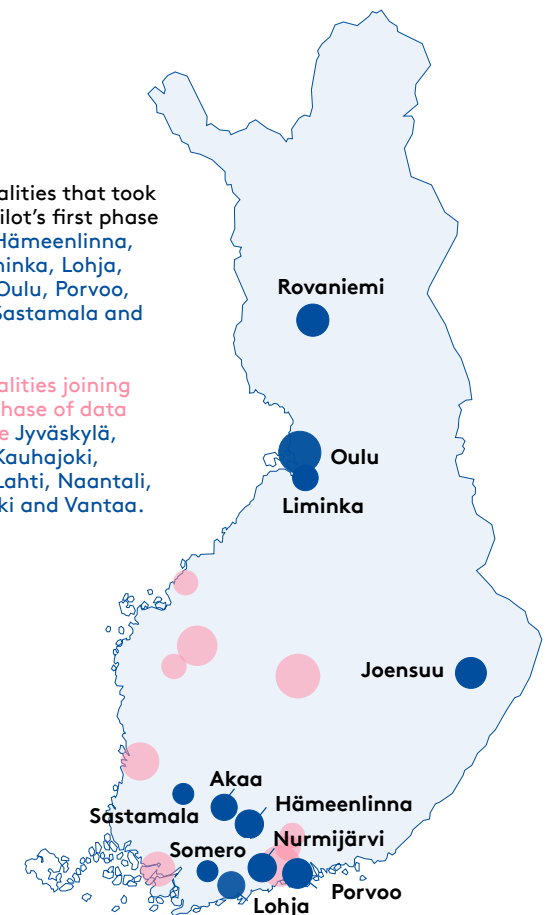
For many students who deal with **accumulated disadvantage in their lives**, free clubs run in a school setting are the only opportunity to pursue a leisure activity.

Thinking about the last 6 months, has your child taken part in an organised extra-curricular activity at least once a week?



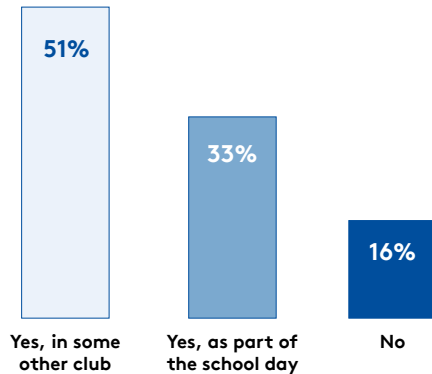
The municipalities that took part in the pilot's first phase were Akaa, Hämeenlinna, Joensuu, Liminka, Lohja, Nurmijärvi, Oulu, Porvoo, Rovaniemi, Sastamala and Somero.

The municipalities joining in the next phase of data collection are Jyväskylä, Järvenpää, Kauhajoki, Kruunupyy, Lahti, Naantali, Pori, Seinäjoki and Vantaa.



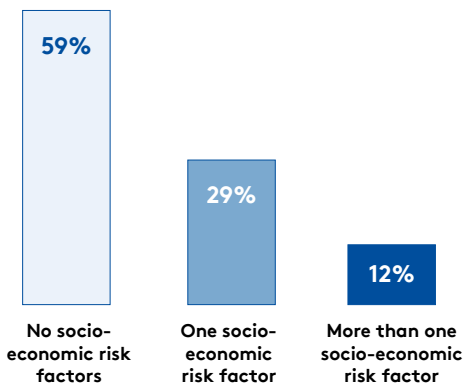
At least **51 per cent** of those participating in the clubs also pursued an out-of-school activity. **16 per cent** did not engage in other organised extra-curricular activities. This was particularly evident among vulnerable students.

Thinking about the last 6 months, has your child taken part in an organised extra-curricular activity at least once a week?



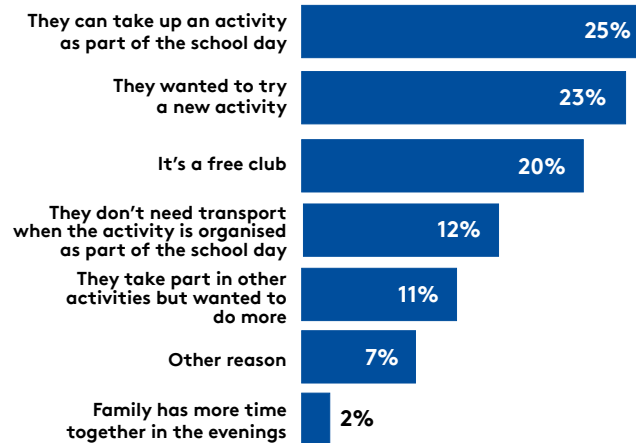
The extra-curricular provision based on the Finnish model has **successfully reached** children and young people from diverse backgrounds.

Socio-economic challenges* among participating students



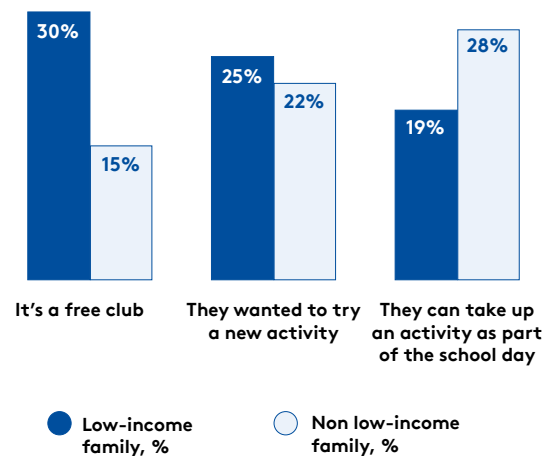
* We asked parents and guardians about the family backgrounds of the students taking part in the activities. The survey included questions about the following socio-economic background factors: parent's or guardian's prolonged unemployment or incapacity for work, low level of education, low income, and single parenthood.

What was the most important reason for enrolling your child in an extra-curricular activity as part the school day?



For children from low-income families, the fact that **the activity was free of charge** was the most important reason for participation.

What was the most important reason for enrolling your child in an extra-curricular activity as part the school day?



Across Finland, **11.7%**

of children under 18 live in low-income families.*

According to the survey results, **34%**

of those registered to the free hobby groups live in low-income families.

*Statistics Finland

Sports groups were the most popular.

52%

of students from families with accumulated disadvantages chose a sports activity.

46%

of other students chose a sports activity.

Children living in one-parent families had fewer opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities: **24%** had not previously taken part in an extra-curricular activity.

Thinking about the last 6 months, has your child taken part in an organised extra-curricular activity at least once a week?

