

# Sport and Equality 2017

An overview of the current status of gender equality in sports and physical activity

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| <p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>This report is a continuation for an earlier document titled 'Sport and Equality 2011'. The report discusses topical themes related to sports and physical activity from the gender equality perspective, relates the latest research findings by gender, and compares key data to the situation six years ago. Its key viewpoints include physical activity as well as decision-making and management. The report's structure and contents serve the strategic steering of sports and sport services based on the principle of guidance by information as well as continuous impact assessment.</p> <p>Objective measurements have provided more information and more accurate data on differences in physical activity between the genders. Boys take more exercise and exercise more intensively than girls. While this difference can already be observed in the early childhood education and care age, it is the greatest in lower primary school and becomes less prominent in teenage years. Men take more brisk or strenuous exercise than women, whereas women accumulate more hours of light physical activity.</p> <p>The number of women in managerial and decision-making roles as well as in the networks and working groups of the sports sector has increased in this decade. Of leading office holders in the municipal sports and exercise sector, 45% are women. Women account for 32% of board members, 16% of chairpersons and 34% of executive directors in sports organisations. However, there are major differences in the gender distribution between various sports organisations. In recent years, women in coaching and management roles have been supported by several mentoring and training projects as well as through networking and awards.</p> <p>The report's findings indicate that gender equality and the knowledge base related to it have improved in the sports and sport sector in recent years. Data itemised by gender will also be needed in the future to support decision-making on sports policy and creating preconditions for exercise. Data collection should be continued regularly and systematically. It should also be expanded to new areas, including the allocation of bookings in sports facilities and other resources. The collection and systematic utilisation of data may help to identify the needs of the two genders, monitor changes and target separate measures at women and men, or girls and boys, as necessary.</p> |   |                                |
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# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Foreword</b> .....  | 6  |
| <b>1 Introduction</b> .....  | 9  |
| <b>2 Legal basis of equality in sports and physical activity</b> ..... | 11 |
| 2.1 Act on Equality between Women and Men.....                         | 11 |
| 2.2 Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity.....          | 12 |
| 2.3 Government Action Plan for Gender Equality.....                    | 13 |
| 2.4 International commitments and recommendations .....                | 15 |
| <b>3 Physical activity and fitness</b> .....                           | 17 |
| 3.1 Children and adolescents.....                                      | 18 |
| 3.2 Physical activity during the school day .....                      | 29 |
| <b>4 Men's and women's different choices of sport</b> .....            | 44 |
| 4.1 Participation in sports club activities.....                       | 44 |
| 4.2 Gender distribution in national sports federation licences .....   | 46 |
| 4.3 Licence data as a tool for developing sports.....                  | 48 |
| <b>5 High performance sports</b> .....                                 | 52 |
| 5.1 Athletes.....  | 52 |
| 5.2 Coaches.....   | 54 |
| <b>6 Decision-making and leadership</b> .....                          | 57 |
| 6.1 Organisations.....   | 57 |
| 6.2 Municipalities.....  | 62 |
| 6.3 Central government.....  | 68 |
| 6.4 Associations between sport and women's and men's careers.....      | 70 |

|          |   |    |
|----------|---|----|
| <b>7</b> | <b>Gender equality in efforts to promote physical activity</b> .....  | 72 |
| 7.1      | Sports organisations' non-discrimination and equality plans.....  | 72 |
| 7.2      | National programmes for promoting physical activity.....  | 73 |
| 7.3      | Development grants.....   | 76 |
| 7.4      | 100 Acts for Gender Equality in sports.....   | 79 |
| 7.5      | National Sports Council's Non-discrimination and Equality Committee.....  | 80 |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Conclusion</b> .....   | 81 |
|          | <b>References</b> .....   | 83 |
|          | <b>Appendix 1. List of persons who participated in producing report contents and their background organisations</b> ..... | 90 |

## FOREWORD

Gender equality has emerged as an important global success factor. The World Economic Forum, for instance, annually measures various countries' success using a gender gap index. Year after year, Finland has been one of the leading countries in this ranking as well as in other international comparisons of gender equality. While we deserve to be proud of the status of equality in our society, it is also important to acknowledge that there is still room for improvement in many areas. These areas include especially the world of work, where leadership, occupations and pay remain strongly gendered. Compared to women, men are on average more often found in leadership roles and higher-level managerial positions, receive higher pay and work in different occupations and sectors. Similarly, work remains to be done in the area of family life. Women today continue to shoulder the greatest share of responsibility for looking after the home and managing the family's daily life, for example when measured by the time spent on household chores and child care.

The findings of this equality report show that, in step with general societal change, gender equality has also made progress in sports and physical activity since the last equality report was published in 2011. Positive development can be seen in the areas of leadership, coaching and participation in sports and physical activity alike.

Applying the gender equality perspective in a cross-cutting manner to all activities in the sports and physical activity sector has also taken a big step forward since the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity was reformed in 2015, making gender equality and non-discrimination one of its founding principles. The message of the Act is loud and clear: gender equality – the viewpoints of girls and boys, women and men – must be taken into account in all activities of the sports and physical activity sector, and equality must be promoted proactively.



Evidence-based information, statistics, and systematic and long-term monitoring and evaluation of the situation play a key role in making sports and physical activity more equal. A reliable knowledge base is needed to promote gender equality effectively and to target the actions correctly. A report on sport and equality is an excellent way of gathering together evidence-based information on this theme at regular intervals. In addition, we all need to be sensitive to this issue and collect information in our daily lives, enabling us to recognise and prevent inequality and promote equality.

Tiina Kivisaari  
Director  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Division for Sport



# 1 Introduction

The previous Sport and Equality report was published in 2011. Its overarching idea was to link equality in sport to equality in society in general, to offer facts about how men and women end up with different roles, ways of spending time and consumer choices in the context of sports and physical activity, and to describe the biological, social and societal discourses that explain these choices. Additionally, an effort was made to clarify the concept of equality as referring to equality between women and men, also in the sports sector, and to avoid confusing it with non-discrimination. Promotion of equality in sport was seen as being redefined in the dialogue between public authorities and representatives of sports organisations, to which the report wished to make its contribution.

Since the previous report came out, NGO activities at central organisation level have been restructured. The legal basis has also been updated: a new Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity was passed (390/2015), and the Act on Equality between Women and Men (1329/2014) was updated. Equality continues to be defined as equality between women and men. The Equality Act now also encompasses discrimination based on sexual identity and gender expression, as well as discrimination based on the fact that an individual's physical gender-defining characteristics are not unambiguously female or male. Discrimination based on reasons other than gender and the prevention of such discrimination are within the scope of the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014).

According to the National Sports Council's assessment, ethical questions as well as non-discrimination and equality issues have become more prominent in discussions on sport policy both in Finland and internationally. The Council finds this trend appropriate (National Sports Council 2015). For the first time, the Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality addresses sports and physical activity and dedicates specific actions to this sector. It refers to steering the construction of sports facilities so that the needs of both genders are addressed, and notes that gender equality should be taken better into account in the grounds for discretion when awarding general government grants to sports organisations and in the criteria for awarding other government grants to sports activities. The Action Plan further assigns to the National Sports Council the task of evaluating the

implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination issues. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016a.)

In the draft Budget 2018, promoting physical activity is specified as the task of the sports services: it is up to the central government and municipalities to create preconditions for it, whereas the practical organisation of sports and physical activity is mainly left to sports organisations. Supporting projects that promote gender equality is listed as a key measure aiming to achieve the operative target for increasing the levels of physical activity in different population groups. (HE 106/2017. 29.90. Report section.)

The purpose of this report is to investigate the status of gender equality in the sports and physical activity sector in Finland and to create the knowledge base needed to support management by information. The report follows and complies with specifications made and goals set for the sports and physical activity sector. The report's structure and the content it deals with are geared to serving strategic leadership and steering systems based on the principle of management by information and continuous impact assessment. (HE 106/2017. 29.90. Report section.)

In its policy document on sports research, which was completed in 2013 and which extended to 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture designated promoting the physical activity of the population as the primary thematic area: physical activity, a sporty lifestyle, and operating models and practices that promote physical activity. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2013.) These policies have influenced not only the structure of this report but also the choice of its thematic areas and emphases and the available knowledge base: the knowledge base on the physical activity of men and women as well as girls and boys is now more extensive than in 2011. New action plans and policy instruments are in place to promote sports and physical activity and gender equality within this sector.

## 2 Legal basis of equality in sports and physical activity

### 2.1 Act on Equality between Women and Men

The objectives of the Act on Equality Between Women and Men are to prevent discrimination based on gender, to promote equality between women and men, and thus to improve the status of women, particularly in working life. The objectives also include preventing discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression. (Act on Equality between Women and Men 2014/1329). In principle, the Equality Act applies to all societal activities and all areas of life.

An update of the Equality Act in 2015 coincided with the reform of the Non-Discrimination Act. A prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression and the obligation to prevent this type of discrimination were included in the Equality Act. In addition, the obligation to prepare equality plans was extended to comprehensive schools, detail was added to the provisions on employers' gender equality plans and pay surveys, and the provision on the Ombudsman for Equality's independent position were made more emphatic. A new National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal was established to supervise compliance with the Equality Act.

In the Equality Act (section 3), gender identity means an individual's own experience of their gender. Gender expression means expressing one's gender through clothing, behaviour, or by other means. The Act's provisions on discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression apply correspondingly to discrimination based on the fact that an individual's physical gender-defining characteristics are not unambiguously female or male.

The government proposal on this Act (HE 19/2014) concluded by proposing that the Non-Discrimination Act and the Equality Act should be preserved as two separate statutes. It would have been possible to include the obligation to prevent discrimination based on

gender identity or gender expression in either the Non-Discrimination Act or the Equality Act. The latter alternative was considered more appropriate, among other reasons because “under European Union law, discrimination on the basis of gender reassignment has been considered to be part of the recast version of the Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, which is implemented in Finland through the Act on Equality between Women and Men”. The line between protection against discrimination based on transsexualism and discrimination based on gender expression was considered too artificial to warrant the inclusion of these prohibitions in different Acts. Discrimination on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics are within the scope of the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014).

The Equality Act contains a provision on a 40 per cent quota, which applies to government committees, advisory boards and other corresponding bodies, and to municipal bodies and bodies established for the purpose of intermunicipal cooperation. Consequently, the statutory requirement applicable to such municipal committees as those dealing with sports and physical activity is that their members must include a minimum of 40% of women and men. This provision does not apply to the bodies of non-governmental organisations. As the health and social services and regional government reform enters into force, the Equality Act is to be amended, also making its provisions applicable to the counties (HE 15/2017 vp).

## 2.2 Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity

The new Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity (390/2015) entered into force in 2015. The principle of gender equality is more prominent in the provisions of the reformed Act. The Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity is a framework act that contains provisions on authorities' competence, duties, policy instruments and resources in the physical activity sector and formulates definitions that have impacts on creating and restricting rights. According to the relevant government proposal, the Act creates gender impacts through strengthening equality between women and men as well as girls and boys in sports and physical activity. (HE 19/2014.)

The purpose of the Act is to promote:

1. the opportunities of various demographic groups to engage in physical activity

2. the wellbeing and health of the population
3. the maintenance and improvement of the capacity for physical activity
4. the growth and development of children and young people
5. civic action in the field of physical activity including club activities
6. top-level sports
7. integrity and ethical principles in the context of physical activity and top-level sports, and
8. greater equality in sports and physical activity.

The efforts to achieve these objectives are based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination, social inclusion, multiculturalism, healthy lifestyles, respect for the environment and sustainable development.

Promoting equality is also cited in section 12 of the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity, which lays down the criteria for granting state aid to organisations. Under the Act, when assessing the amount of state aid, due consideration shall be given to the type, extent and social impact of the activities that the organisation is engaged in; the ways in which the organisation promotes the objective of this Act and the ethical principles of sports and physical activity; the extent to which it complies with the international regulations binding on Finland; and how it promotes equality and non-discrimination.

## 2.3 Government Action Plan for Gender Equality

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2019 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016a) collates the objectives and measures by which Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government promotes equality between women and men. The Action Plan is an instrument for coordinating gender equality policy in the Government, and it incorporates measures for all government ministries. It was put together to ensure that, in addition to the measures that improve the position of women and men, equality is also incorporated in significant societal reforms and key projects. The Action Plan is the sixth Government Action Plan for Gender Equality in Finland. As the Action Plan for Gender Equality was published, the Government sought to stress the fact that equality should not be taken for granted, and that the strengthening and preserving of equality requires methodical and determined work.

The Government Action Plan assigns to all ministries the task of investigating key challenges to equality in their policy areas. The ministries are urged to ensure that their

operative working groups on gender equality have adequate resources to carry out their work. Gender impact assessment shall be part of legislative drafting. The ministries will continue to jointly develop gender mainstreaming in their network of operative working groups on gender equality. All ministries will ensure that every branch of administration produces data disaggregated by gender and that this data is used as a basis for drafting and decision-making. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016a.)

Chapter 4 of the Action Plan sets the objective of “steering the construction of sports facilities so that the needs of both genders are taken into account” in the work to promote gender equality. Gender equality shall be taken into account better in the grounds for discretion when awarding general government grants to sports organisations and in the criteria for awarding other government grants to sports activities. The National Sports Council will evaluate the implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination issues.” (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016a.)

The Action Plan lays down the policy of mainstreaming the gender perspective in key societal and administrative reforms, such as the Government’s key projects. In connection with the Government’s key projects, the ministries will ensure that an effort is made to define equality objectives, that gender impacts are assessed in different project phases, and that the impacts on gender equality will be reported on. In addition, sufficient skills in gender equality promotion will be ensured. The Government will assess the gender impacts of its projects. Sports and physical activity are relevant to a number of the Government’s key projects, most notably to the project on knowledge and education within the Ministry of Education and Culture’s remit titled “New learning environments and digital materials to comprehensive schools”. Mainstreaming the Schools on the Move programme across the country is part of this project. Physical activity also has a role in the key project on health and welfare coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health titled “Health and wellbeing will be fostered and inequalities reduced”. The ministries submitted their first reports on gender equality measures incorporated in their key projects to the Government in autumn 2017.

In addition to the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality, key policy documents informing the Finnish equality policy include the Government Report on Gender Equality from 2010. This report outlines the future gender equality policy in Finland until the year 2020. It describes various governments’ key goals, the focal areas of which have included increasing the proportion of women among decision-makers, addressing gender equality issues in working life and education, more equal distribution of family leaves and combating violence against women. When discussing the report, the Parliament required that the Government issue an interim report on these matters to the Employment and Equality Committee in 2016. This report was published in early 2017 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2017a), and



it describes the achievement of the objectives in seven areas. The report acknowledges that progress has been made in many issues between 2011 and 2016, including workplace equality plans and the fact that the activities of the Centre for Gender Equality Information Minna have been put on a permanent footing, with the Centre now serving as a central body compiling gender equality information. No headway had been made in some issues, on the other hand, including discrimination based on pregnancy or family leaves, or addressing the special needs of minority groups and men in service development. The interim report voices concerns over the fact that municipal and regional level equality work has not progressed as hoped due to lack of resources. The report notes that the gender perspective should be incorporated in major structural reforms, including the health and social services and regional government reform.

## 2.4 International commitments and recommendations

The European Commission's expert group adopted a document titled Gender Equality in Sport. Proposal for Strategic Actions 2014 – 2020 on 18 February 2014. The proposal stems from the observations that the participation of girls and women in sport is still not at the same level as the participation of boys and men, and that the number of women in leadership positions in sport governing bodies in Europe is still very low. On the other hand, the document notes as a step forward that at the London Olympic Games in 2012, women and men were competing in every sport, and that there were 24 female IOC members out of 115.

As justifications for strategic actions, the document lists the need to attract more participants and clients to sport, empower lives, improve the quality of services, promote a safe and secure sport environment, decrease the high drop-out rate of girls and women, and be economically beneficial for different stakeholders, including the sports media. As a particular task of the strategic actions was considered intervention in gender based violence and harassment. The document claims that an open, sound and safe sporting environment serves as a protection against sexual harassment and abuse and against false accusations. National strategies in each EU Member States are considered a precondition for effective intervention. (Gender Equality in Sport 2014.)

A recommendation of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers on gender mainstreaming in sport was adopted on 21 January 2015. Building and promoting a 'sport for all' culture in society is highlighted as the starting point of the recommendation. As justifications, the document notes that sport allows girls and boys to develop essential values, such as fair play, respect for others and respect for rules, team spirit, tolerance and responsibility, which contribute to turning them into responsible citizens.

In particular, the Council of Europe urges the governments of Member States to review their legislation and/or policies pertaining to sport, review gender mainstreaming practices and results, carry out gender impact assessments and report to the relevant bodies of the Council of Europe; ensure that public authorities require gender equality criteria before granting subsidies to sports organisations; establish concerted action between the ministries and administrative branches, in particular when drawing up national action plans and ensure that all statistics on this theme are disaggregated by sex. Specifically, the Member States are urged to identify the reasons for which women, girls, men and boys drop out of sporting activities and organised or competitive sport. (Council of Europe 2015.) To promote this recommendation, the Council of Europe has launched an initiative titled Balance in sport. Its goals are setting up gender equality indicators as well as systematically collecting and publishing data. (EPAS 2017.)

The International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) published the conclusions and recommendations of its conference held in Helsinki on 14 June 2014. The basic premises of these documents were health-promoting physical activity, supporting it in different stages of girls' and women's' lives, as well as specific actions to prevent eating disorders and sports injuries. The IWG noted the need to produce statistics on sport broken down by sex and to mainstream the gender perspective in the allocation of resources, and required governments and sports organisations to report on research findings and data collected on gender equality in sport and share information on policies, actions and best practices. The IWG also found mentoring and education to be preconditions for increasing the share of women in coaches and referees. (IWG 2014a.) In this connection, the IWG also published its Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration, which lists key multinational and international conventions, declarations, resolutions, recommendations and guidelines with equality provisions, requiring that every effort should be made by state and government to ensure that institutions and organisations responsible for sport and physical activity comply with them. (IWG 2014b.)

### 3 Physical activity and fitness

Technological development has brought about new, objective, and more accurate and reliable methods of measuring physical activity (e.g. Aittasalo et al. 2015; Vähä-Ypyä et al. 2015). This makes it possible to produce more accurate interpretations of gender differences at different levels of physical activity. Accelerometers can be used to study not only physical activity but also sedentary behaviours, for example sitting. In recent years, campaigns have been organised in an effort to reduce sedentary time (e.g. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2015). Objective methods have produced a wealth of new information in recent years, especially on the physical activity of children and adolescents. Reporting of findings disaggregated by gender is relatively common.

Research findings concerning physical activity are often compared to national recommendations: what proportion of children, adolescents or adults participate in enough physical activity to meet the recommendation? The national recommendations on physical activity are the same for both sexes. According to the physical activity recommendation for school-aged children, "all 7–18-year-olds should be physically active for at least one to two hours a day" (Ministry of Education and Culture and the Young Finland Association 2008, 6). A level of physical activity exceeding the recommended values brings added health benefits, as the recommendation refers to the minimum quantity of moderate activity needed to maintain good health. According to the recommendation, vigorous physical activity should be part of every day. Children's vigorous physical activity, which causes them to feel clearly out of breath and significantly increases their heart rate, usually occurs in short bursts. (Ministry of Education and the Young Finland Association 2008.) World Health Organization (2010) advocates a similar minimum quantity of moderate physical activity as Finnish recommendations, or one hour a day. It also recommends vigorous physical activity at least three times a week.

Physical activity recommendations for early childhood were published in 2016 (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016a). A child aged under 8 needs at least three hours of physical activity with varying intensity levels every day, comprising light physical activity, brisk outdoor activities and vigorous physical activity. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016b.)

The recommendation concerning weekly health-promoting physical activity for adults aged 18 to 64 is worded as follows: 1) 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate, or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous, physical activity that improves cardiorespiratory fitness a week, and 2) physical activity that improves muscle tone and motor ability at least twice a week. The physical activity recommendation for the age group 65 or over additionally stresses the need to maintain muscular strength and balance: 1) regular physical activity several days a week, in total at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate or 1 hour 15 minutes of vigorous activity, and 2) activities that improve muscular strength, balance and flexibility at least twice a week. (Current care guidelines 2016.)

### 3.1 Children and adolescents

Children and adolescents' physical activity is studied and monitored in at least four national research projects: Physical activity behaviours of children and adolescents in Finland (LIITU) every two years, WHO's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children every four years, School Health Promotion Study every two years, and Study of young people's leisure activities every two years. In recent years, monitoring and research carried out under the Schools on the Move programme have also produced national data on children and adolescents' physical activity. Whereas the volume of physical activity in these studies has, as a rule, been assessed on the basis of children and adolescents' personal estimates in surveys, LIITU and Schools on the Move studies have also used accelerometers to track physical activity and disaggregated all data by gender.

The LIITU study, which was launched in 2014 and repeated in 2016, has produced the currently most comprehensive national data set based on objective measurements of children and adolescents' physical activity. Every second LIITU study is carried out in conjunction with the WHO's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study, while in the intervening years, it is conducted independently. It provides data on trends in the physical activity of comprehensive school pupils in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9 (aged 9, 11, 13 and 15). (Kokko et al. 2016.) The LIITU study contributes to meeting a need identified both in the central government and among researchers in the 2000s: sufficient national follow-up data on the quantity and quality of children and adolescents' physical activity and its trends were not available. It was also felt that the fragmented nature or lack of the necessary data hampered decision-making on sport policy (e.g. Korjus & Paajanen 2016). The LIITU study collects data on the volume of physical activity accumulated by children and adolescents, its venues, its motives and significance, children and adolescents' experiences and modes of physical activity, obstacles to being active, physical education at school, sports club activities and sports injuries. Combining a survey with objective

activity tracking broadens our understanding of the status of children and adolescents' physical activity as a whole.

The following sections discuss findings on girls' and boys' physical activity and participation in sport based on the most recent publications of the LIITU and Schools on the Move studies. Findings on girls' and boys' physical activity based on other surveys are also examined.

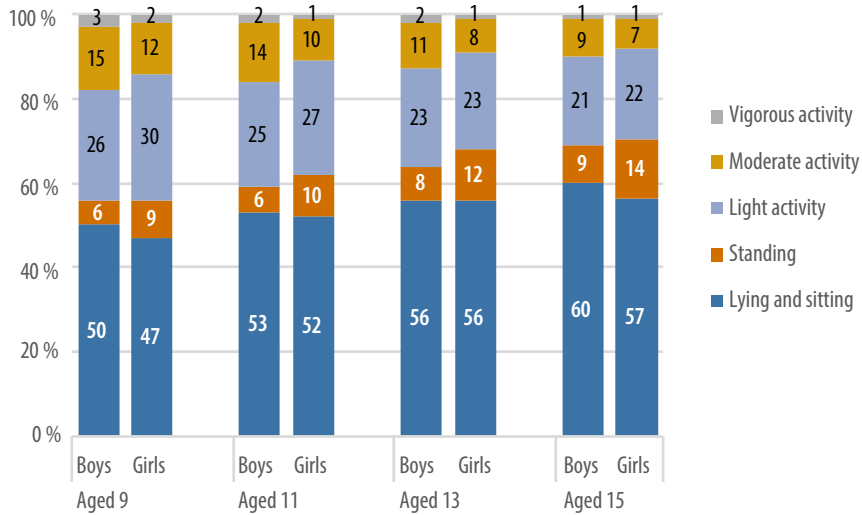
### Girls' and boys' physical activity measured by accelerometer

In the LIITU study of spring 2016, children and adolescents' sedentary behaviours and physical activity were measured using an accelerometer, which the participants wore on their hips for a week (7 days) whenever they were awake. The monitor, which was the size of a matchbox, was attached to an elasticated belt, and the children and adolescents put it on when they woke up in the morning and took it off when they went to bed. The monitor was also taken off while showering or participating in aquatic sports. The variables describing physical activity and sedentary behaviour were analysed in six-second epochs. Of sedentary behaviours, the study identified sitting, lying and standing, and physical activity was divided into three categories depending on its intensity: light, moderate and vigorous (Sun et al. 2014). As variables describing sedentary behaviours and physical activity were used the average proportions of time spent sitting/lying, standing and participating in physical activity of different intensities during the period in which the monitor was worn. In addition, the study analysed the total time spent on sedentary behaviours and physical activity of different intensities as daily averages and the average number of steps that children and adolescents took during the day. (Husu et al. 2016a, 16.)

Accelerometer data was collected from 3,274 pupils, 57% of whom were girls. Of these pupils, 90% (n=2,931, 59% girls) had worn the monitor for at least four days, at minimum ten hours a day, which was considered a sufficient length of time in the study to describe the proportions of sedentary and active behaviours while the pupils were awake. On average, the children and adolescents wore the accelerometer 14 hours a day. (Husu et al. 2016a, 17.)

The measured data indicates that on average, girls and boys spent one half of their waking hours sitting or lying (Figure 1). Boys spent slightly more time sitting and lying than girls. The proportion of standing was slightly higher for girls than boys, and it increased when moving from slightly younger age groups towards older ones, especially in girls. The majority of girls' and boys' physical activity was light. While girls accumulated slightly more light physical activity than boys, this difference evened out in the older age groups. In all age groups, boys accumulated more moderate and vigorous physical activity than girls.

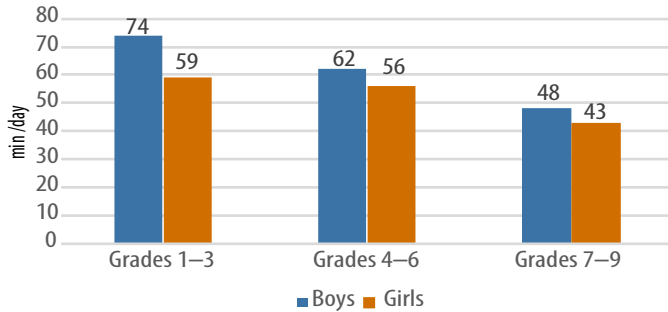
In 15-year-old girls, the proportion of vigorous physical activity represented less than one per cent of their waking hours. (Husu at al. 2016a, 18.)



**Figure 1.** Average proportions of sedentary and active time for boys and girls during waking hours by age group (n = 2,931) (%) in LIITU study. (Husu et al. 2016a.)

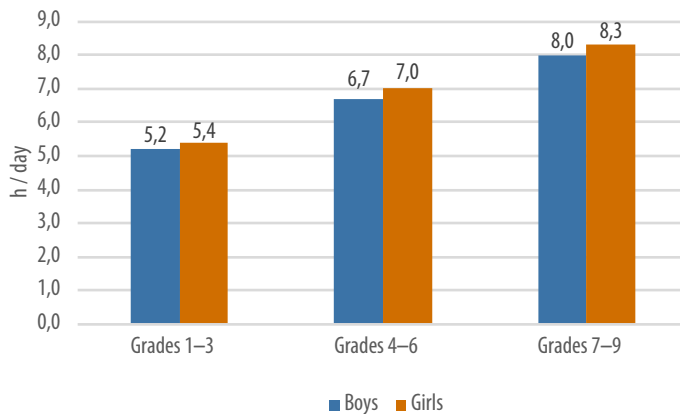
In the Schools on the Move study and follow-up in 2010–2015, the physical activity of 1,186 pupils in total (45% boys, 55% girls) was measured using an ActiGraph accelerometer carried on the hip (Tammelin et al. 2015). In the measurement data, the time of sedentary, or inactive, time and the time spent on physical activity of various intensities were calculated for the entire day and for the school day. The threshold values determined by Evenson et al. (2008) were used to specify the different intensity ranges (sedentary time, light and moderate activity) (Tammelin et al. 2013).

The results based on accelerometer data indicate that pupils become less active as they grow older, and girls accumulate less moderate physical activity than boys in all grades (Figure 2). The difference between girls and boys in the volume of moderate physical activity was clear in lower comprehensive school, but less pronounced and not statistically significant in the higher grades. (Tammelin et al. 2015.)



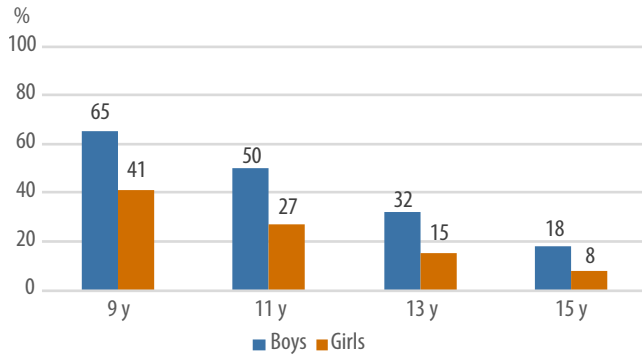
**Figure 2.** Volume of moderate physical activity during the entire day measured by accelerometer (min/day) (Tammelin et al. 2015).

The measured data obtained in the LIITU study indicate that one third (34%) of children and adolescents met the physical activity recommendation, or participated in at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity on each measurement day (Figure 4). In all age groups under scrutiny, a larger proportion of boys than girls met the recommendation. A reduction in the volume of physical activity as young people grow older is clearly observed in both girls and boys. Fewer than one out of ten girls aged 15 accumulates an hour of physical activity every day. (Husu et al. 2016a, 21.)



**Figure 3.** Sedentary time accumulated by boys and girls during the day measured by accelerometer (hours/day) (Tammelin et al. 2015).

The measured data obtained in the LIITU study indicate that one third (34%) of children and adolescents met the physical activity recommendation, or participated in at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity on each measurement day (Figure 4). In all age groups under scrutiny, a larger proportion of boys than girls met the recommendation. A reduction in the volume of physical activity as young people grow older is clearly observed in both girls and boys. Fewer than one out of ten girls aged 15 accumulates an hour of physical activity every day. (Husu et al. 2016a, 21.)



**Figure 4.** Proportion of girls and boys who accumulate the recommended volume of physical activity (at minimum 60 minutes of moderate/vigorous activity on each measurement day) ( $n = 2,931$ ) (%) measured objectively in LIITU study (Husu et al. 2016a).

The Schools on the Move measurements indicate that in lower comprehensive schools, 40% of girls and 59% of boys, and in higher comprehensive school, 16% of girls and 22% of boys, accumulated the recommended volume of physical activity. These findings differ somewhat from the results of the LIITU study, which used slightly different criteria for meeting the recommendation. In the LIITU study, pupils who accumulated an hour of physical activity on every measurement day were included in those who met the recommendation. In the Schools on the Move study, pupils who exceeded the average of one hour of physical activity accumulated over seven days were included.

Making comparisons between LIITU findings and other international or Finnish objective measurements is difficult due to differences in the methods used for analysing the accelerometer data. The methodology and calculation methods used in the LIITU study for children and adolescents have previously only been used in the geographically more limited Naantali Schools on the Move study (Husu et al. 2016b). An ActiGraph monitor is frequently used in international studies, which facilitates the comparison of findings. For example, the physical activity of Finnish and American pupils in grades 1 to 3 (aged 6 to 8 years) has been compared using an ActiGraph monitor (Yli-Piipari et al. 2016). In this study, boys accumulated more moderate or vigorous physical activity (MVPA) than girls in data collected both in Finland and the United States. No statistically significant difference was found between the genders regarding light physical activity. Girls accumulated more sedentary time than boys in both countries. In Finland, both girls and boys accumulated a greater proportion of their physically active time during the school day than American girls and boys. (Yli-Piipari et al. 2016.)

Plenty of additional data have been obtained on the physical activity of under school-age boys and girls in recent years. A number of studies focusing on children at the early childhood education and care age are currently under way in Finland, including Skilled



kids, a University of Jyväskylä research project; Folkhälsan's DAGIS project; and the Keys to Positive Growth study of the Turku Institute for Child and Youth Research, which monitors the wellbeing of children and their families and the children's motor skills. The first international publication on physical activity produced by the Keys to Positive Growth study (Matarma et al. 2016) investigated objectively measured physical activity in children aged 5 to 6 based on a small data set (62 boys, 78 girls). The boys accumulated slightly more moderate physical activity than girls (6.5% vs. 5.6%). No difference between girls and boys was found in light or vigorous activity.

In her doctoral dissertation, Soini (2015) studied physical activity in 3-year-old children using an ActiGraph monitor and the OSRAC-P observational system. Measuring the physical activity of under school-age children is difficult due to its spontaneous and unpredictable nature (e.g. Cliff et al. 2009; Oliver et al. 2007; Pate et al. 2010; Trost 2007), and the use of several different measuring methods, both subjective and objective ones, in parallel is recommended in order to obtain reliable results. In autumn 2010 (August-October), 48 boys and 48 girls, and in winter 2011 (January-February), 50 boys and 44 girls participated in Soini's study.

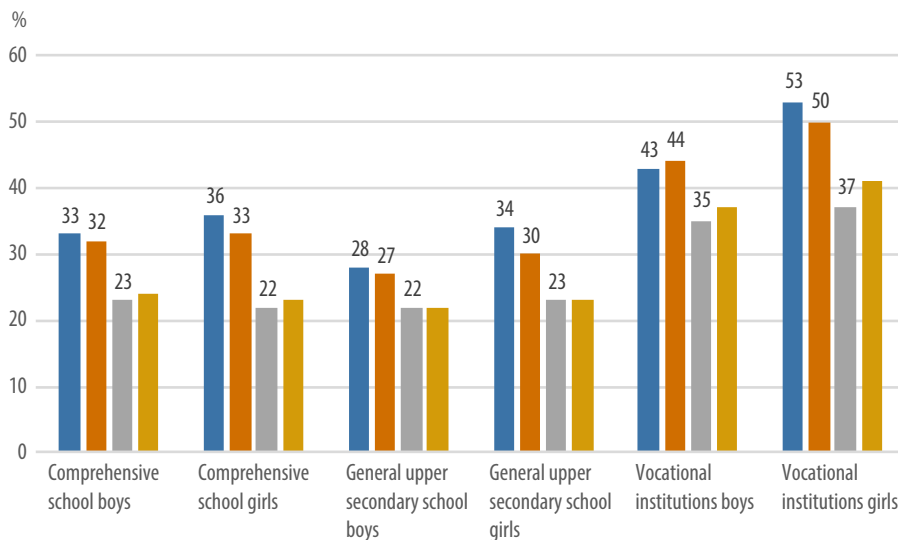
According to Soini (2015), the intensity of children's physical activity at the day-care centre was mainly very light, and play of at least moderately vigorous intensity accounted for only approx. 2% of the observations (Soini et al. 2014b). A difference between the genders was observed in children as young as three, with boys being more active than girls. Boys' physical activity was more vigorous than girls', and the gender differences were particularly pronounced in winter (Soini et al. 2014a) and during days at the day-care centre (Soini et al. 2014c). According to the findings, few 3-year-olds accumulated two hours of moderate physical activity a day, which was the quantitative target of the Recommendation for physical activity in early childhood education and care from 2005. In young children, in particular, comparing the proportion of those who meet the recommendation in different studies is difficult, as studies use different recommendation criteria and accelerometer threshold values (Soini 2015).

### Girls' and boys' physical activity in surveys

The School Health Promotion Study conducted by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) produces national follow-up data on children and adolescents' welfare. Since 1996, the following question has been used to gauge physical activity: "For how many hours a week do you usually participate in physical activity in your leisure time that causes you to get out of breath and sweat?", with the options none; about ½ hour; about 1 hour; about 2 to 3 hours; about 4 to 6 hours; and about 7 hours or more. The proportion of young people who participate in physical activity in their leisure time that causes them to get out of breath and sweat for at most one hour a week has been selected as the indicator for reporting the findings of the School Health Promotion Study. This

can be regarded as the proportion of young people with a low level of physical activity. Comparable data have been collected from grade 8 to 9 pupils since 1996, general upper secondary students since 1999, and students at vocational institutions since 2008. Lower comprehensive school pupils in grades 4 to 5 and their guardians have been included in the survey since 2017. All School Health Promotion Study results are disaggregated by gender.

The results of the School Health Promotion Study of 2017 (National Institute for Health and Welfare THL 2017) indicate that 24% of boys and 23% of girls in grades 8 to 9 participate in physical activity in their leisure time that causes them to get out of breath and sweat for at maximum one hour a week (Figure 5). These figures for general upper secondary students are 22% for boys and 23% for girls, and 37% for boys and 41% for girls at vocational institutions. The proportion of young people with a low level of physical activity declined in all age groups between 2010 and 2015; in other words, the proportion of girls and boys with a low level of physical activity decreased. However, in the most recent survey from 2017, the proportion of those with a low level of physical activity increased slightly in all other groups except general upper secondary students. Gender differences between young people with a low level of physical exercise have evened out in the 2010s and are minor in all age groups.



**Figure 5. Proportion of students with a low level of physical activity: proportion of boys and girls who report taking exercise in their leisure time that causes them to get out of breath and sweat for at most one hour a week. Non-standardised percentage of pupils in comprehensive school grades 8 and 9 as well as year 1 and 2 students at general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions in 2010/2011–2017. (National Institute for Health and Welfare THL 2017.)**

In 2017, another question about physical activity was added to the School Health Promotion Study: “Think about all physical activity in which you have participated in the last 7 days. On how many days were you physically active for at least one hour a day?” with the options 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 days. This question makes it possible to analyse the proportion of children and adolescents who meet the recommendation for physical activity, or are active for at least an hour a day. A similarly worded question was also used in the WHO’s Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study and LIITU surveys. However, the wording is not exactly the same in all surveys, which may partly explain the differences between the findings.

According to the School Health Promotion Study, 50% of boys and 40% of girls in grades 4 to 5 (n=94,766) meet the recommendation for physical activity, or are active for one hour every day (Table 1). Of pupils in grades 8 to 9 (n=72,115), 23% of boys and 16% of girls, in general upper secondary school (n=34,674), 16% of boys and 11% of girls, and at vocational institutions (n=30,568), 14% of boys and 11% of girls meet the recommendation.

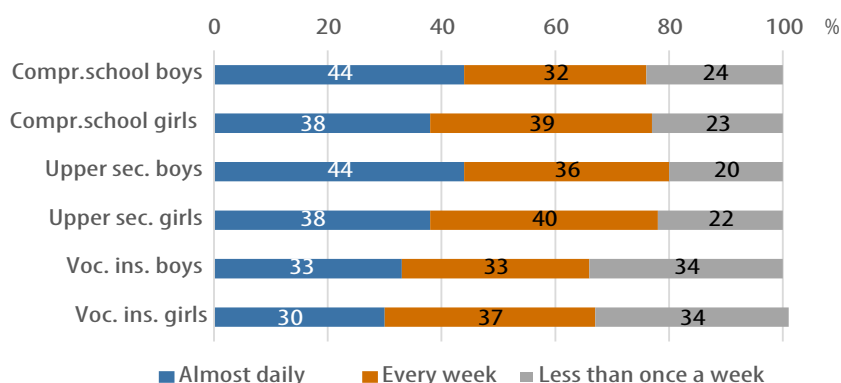
According to surveys conducted as part of the LIITU study (Kokko et al. 2016), 36% of boys and 27% of girls (aged 9 to 15, n=7,340) meet the recommendation by being physically active for one hour every day. Similar results were obtained in the WHO’s Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey of 2014, which indicates that 33% of boys and 23% of girls aged 11 to 15 meet the recommendation for physical activity every day (Report Card 2016, 11). Boys meet the recommendation more often than girls (Kokko et al. 2016, 11).

**Table 1. Proportion of boys and girls (%) who meet the recommendation for physical activity according to surveys.**

|  | Boys (%) | Girls (%) |
|--|----------|-----------|
| <b>School Health Promotion Study 2017</b>                |          |           |
| Grades 4–5   | 50       | 40        |
| Grades 8–9   | 23       | 16        |
| General upper secondary school                           | 16       | 11        |
| Vocational institutes                                    | 14       | 11        |
| <b>LIITU 2016</b>  |          |           |
| Aged 9–15  | 36       | 27        |
| <b>WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children 2014</b> |          |           |
| Aged 11–15   | 33       | 23        |

Since 2015, the School Health Promotion Study has charted physical activity in leisure time using a single multiple choice question; “How often do you do the following outside the school hours? Part 1) of the question: “I participate in unorganised sports or physical activity”. Options: 1) almost daily, 2) every week, 3) every month, 4) less often, 5) never. The gender differences in the answers were statistically significant but not major (Figure 6). In

all age groups, a slightly higher proportion of boys than girls report that they participate in unorganised sports or physical activity almost daily. Similarly, a slightly higher proportion of girls than boys report that they participate in unorganised sports or physical activity every week. There is little different between the genders in those who take exercise less often than once a week. (National Institute for Health and Welfare THL 2017.)



**Figure 6. Participation in leisure time physical activity according to the School Health Promotion Study (National Institute for Health and Welfare THL 2017).**

The Study of children and young people's leisure activities investigates how the age group 7 to 29 spend their leisure time, with special focus on their relationship with the media, hobbies and physical activity. This study follows on a series of publications titled Study of young people's leisure activities; the title was updated as the lower age limit of the target group was reduced. In the future, the study aims to also include children at pre-primary school age, as the researchers engaged in this project find that empirical data on under school-age children has been overlooked in Finland (Merikivi et al. 2016, 5). The study will examine the regularity of activity, the selected sports, modes and venues for physical activity and reasons for being inactive. The Study of leisure activities will be implemented by means of interviews, including telephone interviews. The interview contains a specific question about the respondent's gender, with the options girl/woman, boy/man, other, or do not wish to disclose. (Merikivi et al. 2016, 15). Not all findings of the Study of leisure time have been reported by gender.

The results of the Study of free time indicate that 93% of girls and 90% of boys (n=1,205) take part in some physical activity in their leisure time, while 3% of girls and 6% of boys do not participate, or wish to participate, in physical activity. A clear increase in participation in physical activity was reported between 2012 and 2015, but the researchers note that findings on physical activity obtained by survey methods have their limitations, and rather than an actual increase in the number of those who take part in physical activity, the larger

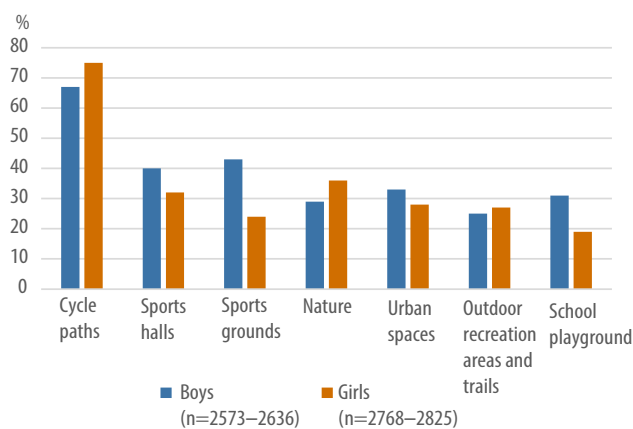
figures may reflect the fact that more types of different activities are regarded as physical activity than before. (Merikivi et al. 2016, 77–78.)

No significant gender differences can be observed in the reported weekly participation in physical activity that causes the respondents to get out of breath and sweat in the age group 7 to 29. 25% of girls and 28% of boys report that they participate in physical activity that causes them to get out of breath and sweat for at least half an hour at a time daily, whereas 7% of girls and 9% of boys report that they take part in this type of activity less often than once or twice a week. (Merikivi et al. 2016, 79).

According to the Study of leisure time (2016), the two most popular physical activities among girls and boys in the age group 7 to 29 are running/jogging and cycling. The next most popular activities for girls were outdoor activities/walking and going to the gym, and for boys playing football and going to the gym. The most significant gender difference regarding the most popular types of physical activity were related to football: 20% of boys and 7% of girls reported playing it sometimes. Another clearly gendered activity according to this report was floor hockey/floorball: 14% of boys reported that they play it, at least sometimes, whereas only a few girls mentioned this sport. Both genders show major age-related differences regarding the frequency of participating in different activities. Cycling, outdoor activities and walking appear to be activities that remain popular throughout childhood and adolescence (Merikivi et al. 2016, 90–93.)

The Study of leisure time indicates that changes have taken place in children and adolescents' modes of taking part in physical activity between the surveys conducted in 2012 and 2015. The researchers suggest that traditional activities are losing their popularity and being replaced with new dance forms, jumping on a trampoline, skateboarding and playing with scooters. However, the report reiterates the observation that it is difficult to make far-reaching conclusions on the results, as this may also be due to the broadening of the concept of physical activity. (Merikivi et al. 2016, 7).

The LIITU survey of 2016 asked children and adolescents about the venues for physical activities used by them. The venues were grouped following the national LIPAS classification of sports facilities. According to survey results, the venues used the most often by both girls (75%) and boys (67%) were cycle paths (Figure 7) (Suomi et al. 2016). Boys use sports halls, sports grounds and school playgrounds more often than girls, whereas girls take more exercise in nature.



**Figure 7. Venues of physical activity used by girls and boys in their leisure time outside school hours approx. once a week or more in the LIITU survey (Suomi et al. 2016).**

A Report Card, or a compilation of recent research results on the status and promotion of physical activity among children and adolescents, was produced in 2016 (Tammelin et al. 2016; Report Card 2016). The preparation of the Report Card was part of an international project in which 38 countries compiled corresponding data on physical activity among children and adolescents in their countries. The Report Card evaluated physical activity among Finnish children and adolescents in the following ten areas: overall physical activity levels, sedentary behaviours, early childhood education, school, active transportation, active play, family and peers, organised sports participation, community and the built environment, and government strategies and investments. Examining the results by gender was a basic principle of Finland's Report Card. While the Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance, which was behind the international Report Card project, did not instruct the participating countries to analyse the results by gender, the gender perspective was taken into account in the Report Cards of almost all participating countries. According to the findings, boys having higher activity levels than girls is a global phenomenon. Among other things, this is reflected in overall physical activity levels, organised sports participation and active play. (Report Card 2016.)

### Girls' and boys' physical functional capacity

As part of the Schools on the Move programme follow-up study, Move! tests of children and young people's physical functional capacity were carried out in 2013–2015 in nine schools. Some 1,500 pupils participated in these tests. Four tests in this battery were carried out in the same way by boys and girls: an endurance test through 20 meter line run, an upper body lift, five continuous jumps and mobility tests. (Sääkslahti et al. 2015.) In two tests (push-ups and throw-catch combination), different instructions were given to girls and boys. In keeping with earlier findings, the research data showed that older pupils display on average better physical properties than their younger peers, and boys had

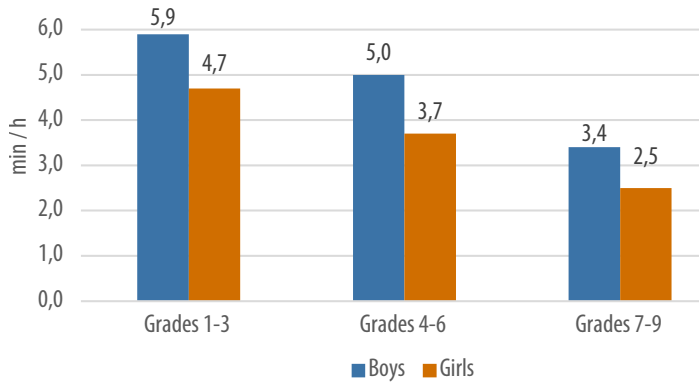
better properties than girls (Malina et al. 2004), with the exception of mobility, in which girls scored better results than boys.

This extensive data set was used not only for research purposes but also to support the introduction of a monitoring and feedback system for physical functional capacity (Move!). This system was introduced nationally in autumn 2016, and as from 2018, it will extend to each grade 5 and 8 pupil studying at the Finnish comprehensive schools. Among other things, the Move! system will provide information on the pupil's physical functional capacity for the purposes of the extensive health examinations carried out in grades 5 and 8. The system comprises physical functional capacity tests carried out at school, individual feedback provided by the teacher and the public health nurse, as well as Harava, a national data collection system. The data collected in a follow-up study on pupils' physical activity and wellbeing were used to establish reference values for the feedback section of the Move! system. Separate reference values were created for girls and boys in different age groups.

### 3.2 Physical activity during the school day

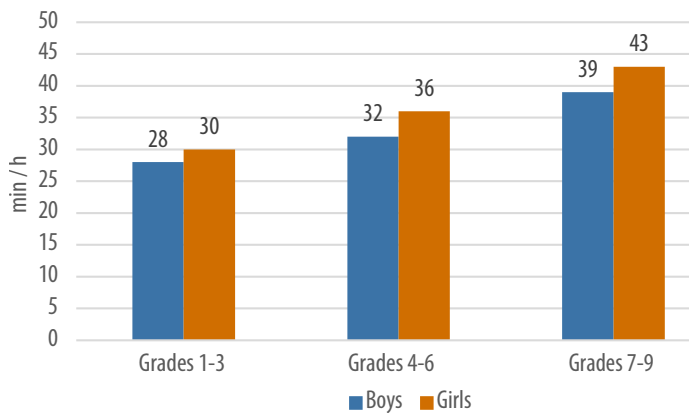
The school has an important role in regulating children and adolescents' physical activity. A study conducted as part of the Schools on the Move programme examined pupils' physical activity separately during the school day and the entire day (Tammelin et al. 2015). On average, the pupils accumulate one third (34%) of the day's moderate physical activity during the school day. For pupils with a low level of physical activity, this proportion is almost one half (42%). Of daily sedentary activities, 47% take place at school.

Boys take part in clearly more physical activity during the school day than girls. The greatest volume of moderate physical activity during the school day was accumulated by boys in grades 1 to 3 (Figure 3). The lowest volumes of moderate activity were accumulated by girls in grades 7 to 9. The greatest gender difference was found in pupils in grades 4 to 6, with boys on average accumulating 1.3 minutes more physical activity per hour than girls. (Tammelin et al. 2015.)



**Figure 8. Moderate physical activity accumulated by girls and boys during the school day (minutes/hour) (Tammelin et al. 2015).**

Girls in all age groups accumulated more sedentary time than boys during the school day (Figure 9) (Tammelin et al. 2015). In grades 1 to 3, the gender difference is 2 minutes per hour, and in grades 4 to 9, it is 4 minutes per hour.



**Figure 9. Sedentary time accumulated by girls and boys during the school day (minutes/hour) (Tammelin et al. 2015).**

Yli-Piipari et al. (2016) compared the levels of physical activity of Finnish and American pupils in grades 1 to 3 (aged 6 to 8 years) during school days that contained physical education classes and other school days. In both countries, girls accumulated more sedentary time than boys, and the gender differences were similar on school days that contained physical education classes and other school days. In both countries, girls and boys accumulated more moderate and vigorous activity on school days that contained physical education classes than on days that did not contain these classes. (Yli-Piipari et al. 2016.)



## Physical activity during recess

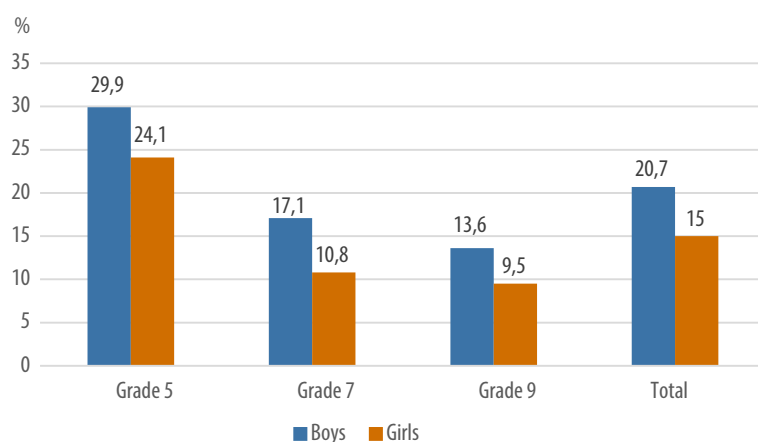
Children and adolescent spend several hours a week on recess, and physical activity during recess can thus comprise a significant share of schoolchildren's physical activity. Participation in physical activity during recess is associated with social factors at school experienced by girls and boys, including peer relationships and the feeling of togetherness, as well as the school's atmosphere (Haapala et al. 2014).

The LIITU study included three questions about physical activity during recess (Rajala et al. 2016). The pupils were asked if they spent their recess time indoors or outdoors. The volume of physical activity during recess was investigated by including two multiple choice questions about what girls and boys usually do at school during the recess in the survey. The findings were disaggregated by grade and gender.

There was little difference between boys and girls regarding where they spent their recess time. Almost all girls and boys in lower comprehensive school spent their recess outdoors, whereas 55% of boys and 45% of girls in grade 7 and 46% of boys and 41% of girls in grade 9 spent their recess outdoors. (Rajala et al. 2016, 46.)

Sitting during the recess was examined separately for recess time spent outdoors and indoors. During recess time spent outdoors, higher comprehensive school pupils spent clearly more time sitting than lower comprehensive pupils. There was little difference between boys and girls. During recess times spent indoors, sitting was significantly more common than during times spent outdoors. A slightly higher proportion of boys than girls spent all or most of their recess sitting. (Rajala et al. 2016, 47.)

The total volume of physical activity accumulated during recess can be described using a physical activity during recess index (see Rajala et al. 2014), which includes walking, games involving physical activity, ball games, participation in instructor-led physical activity during recess as well as leading physical activity during recess. The higher the physical activity during recess index, the higher the volume and intensity of physical activity in which the pupils take part (range 0–63). The reliability of the index describing the total volume of physical activity during recess has been previously studied by comparing it to the volume of physical activity during recess measured by an accelerometer. The values obtained using the two methods were found to be consistent. (Rajala et al. 2014.) Examined by the physical activity during recess index, there is a clear difference between lower and higher comprehensive school pupils and the genders in the volume of physical activity they accumulate during recess (Figure 10). Boys had higher levels of physical activity than girls in all grades.



**Figure 10.** Index describing physical activity during recess accumulated by girls and boys in grades 5, 7 and 9 (range 0–63, n=5,446) (Rajala et al. 2016).

### Perceived social status and physical activity

An adolescent's perceived social status consists of two dimensions: the young person's assessment of his or her ranking in the social hierarchy of the school community, and the young person's assessment of his or her family's status in the societal order (Goodman et al. 2001). There has been little or no research in the link between perceived social status and physical activity.

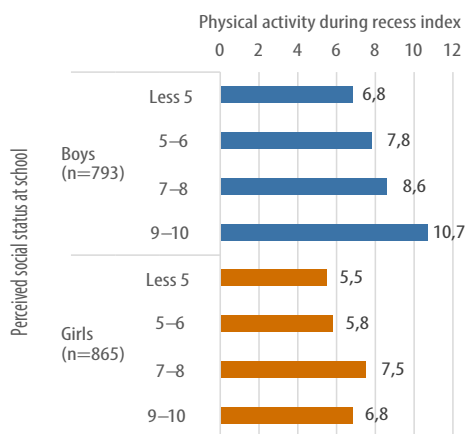
The perceived social status can be measured using a ranking model with ten levels (Goodman et al. 2001), in which the highest levels describe a social status perceived as high, whereas the lower levels describe a low perceived social status. Finnish lower comprehensive school pupils most commonly placed themselves on levels 7 to 8 of the model describing their social ranking in the school community (Table 2). Boys placed themselves on the top level in the school community ranking more frequently than girls. (Rajala et al. 2014.)

**Table 2.** Boys' and girls' perceived social status at school (Rajala et al. 2014).

| Perceived social status at school   | Boys (n=809)     | Girls (n=869)    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Average (Standard deviation)</b> | <b>7,0 (2,1)</b> | <b>6,2 (2,1)</b> |
| Less than 5 (%)                     | 11,2             | 20,7             |
| 5–6 (%)                             | 20,4             | 29,1             |
| 7–8 (%)                             | 47,2             | 39,4             |
| 9–10 (%)                            | 21,1             | 10,8             |

The average of the physical activity during recess index, which measures the total volume of physical activity in which pupils participate during recess, was higher for boys than girls

(8.7 vs. 6.5). In other words, the index shows that boys took part in more physical activity during recess than girls. (Rajala et al. 2014.) The perceived social status at school was associated with physical activity during recess in both boys and girls. Young people with a high perceived status in the school hierarchy were physically more active during recess than those with a lower perceived status (Figure 11). Boys were more physically active than girls at all social status levels. (Rajala et al. 2014.)



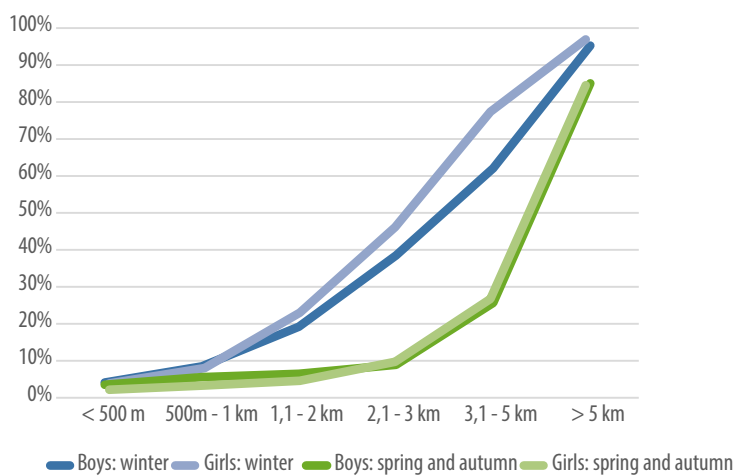
**Figure 11.** Boys' and girls' perceived social status and physical activity during recess according to mean physical activity during recess indices (Rajala et al. 2014).

The study investigated if, in the case of girls, the meanings associated by young people with the facilities differ according to their perceived social status in the school community. Girls with a high perceived social status associated more positive meanings with the school facilities than girls with a lower perceived social status. Girls with a higher status also perceived their scope of physical and social freedom as wider. These differences are linked to interactive relationships between young people. (Rajala et al. 2015.) This may explain why girls with a high perceived social status in the school community take part in more physical activity in the school facilities during the school day than girls with a low perceived social status.

### Active commuting

A study of active commuting to school was carried out as part of the monitoring exercise in the School on the Move programme in 2012–2015 (Kallio et al. 2016a). The study focused on pupils in grades 4 to 9. The total number of participants was 5,107, of whom 51 % were girls and 49 % boys. The data was collected during lessons using an online survey, in which the pupils were asked about the distance they commute to school and the mode of transport used by them in spring/autumn and in winter.

In Finland, the majority of both girls (93 %) and boys (92%) living less than 5 kilometres away from school walk or cycle to school in spring and autumn (Figure 12). In winter, these figures are 75 % for girls and 79% for boys. Travel by motor vehicle becomes more common for both genders when the distance to school is longer. Girls with a short commute are slightly more active than boys in spring and autumn, whereas boys are more active than girls in winter when the distance to school is between 3 and 5 km. The greatest gender differences are found in the choice of mode of transport. Girls walk to school more often than boys, while boys cycle more often than girls, especially in winter. (Kallio et al. 2016a.)



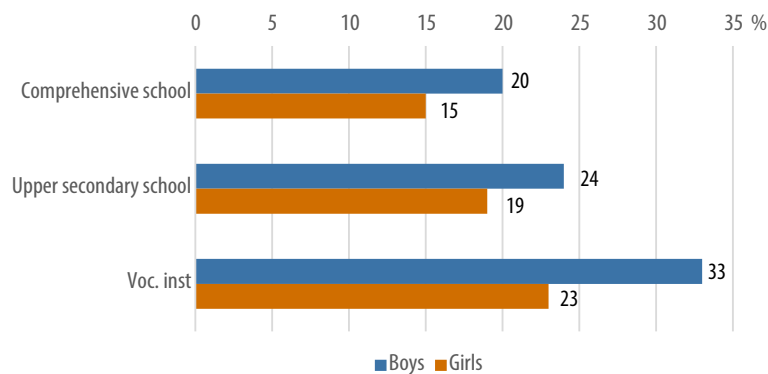
**Figure 12.** Proportion of pupils who commute to school by a motor vehicle itemised by distance to school (%). Separate figures are given for girls and boys in spring (green tones) and in autumn (blue tones). (Kallio et al. 2016a.)

The most recent LIITU survey used the same questions about commuting to school as the Schools on the Move study, and the findings were similar. While active commuting to school is equally common in boys and girls, there are gender differences related to the mode of transport: boys cycle to school more often than girls, whereas girls walk to school more often than boys. This difference is larger in winter, with boys cycling to school three times more often than girls (boys 18% vs. girls 6%). (Kallio et al. 2016b, 50.)

**IN WINTER, BOYS ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO CYCLE TO SCHOOL THAN GIRLS.**

Since 2015, the School Health Promotion Study has contained a question about travel to school: "How long a time do you usually spend walking or cycling on your way to school or home? Also include the distance to the bus stop and from the bus stop to your school/institution and home". This questions provides data on the proportion of those who

travel by light motorbike or car, and the time spent on active commuting estimated by the students. The survey does not analyse the distance travelled or the mode of active transportation. In travel by a motor vehicle, there are clear gender differences: boys are more likely to travel to school by a motor vehicle than girls (Figure 13). Students at vocational institutions, both girls and boys, are the most likely to travel by motor vehicle: 33 % of boys and 23% of girls travel the whole distance by a light motorcycle or car.



**Figure 13.** Proportion of girls and boys who commute to school by a motor vehicle at comprehensive schools, general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions (Voc. inst) (National Institute for Health and Welfare THL 2015).

## Physical activity and learning

The decline of physical fitness and low levels of physical activity in children and adolescents have given rise to concerns over the impacts that a sedentary lifestyle and deteriorating fitness levels will have – not only on children and adolescents’ health but also their learning and academic success. In earlier studies, a higher volume of physical activity and good level of cardiorespiratory fitness have been linked to better cognitive function and learning outcomes.

A study titled Physical activity, the brain and learning investigated associations between academic success and various areas of physical functional capacity, including endurance, strength, speed, mobility and motor skills. The participants comprised 605 pupils in grades 4 to 7 (average age 13.0 years, 49 % girls) in spring 2013. In this study, a positive correlation was found between academic success and a good level of cardiorespiratory fitness, lower limb strength and speed properties, upper body strength and body mobility. These associations were mainly the same in girls and boys. (Syväoja et al. 2015.)

In studies of physical activity and learning, the associations frequently are very similar in girls and boys, and the studies often conclude by reporting the associations in the same model, controlled for gender. As expected, the effect size of the association between

physical activity and learning is small, and a large body of data is needed to demonstrate it. By analysing the data for girls and boys together, a greater statistical strength can be achieved than by analysing their data separately. If the associations are similar in girls and boys, a combined analysis is justified. In this case, the level difference between the genders in the average value (response) must be controlled for. The associations may also be presented separately for girls and boys, but the combined effect of physical activity and gender is rarely tested for. Only an examination of the combined effects would show whether the associations are different in girls and boys.

### School staff

A staff survey conducted as part of the Schools on the Move programme in spring 2017 (n=3,687) did not reveal significant differences between the attitudes of women and men towards including more physical activity in the school day. Most women and men working in schools have a positive attitude towards the Schools on the Move actions.

In the staff survey, a gender difference came up in questions about teachers' personal actions for promoting physical activity during the school day (n=3,062). A clearly larger proportion of women than men use activity-based methods in most or all lessons and break up the pupils' continuous sedentary periods.

## 3.3 Adults

Finnish adults' physical activity in their leisure time has been monitored regularly by means of different surveys. Currently, data collected through surveys and other self-assessment methods are not considered to give a true picture of the population's physical activity as a whole. International studies based on objective measurements have shown that in self-reported data, the volume and intensity of physical activity is often overestimated (e.g. Hagstowner et al. 2010; van Poppel et al. 2010) and, on the other hand, sedentary time is underestimated (e.g. Clark et al. 2009; Healy et al. 2011). In particular, investigating random, short-term physical activity that takes place between other activities, or obtaining information about short breaks in sitting, which may play a significant role in preventing health harms caused by sedentary activities, by means of self-assessment methods is difficult (e.g. de Duviervier et al. 2013; Thosar et al. 2015). A precondition for reliably measuring physical activity and sedentary behaviours is the use of objective measuring methods, including accelerometers, in addition to self-assessments (Hallal et al. 2012; Husu et al. 2014; Thorp et al. 2011). It is currently recommended that raw acceleration data should be collected without pre-defined, difficult-to-interpret units (e.g. counts/min) (Bassett et al. 2012; Intille 2012; Matthews et al. 2012). The use of authentic

acceleration data would enable reliable comparisons between monitors produced by different manufacturers and different types of activity (Husu et al. 2014).

The independent significance of sedentary behaviours, or inactivity, for national health has only been recognised in recent years. The latest research findings have shown that sedentary behaviour, which is often described as the time spent sitting, is a health risk factor in adults, independently of their volume of moderate and vigorous physical activity (e.g. Katzmarzyk et al. 2009; Koster et al. 2012; Patel et al. 2010; Thorp et al. 2011). The data collected on sedentary behaviours in Finnish adults are not yet as comprehensive as the data on physical activity (Husu et al. 2014).

### Women's and men's physical activity measured by accelerometer

In Finland, accelerometers were used for the first time to study the physical activity of adults at the population level as part of the National Institute for Health and Welfare's Health 2011 study (Husu et al. 2014; Husu et al. 2016c). The target group of the study were adults aged 18 to 85; in other words, the group included both working age subjects and pensioners. The study used Hookie AM 20 accelerometer, and the analysis included subjects who had worn the monitor successfully at least for four days and for at minimum 10 hours a day (n=1,587). The accelerometer collects tri-axial raw data (100 samples/s) on all movements measured in actual g-units. The acceleration data analysis algorithms recognise periods of activity at different intensity levels and inactivity as well as the duration of the activity. Based on the collected data, physical activity was classified in three categories: light, moderate and vigorous. Steps were identified by calculating the impulse derived from acceleration. The subject needed to walk at roughly the speed of 3 km/h to create an impulse that was classified as a step. If a float phase was detected in the acceleration signal between consecutive steps, the step was classified as running. As sedentary time was classified any time spent sitting, lying and standing during the waking hours.

In the Health 2011 survey, the participants' average age was 52 years, and 57 % of them were women. According to objective measurements (Husu et al. 2014; Husu et al. 2016c), women and men spend most of their waking hours in sedentary pursuits, or sitting, lying or standing. The majority of physical activity is light and fails to reach the level of health-enhancing physical activity indicated by the current recommendations. Men accumulated more moderate or vigorous physical activity in all age groups. No significant gender differences were observed in the volume of light physical activity. Both highly active and highly inactive women and men were found in all age groups. While younger participants accumulated more moderate or vigorous physical activity than older subjects, there were major individual variations, especially in men aged under 30.

The ESTER study (Preterm Birth, Pregnancy and Offspring Health in Adult Life) measured the physical activity of young adults using an accelerometer in 2009–2011. The participants comprised 224 men and 314 women aged 19 to 26. Women accumulated more light physical activity than men (Kantomaa et al. 2016), while men accumulated more moderate or vigorous physical activity. The difference between the genders regarding moderate and vigorous physical activity was eliminated if the activity was required to be sustained (for a minimum of 10 minutes). This finding supports the idea that men and women engage in different types of physical activity.

**MEN ACCUMULATE MORE MODERATE AND VIGOROUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING THE DAY THAN WOMEN. WOMEN ACCUMULATE MORE LIGHT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.**

The LASERI study (Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study) measured steps accumulated by adults in 2007 and 2011. In 2011, 392 men and 641 women participated in the measurements. Women took more steps during the day than men. Women accumulated 8,029 and men 7,049 steps a day (median value, Salin et al. 2015). In the Health 2011 study, on the other hand, men accumulated more steps than women on average (Husu et al. 2014). The results may be influenced by the representativeness of the subjects. Only one third of those invited to participated in the Health 2011 study produced sufficient amounts of accelerometer data, which limits the generalisation of the results. Those who wore the monitor for sufficient periods were more highly educated on average and had better perceived health than those who used the monitor insufficiently or not at all. Of men aged 30 to 44, only 36% of those invited to participate in the study actually took part, which may affect the representativeness of the results.

According to Health 2011 results, men spent on average more time sitting than women (8 h 40 min/day vs. 8 h 4 min/day). Women accumulated fewer extended periods of sitting ( $\geq 30$  min) than men. Women also spent more time standing than men. Women stood up on average three times more often than men, breaking up continuous sedentary periods. (Husu et al. 2016.)

**MEN SPENT A TOTAL OF 8 HOURS AND 40 MINUTES AND WOMEN 8 HOURS AND 4 MINUTES A DAY SITTING.**

In the Health 2011 study, fewer than one out of four participants met the recommendation for physical activity that improves cardiorespiratory fitness, which is considerably less than what has been reported in earlier surveys. According to objective measurements, women



met the recommendation more often than men in the age groups 18–39 and 50–59, whereas men met the recommendation more often than women in the age groups 40–49 and 60 or over. (Husu et al. 2014.)

The subject set of the Health 2011 study showed higher average volumes of moderate and vigorous physical activity than subjects in prior international studies (e.g. Hansen et al. 2012; Healy et al. 2008; Spittaels et al. 2012), but making comparisons between the studies is difficult, as the accelerometer used in this study is not in wide-spread use, and analysis methods and threshold values vary in different studies. As a drawback of accelerometers can be considered their inability to reliably recognise activity produced by movements of the lower or higher limbs when the body is not in an upright position, and the fact that they are not waterproof. For these reasons, the instruments cannot record the actual intensity of such activities as training in the gym, yoga and swimming. The current analysis algorithms are also inaccurate when measuring the intensity of cycling and skiing. (Husu et al. 2014.)

ERMA, a study of associations between female reproductive health and physical activity, has measured objectively the physical activity of women aged 48 to 55. In this study, 703 women were instructed to wear an ActiGraph monitor during their waking hours for seven consecutive days. As the limit for acceptable data was specified wearing the instrument for 10 hours on at least four days. 94% of the participants wore the monitor on all seven days, on average for 15 hours a day. 39% of the subjects accumulated the recommended 150 minutes of MVPA a week. Some of the variations in the volume of physical activity were explained by pelvic floor and menopause symptoms, which should be taken into account in efforts to promote physical activity. (Laakkonen et al. 2017.)

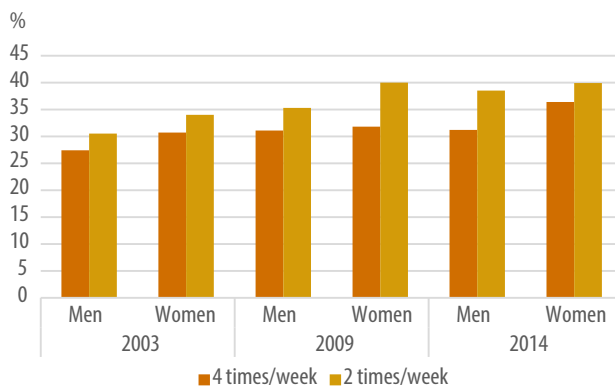
## Women's and men's physical activity according to surveys

The health and lifestyles of working-age people (aged 15 to 64) have been monitored through annual AVTK (Health Behaviour and Health among the Finnish Adult Population) postal surveys in 1978–2014. Attitudes towards responding to postal surveys have changed during this period: 17 % of men and 14% of women did not respond to the first survey carried out. In 2014, 41 % of women and as many as 54% of men failed to respond (Helldán & Helakorpi 2015, 10). Since 2015, the AVTK survey has been incorporated in the Regional Health and Wellbeing survey (ATH) used to monitor changes in the wellbeing and health of the population and different population groups. Up till 2014, the EVTK survey (Health Behaviour and Health among the Finnish Retirement-Age Population) produced information on the physical activity of people in retirement age. The EVTK was carried out as a postal survey every second year from 1985. In 1985–1989, the survey targeted those aged 65 to 79, and in 1993–2013, it focused on the 65 to 84 age group. Since 2015,

the EVTK survey has also been incorporated in the Regional Health and Wellbeing survey (ATH). As from autumn 2017, the ATH survey continues under the name FinSote survey.

According to the AVTK survey, both men and women have increased their participation in leisure time physical activity since the late 1970s, whereas active commuting has declined. While leisure time physical activity has increased in all groups with different levels of education, men with the highest level of education take part in leisure time physical activity slightly more than men with lower levels of education. In women, on the other hand, differences in physical activity between groups with various levels of education remain minor. (Helldán & Helakorpi 2015.)

In 2014, 54 % of men and 60% of women reported that they take part in physical activity in their leisure time at least three times a week. The lowest levels of leisure time physical activity of this type were reported by the age group 35 to 44: 48 % of men and 55 % of women. 70 % of men and 76 % of women said they take part in leisure time physical activity for at least half an hour at a time at minimum twice a week, while 31% of men and 36 % of women reported that they do so at least four times a week. The proportion of those who take part in physical activity in their leisure time at least four times a week has remained more or less the same since the mid-1990s, or the year from which the AVTK survey has been monitoring this trend. (Helldán & Helakorpi 2015, 19–20.) For the proportion of men and women who take part in physical activity in their leisure time at minimum two and at minimum four times a week in 2013–2014, see Figure 14.

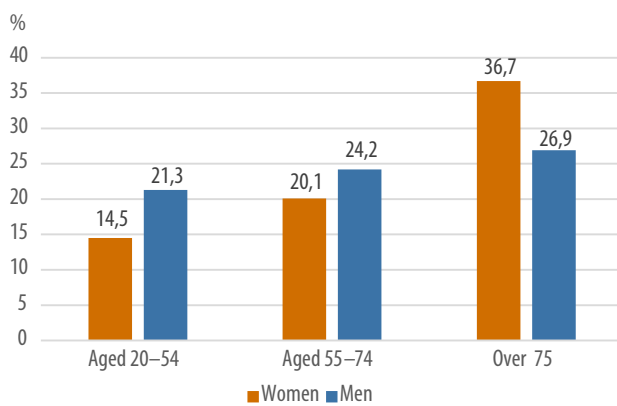


**Figure 14.** Proportion of those who participate in leisure time physical activity for at least half an hour at a time at minimum twice and at minimum four times a week among men and women aged 15 to 64 in 2003–2014 according to the AVTK survey (Helakorpi et al. 2003; Helakorpi et al. 2010; Helldán & Helakorpi 2015).

Active commuting is more popular among women than men. 32 % of men who work reported that they walk or cycle for at minimum 15 minutes a day while commuting, whereas this figure for women was 41 %. 15 % of both men and women cycled or walked for at minimum 30 minutes a day while commuting. (Helldán & Helakorpi 2015, 19–20.)

The results of the ATH (Regional Health and Wellbeing) survey are presented as time series reports on the free web service of the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). In this survey, five indicators of physical activity are used: 1) the proportion of those who regularly take part in physical activity for fitness for several hours a week (%), 2) the proportion of those who do not take part in physical activity in their leisure time (%), 3) those who meet the recommendation for physical activity that improves cardiorespiratory fitness and muscular fitness training (%), 4) those who partially meet the recommendation for physical activity that improves cardiorespiratory fitness and muscular fitness training (%), and 5) those who do not meet the recommendation for physical activity that improves cardiorespiratory fitness and muscular fitness training (%). The answers can be disaggregated by gender and also, for example, by age group, region or level of education. (Kaikkonen et al. 2015; Murto et al. 2016.)

In the ATH survey, 25 % of men and 20% of women say they take part in physical activity that improves their fitness regularly for several hours a week, while 23% of men and 19 % of women report that they take part in no physical activity in their leisure time. This proportion grows towards the older age groups (Figure 15). In the age group 20–74, a greater share of men than women report that they do not take part in physical activity in their leisure time, but in the age group 75 or over, a greater proportion of women than men report not taking part in physical activity. (Kaikkonen et al. 2015.) The proportion of those who do not take part in physical activity grows further towards the older age groups. According to the THL report (2014), 49 % of women and 34 % of men aged 80 or over say they do not take part in physical activity (Sainio et al. 2014).



**Figure 15.** Proportion of women and men (%) who do not take part in leisure time physical activity by age group according to the ATH survey (Kaikkonen 2015).

The results of the Health 2011 survey (Mäkinen et al. 2012) are similar to the AVTK and ATH survey data: working-age women take part in physical activity in their leisure time more often than men, but in retirement age, the roles are reversed. Active commuting is more typical of women. More than one out of four women aged 30 to 64, but only one out of six men, reported that they walk or cycle to work. While active commuting became

less common in men as they aged, there were no differences between the age groups in women. (Mäkinen et al. 2012.)

The volume of physical activity in leisure time was the lowest for those aged 75 or over: 42 % of men and 55% of women reported that they participate in no physical activity in their leisure time. The proportions of those who do not take part in physical activity were also large in younger age groups: one third of men aged 30 to 64 and women aged 45 to 54 did not take part in physical activity in their leisure time. (Mäkinen et al. 2012.)

The Health 2011 survey and the ATH survey examined compliance with the recommendation for health-enhancing physical activity (Kaikkonen et al. 2015; Mäkinen et al. 2012). According to the ATH survey, 15% of men and 20% of women meet the recommendation for physical activity (Kaikkonen 2015). These figures were lower in the Health 2011 survey; in particular, the researchers find it alarming that 90% of Finnish people do not accumulate the recommended quantity of health-enhancing physical activity. There were no significant differences between the genders. (Mäkinen et al. 2012.)

Stenholm et al. (2016) have investigated changes in physical activity after retirement. The subjects were 9,488 public sector employees who retired in 2000–2011. Data was collected four times, the time range being 10 years before retirement and 10 years after retirement. The four variables of physical activity (total activity level, moderate physical activity, vigorous physical activity and inactivity) were calculated separately for men and women. While the article published on the study does not discuss the differences between men and women in detail, gender differences are presented in its attachments. The findings show that, on average, men are more active than women. The trends for the four variables of physical activity are quite similar in men and women. The frequency and intensity of physical activity display very similar changes in men and women: immediately before retirement age, women's and men's physical activity declines, whereas it increases after retirement and begins to decline again after a few years spent in retirement. (Stenholm et al. 2016.)

In older persons, the gap between wishing to be active and actually participating in physical activity widens. The shrinking life-space reduces their autonomy and undermines their quality of life. The role of an informal carer may also shrink an individual's life-space. (Rantakokko 2017.)

## Women's and men's physical fitness

The sub-sample on exercise in the Health 2011 survey measured for the first time the physical fitness of women and men aged 18 to 74 in a large sample representing the entire population. The measurements were carried out using the health-related fitness tests of

the UKK Institute, whose results provide information on an individual's preconditions for physical functional capacity and predict future health and functional capacity. The fitness test battery contains four different tests: a one-leg stand, jump-and-reach, modified push-up and six-minute walk test. At least one health-related fitness test was successfully completed by 809 men and 1,009 women. The results obtained by men in all health-related fitness tests were, on average, better than women's results. In particular, men performed better than women in the jump-and-reach test and walk test. In both men and women, older age groups displayed a lower average level of fitness than younger groups. (Suni et al. 2012.)

The Fit for Life programme has published test results for adults measured during a tour titled On the road to fitness (Matka hyvään kuntoon) in 40 localities in autumn 2016. This set comprises data on 6,683 women and 4,503 men in total. 50% of the women and 40 % of the men reported that they feel unreasonably tired after their working day from time to time. The higher their level of physical fitness and the better their perceived ability to work, the less often they felt fatigued. (Results of the On the road to fitness tour in 2016.)

In tests carried out by the Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health LIKES in 2007–2017 (12,060 women and 18,888 men), 45% of women and 42% of men reported feeling unreasonably fatigued after their working day from time to time. Results describing cardiorespiratory fitness were obtained from 53,459 subjects. In this data, the average maximal oxygen uptake (VO<sub>2</sub>max) is 33.9 ml/kg/ min for women and 40.2 ml/kg/min for men. Approximately 70 % of both men and women have the recommended level of cardiorespiratory fitness. (Unpublished data.)

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Boys take more exercise and exercise more intensively than girls. While this gender difference can already be observed in 3-year-olds, it reaches its peak in lower comprehensive school and becomes less prominent in teenage years.
- A larger proportion of boys than girls meet the recommended level of physical activity in all age groups.
- Boys have better physical functional capacity properties than girls.
- Men accumulate more moderate or vigorous physical activity than women.
- Women accumulate more steps and light physical activity than men.
- Women and men spend most of their day sitting, lying or standing. Men spend more time sitting than women.
- In health-related fitness tests, men score better results on average than women.

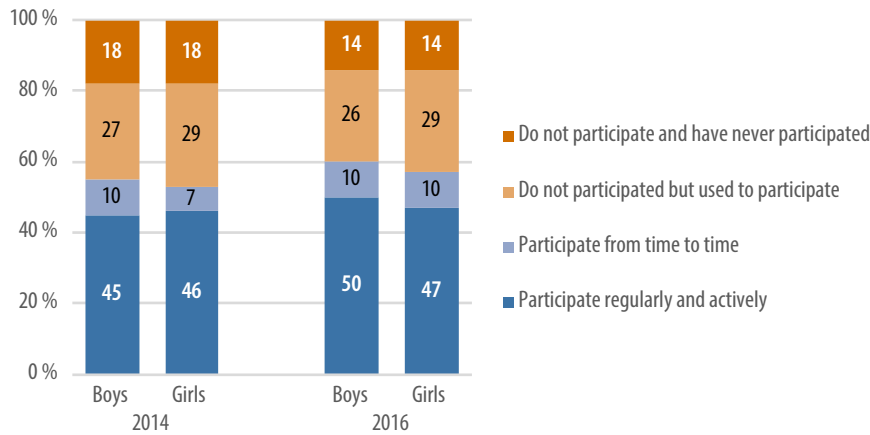
## 4 Men's and women's different choices of sport

Demonstrating the vitality of the sports and physical activity sector by keeping statistics on the activities has been seen as an instrument of societal justification for physical activity (National Sports Council 2013). Having and using this knowledge base are a precondition for developing NGO activities. The data in the registers is disaggregated by gender. The use sports organisations themselves make of this data is essential in terms of their development.

### 4.1 Participation in sports club activities

Sports club activities continue to play a major role in encouraging children and adolescents' participation in physical activity and offering leisure activities. The majority of both girls and boys take part in sports club activities at some stage of their childhood or teenage years.

In the LIITU survey (n=4,550), 60 % of boys and 57% of girls aged 9 to 15 participated in sports club activities in 2016 (Figure 16). The survey interpreted the results to mean that both boys and girls were more likely to take part in sports club activities in 2016 than in 2014. (Mononen et al. 2016, 29–30.)



**Figure 16.** Proportion of girls and boys who participated in sports club activities in 2014 (n=2,736) and in 2016 (n=4,550) in the LIITU survey (Mononen et al. 2016).

According to the Study of young people's leisure activities (n=1,118), 37 % of boys and 33% of girls participate in sports club activities (Merikivi et al. 2016, 84). These figures are clearly lower than the LIITU survey results, as the Study of young people's leisure activities targets a wider age group (7 to 29 years), and participation in organised activities is known to decline as young people grow older.

Dropping out of sports club activities appears to progress faster, both among girls and boys, in the Study of young people's leisure activities than in other surveys (e.g. Aira et al. 2013; Myllyniemi & Berg 2013). According to the Study of young people's leisure activities, the average age of dropping out of club activities is 14.8 for girls and 14.3 for boys. Young children also drop out, but the peak period among both genders is between the ages 14 and 15. 26 % of 15-year-old girls and only 22 % of boys at this age reported that they participated in sports club activities; in other words, more than one half of boys drop out after turning 14. (Merikivi et al. 2016, 85-87.) The report on the Study of young people's leisure activities conjectures that the findings indicate a transition in participation in sports club activities, as a result of which fewer and fewer young people, or as few as approximately one out of four, continue to participate at the age of 15. Even if boys' participation rate recovers slightly in older age groups, the decline in numbers during the teenage years is steep. The results have prompted researchers to consider why such great numbers of teenagers drop out of club activities. As explanations have been suggested the cost of participating, increased competitiveness in clubs, and a declining interest in participation in sports club activities among those aged 15 to 19. (Merikivi et al. 2016).

Differences between the genders can be observed in the choice of sports club activities. According to the LIITU survey, the most popular first sports are football (38% of respondents), ice hockey (13%) and floorball (12%) among boys, and dance (17%), gymnastics (15%) and horse riding (13%) among girls. The most popular main sports for

boys were football (27 %), floorball (15 %) and ice hockey (14 %), which stand out among other sports. The fourth most popular sport for boys was basketball (3 %). The most popular main sports in which girls participated in clubs were dance (17 %), horse riding (16 %), football (10 %) and gymnastics (9 %). There were no gender differences in the number of sports in which young people participated. (Mononen et al. 2016, 28, 119.)

Some gender differences were found regarding the number of training sessions completed by children and adolescents who participate in sports club activities. A larger proportion of girls train under a coach once a week, whereas a greater proportion of boys train under a coach four times a week. Three out of five boys and approximately one out of two girls reported that they complete at least two unstructured training sessions a week in their main sport. Girls were the majority among respondents who said they do no unstructured training. The LIITU survey indicates that boys participate in slightly more training sessions, both coach-led and unstructured training. The duration of an unstructured training session was longer for boys (77 minutes) than for girls (63 minutes). (Mononen et al. 2016, 30–31.)

The majority (76%) of girls and boys who take part in sports club activities (n = 3,054) participated, or had participated in the most recent season, in competitions. Boys participated in both local or regional and national level classes or competitions more often than girls. A larger proportion of girls did not compete at all, or only participated in amateur level competitions. (Mononen et al. 2016, 31-32.) Of those who participated in sports club activities, a larger proportion of boys than girls had competitive goals, or an ambition to be successful at the junior or senior level, either in national or international events. 31% of boys and 41% of girls had no competitive goals. (Mononen et al. 2016, 32.)

At the beginning of 2017, the National Sports Club of the Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities had 850 children or adolescents as its members, of whom 36 % were girls. In 2016, 367 applications were received by the Valtti programme, in which a personal instructor or a consultant guides a child in need of special support in a sport. One third of the applicants were girls. In national teams in sports for persons with disabilities, the proportion of women is lower than this. The low participant numbers in competitions lead to a vicious circle: events are cancelled and classes are combined. (Saari 2017.)

## 4.2 Gender distribution in national sports federation licences

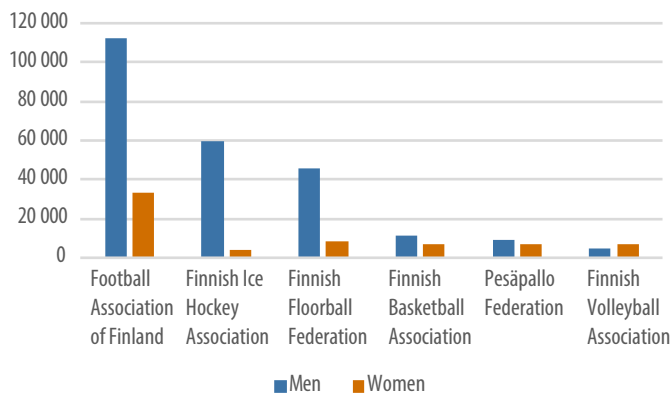
Sports federations' licence systems provide information on gender distribution in different sports. The licence systems are specific to individual sports, and there are significant differences between them. The grounds of recording and keeping statistics on the licences vary, and each federation maintains its own system as indicated by the needs of its sport.



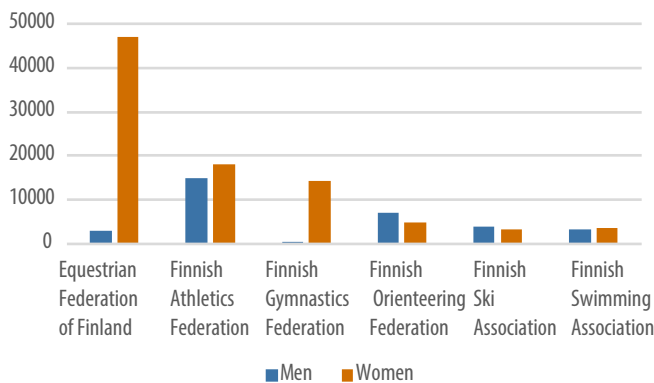
This restricts the possibilities of using the data, and participant numbers in different sports cannot be compared reliably.

The sports federation licence data discussed in this report are based on survey data collected by the Research Institute for Olympic Sports KIHU and the Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health LIKES as well as the so-called sports federation scorecard data. Both licence data sets consist of data reported by the federations.

In terms of licence numbers, football attracts the highest number of participants, or more than 140,000 players with a licence. 77% of the football licences are held by men and 23% by women. In major team sports, men are a clear majority (Figure 17). In individual sports, the gender distribution appears to be more balanced than in team sports (Figure 18). Of individual sports, gymnastics, horse riding and figure skating are clearly dominated by women.



**Figure 17.** Number of licences held by men and women in six of the largest team sports.



**Figure 18.** Number of licences held by men and women in six of the largest individual sports.

The licence system is only one way of obtaining information on the gender distribution in different sports. In a number of sports, the licence system does not reveal the overall participant profile, as organised participation is also possible without a licence. A large number of participants in gymnastics, for instance, are not included in the licence system, and clubs, regions and federations organise their own events, where no licence is required. In 2016, the Finnish Gymnastics Federation distributed to clubs 48,275 gymnastics passports intended for children, which is more than three times the number of its licences. In orienteering, the participant numbers are also many times higher than the number of licences issued, as a great volume of orienteers participate in weekly evening events, where no licence or club memberships is required.

### 4.3 Licence data as a tool for developing sports

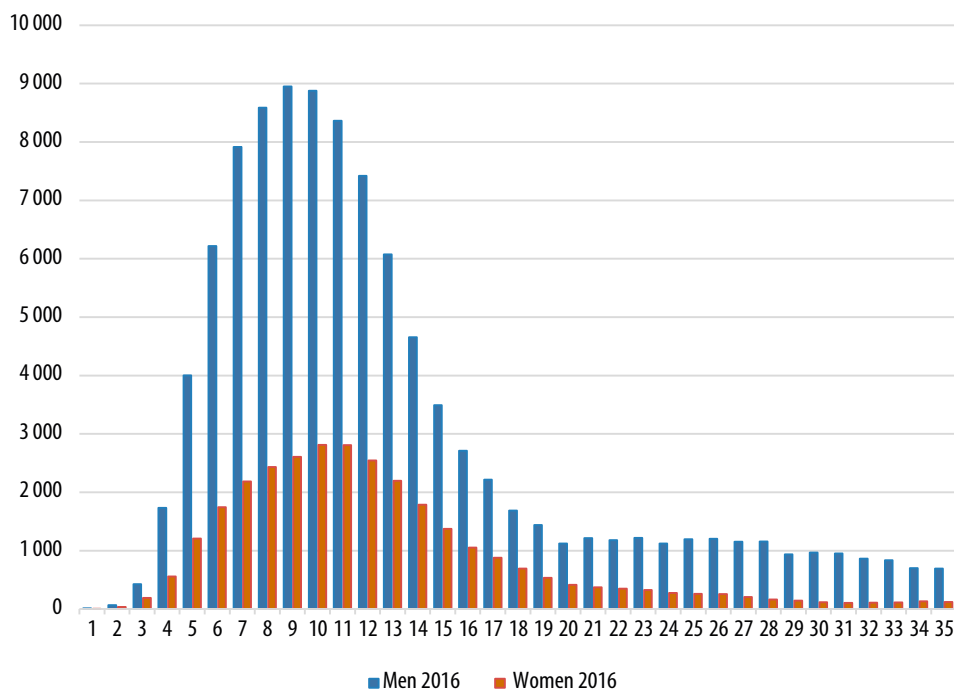
The registration of participants – usually using a licence system – offers concrete information on how women and men participate in a sports federation's activities. Rather than being written in stone, the number of participants and their gender distribution can be changed. The licence system may serve as a source of monitoring data and thus a development tool for a sports federation when aiming to increase the participant numbers and the proportion of the minority gender.

#### Football

In the Football Association of Finland, data obtained from the licence system have been methodically used to develop the sport since the early 2000s. Based on the licence data, trends in player numbers have been monitored by year, gender and region. Football is one of the sports that have managed to alter their gender distribution the most rapidly. The number of female football players already started growing in the late 1980s, and this growth gathered momentum in the early 2000s. The National Sports Survey (2007) had shown that interest in starting the sport continued to be greater than the actual participant numbers. The Football Association of Finland was able to increase the number of female players rapidly, among other things through its own club development programmes. An additional target was attracting girls to the sport at an earlier age, as they tended to start playing later than boys. Such interventions as the Princess soccer concept borrowed from Denmark have helped to respond to this need (Hokka 2014). The Association also managed to harness women's European Championships, which took place in Helsinki, in the efforts to promote girls' football activities (Hakamäki 2014). Work aiming to promote girls' and women's participation in football also continues at the international level. In June 2017, the Union of European Football Associations UEFA launched its new campaign, Together #WePlayStrong, to promote girls' and women's football. While the Football Association of

Finland is satisfied with the increased number of girl players, it would also like to see more women participating in club and federation activities. Considering the number of players, women are underrepresented, especially in decision-making and coaching. As a response, football management training for women was launched in 2015. (Korsberg 2017.)

See Figure 19 for the number of football licences disaggregated by age and gender in 2016. The Figure contains information on not only the numbers of girls and boys but also such aspects as the age at which children start to play or drop out. In this example, the highest numbers of licences are held by boys at the approximate age of 9 and girls at the age of 10. The graph that describes dropping out is steeper for boys than girls; in other words, the number of players starts to decline earlier for boys than for girls. The graph for most sports would be similar in shape: the peak number of licences is held by participants aged 10 to 12, after which age the number starts declining.



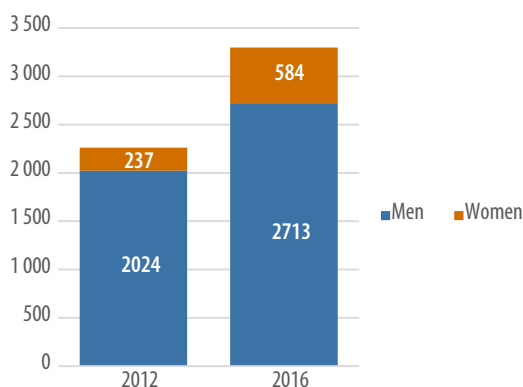
**Figure 19.** Football Association of Finland's registered players in 2016 by age and gender.

## American football

In recent years, the American Football Association of Finland (SAJL) has focused attention on gender equality. Developing league activities for women and girls has had a high profile in the federation's strategy. The federation began the preparation of the gender equality plan required of sports organisations in the context of its strategy work in autumn 2015 and the planning of activities for 2016. The plan addresses means for promoting gender equality and preventing gender discrimination. The first step in the preparation of the equality

plan was conducting a survey to chart the current status of equality in the federation. The survey was sent to 51 SAJL actors: the board, the staff, the committees, national team actors, volunteers and league managers. In total, 34 persons (66.7 %) responded to the survey (22 men, 8 women, 2 other/did not wish to disclose and 2 who left this section blank). Among other things, the survey contained questions about areas of equality that, in the respondents' view, should be developed. 36.7% found gender equality an important or highly important area. Regarding gender equality, the plan proposes the following actions: 1) continuing the work aiming to increase the number of female coaches that started with the Coaches like a woman project, 2) launching activities for girls and junior players, 3) focus on developing a women's league, and 4) updating the instructions for the participation of those having undergone gender reassignment. The federation's plan was adopted at the spring AGM in 2016. (SAJL 2016.)

American football is an aggressive contact sport that combines strength and tactics. It has a masculine history and reputation. Men are predominant in the past exploits of the sport, and its culture is rife with masculine terms. The first American football matches in Finland were played in the mid-1970s. At that time, there were no female participants. The American Football Association of Finland was established in 1979. In 1990, the Association had 2,045 players, all of whom were men. Women and girls were involved in the Association's cheerleader and flag football activities. A women's league was played for the first time in 1998 with six teams participating. In 2003, the women's league attracted 11 teams, and the number of players had grown to nearly 200. (Halttunen et al. 2009.) In 2016, an American football licence was held by 584 women and 2,713 men (Figure 20). The number of participants in this sport has increased significantly as a whole in recent years, both among men and women. The proportion of licences issued to women increased from 10% to 18% in 2012–2016.



**Figure 20.** American football licences issued to men and women in 2012 and 2016.

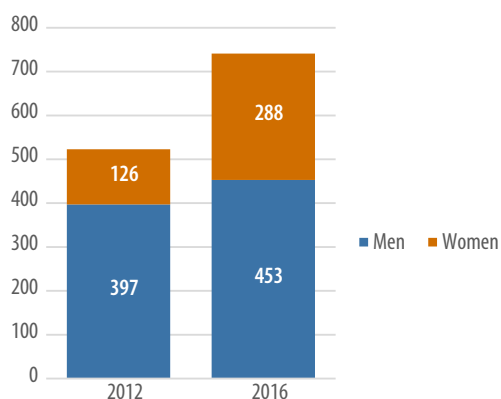
## Weightlifting

In weightlifting, 288 licences are currently held by women and 453 by men (Figure 21). While weightlifting has traditionally been a sport dominated by men, the number of

women has clearly increased in the last decade. In 2004, 14 % of weightlifting licence holders were women, in 2012 their proportion had increased to 24 %, and today 39% of weightlifting and kettlebell sport licences are held by women. Kettlebell sport and crossfit, in particular, have attracted more female participants to weightlifting.

Established in 1934, the Finnish Weightlifting Federation has served as the Finnish umbrella organisation for the sport ever since. Kettlebell sport was added to the federation's range of sports in 2008, increasing the number of female participants in the federation's sports. The introduction of crossfit in Finland also drew more participants to weightlifting in the 2000s. In the 2000s, the Finnish Weightlifting Federation started to pay attention to promoting gender equality. The Federation published its equality plan in 2008 and non-discrimination plan in 2016. (Finnish Weightlifting Federation 2016.)

The Finnish Weightlifting Federation's non-discrimination plan (Finnish Weightlifting Federation 2016) describes the Federation's current status regarding the gender perspective. Two of the eight members in the Federation's Board, or 25 %, represent kettlebell sport. One of these members is a woman. The Federation's rules specify that the Board has one quota member representing the minority gender. By comparison, the greatest proportion of women can be found in the committees that prepare the decisions (33%). It is estimated that the proportion of female coaches and referees is in the same range, even though the Federation cannot produce exact figures. Both genders are represented among the federation's staff, which consists of one man and two women. The plan notes that "female actors may influence the activities, helping to attract more female participants to the sport". In its non-discrimination plan, the Finnish Weightlifting Federation also sets the target of at least 40 % of the members in its board, committees, working groups and other similar preparation, planning and decision-making bodies being women. (Finnish Weightlifting Federation 2016.)



**Figure 21.** Weightlifting licences issued to men and women in 2012 and 2016.

## 5 High performance sports

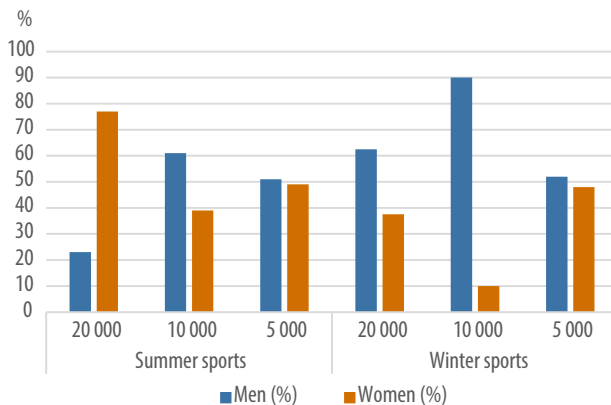
### 5.1 Athletes

For the last 20 years or so, engaging in high performance sports has been seen as an occupation in Finland. According to the Federation of Accident Insurance Institutions, there was a total of 1,195 insured professional athletes in Finland in 2013. Based on these statistics, professional sports are to a great extent dominated by men in Finland, as women account for as little as 2 % of the total number of professional athletes (18 persons). In 2010–2013, there have been between 10 and 18 female professional athletes in Finland every year. Most professionals are ice hockey and football players. These statistics include few top athletes successful in individual sports, as they do not have a specific employer obliged to take out insurance for them. Athletes in individual sports thus have the same status as either entrepreneurs or self-employed workers in creative sectors. (Lämsä 2014.)

The Ministry of Education and Culture annually disburses coaching and training grants to athletes with the aim of allowing them to concentrate fully on their training. The grant amount is either EUR 5,000, 10,000 or 20,000 a year. The special features of different sports, their international appreciation and standard, and the number of participating countries and athletes are taken into account when disbursing these grants. On discretionary grounds, both women's and men's potential for being successful in each sport is taken into account, with the aim of promoting gender equality in high performance sports. These grants have been available since 1996, and the beneficiary's gender has been recorded since 2006. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a, b.) For the gender distribution of the grants in 2017, see Figure 22. In 2017, 44 % of all grants (n=216) went to female and 56% to male athletes. 49 % of grants for summer sports and 36 % for winter sports were received by women. The distribution of grants has, over the years, been more equal in summer sports than in winter sports.

The largest grant amount of EUR 20,000 is primarily intended for athletes in individual sports pursuing the very highest international level (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a, b). A larger number of the EUR 20,000 grants went to women (55%) than to men

(45%). EUR 10,000 grants may be given to athletes who have been successful in major international competitions or other events of a similar standard and who are assessed as having potential for winning medals in future major competitions. This grant may also be given to particularly talented young athletes with promising careers estimated to have potential for success in the adult classes of major competitions in the future (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a, b). Of the EUR 10,000 grants, 29% went to women and 71% to men. The small EUR 5,000 grant is intended for young athletes who are expected to have potential for success in major events in the future based on other than the aforementioned international merits and the development of their athletic careers. A grant may also be given to athletes in individual sports who, based on international merits, are estimated to have potential for winning medals in team or relay events at the following Olympics, Paralympics or World Championships of their sport (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a, b). The gender distribution of the EUR 5,000 grants is the most balanced of all grant types: 49 % went to women, while 51 % went to men.



**Figure 22.** Proportion of male and female athletes (%) in summer and winter sports who received coaching and training grants in three different grant categories in 2017.

Table 3 shows the number of athletes who received a grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the proportion of women, and the grant amount in Euro. The total amount of the grants has increased in the 2000s, exceeding EUR 1.8 million in 2017. The number of beneficiaries has grown significantly since the new EUR 5,000 grant was introduced in 2014. The data for the table comes from figures given in a report titled Sports Services in the Light of Statistics, which is published annually by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

**Table 3. Number of athletes who received coaching and training grants and the proportion of women in 2006–2017.**

| Year | Total number of beneficiaries | Women (%) | Total grant amount (EUR) |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 2006 | 58                            | 45        | 770 000                  |
| 2007 | 64                            | 38        | 860 000                  |
| 2008 | -                             | 38        | 991 500                  |
| 2009 | 95                            | 32        | 1 236 500                |
| 2010 | 125                           | 34        | 1 700 000                |
| 2011 | 129                           | 34        | 1 700 000                |
| 2012 | 129                           | 38        | 1 700 000                |
| 2013 | 78                            | 36        | 1 700 000                |
| 2014 | 157                           | 36        | 1 700 000                |
| 2015 | 152                           | 36        | 1 700 000                |
| 2016 | 167                           | 40        | 1 685 000                |
| 2017 | 216                           | 44        | 1 866 000                |

## 5.2 Coaches

There is no national register of coaches or other statistics on the basis of which the number of coaches in Finland could be monitored. A coach is not an unambiguous term: the boundary between a coach and an instructor is blurred, and the titles vary in different sports. Some sports federations have their own registers of coaches. Some sports also register referees, making it possible to monitor their gender distribution. Many sports merely have officials who direct sports events and who are not registered.

Surveys commissioned by the Research Institute for Olympic Sports KIHU indicate that in 2016, 1,682 professional full-time coaches were operating in Finland. This figure is relatively close to the data in Statistics Finland's classification of occupations, according to which there were 1,556 persons with the occupational title sports coach, instructor or official working in Finland in 2014, 1,003 of whom were men and 553 women. The majority of coaches, or 73 %, worked in sports clubs, while 10% worked in sports federations and at the regional level. A total of 17 % of the coaches worked at sports institutes and academies, at secondary level educational institutions with special emphasis on sport, in the Defence Forces and as entrepreneurs or under a business name. (Puska et al. 2016, 9.)

According to KIHU's report (Puska et al. 2016), estimates of the proportion of women among professional coaches vary depending on the source. A survey targeted at sports federations indicated that 78 % of professional coaches were men and 22 % women.



Estimates given in 2012 were very similar: at that time, the federations estimated that men accounted for 79 % and women for 21 % of professional coaches. Based on Statistics Finland's classification of occupations, men accounted for 64% and women for 36 % of those operating under the occupational titles of sports coach, instructor or official. It would thus appear that a considerably smaller proportion of women than men are working as professional coaches.

Of Professional Coaches of Finland SAVAL members, 73 % are men and 27 % are women (Table 4). Almost one half of the members, or 47 %, are men aged 30 to 49. (Puska et al. 2016, 14.)

**Table 4. Members of Professional Coaches of Finland (SAVAL) by gender and age group (Puska et al. 2016).**

| SAVAL members |            |     |     |
|---------------|------------|-----|-----|
|               |            | n   | %   |
| Men           | Aged 16–29 | 48  | 5   |
|               | Aged 30–39 | 223 | 24  |
|               | Aged 40–49 | 218 | 23  |
|               | Aged 50–59 | 158 | 17  |
|               | yli 60     | 45  | 5   |
| Total         |            | 692 | 73  |
| Women         | Aged 16–29 | 35  | 4   |
|               | Aged 30–39 | 108 | 11  |
|               | Aged 40–49 | 63  | 7   |
|               | Aged 50–59 | 36  | 4   |
|               | over 60    | 13  | 1   |
| Total         |            | 255 | 27  |
| Total         |            | 947 | 100 |

In the 2000s, efforts have been made to promote women in coaching through various projects and mentoring programmes. One of the goals of Finnish Coaches Association, which is a national cooperation, training and lobbying organisation, is to promote woman coaches. Two projects promoting gender equality have played a special role in these efforts in recent years: the national Valmentaa kuin nainen (Coaches like a woman) project and the international Erasmus project SCORE (Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality). (Finnish Coaches Association 2016, SCORE 2016.)

In the Coaches like a woman project, the Finnish Coaches Association serves as an administrator and coordinator. The project focuses on ball games, including football, handball, ringette, floor hockey, ice hockey, American football, pesäpallo (Finnish baseball) and volleyball as well as ball games for disabled athletes, with the aim of increasing the

number of female coaches and sports actors. Its impacts will be monitored until 2018. (Finnish Coaches Association 2016.)

The Coaches like a woman project participated in the Erasmus+ SCORE project administrated by ENGSO in the role of a partner and expert, with the Finnish Coaches Association assuming responsibility for mentoring training. Training related to an awareness pack created as part of the project, which provides a foundation for planning measures for increasing the number of female coaches, was offered in all participating countries, including Finland. In total, the project had partners in eight European countries. (Finnish Coaches Association 2016, SCORE 2016.)

## 6 Decision-making and leadership

Leadership can be described as taking place through organisations' official decision-making structures and the positions of power that are part of them. Seen in this light, gender distribution in leadership can be measured by comparing the proportions of women and men in different roles. On the other hand, research has also paid attention to leadership and decision-making networks as a state of societal being and an operating mode. Exertion of influence, guidance, control, access to information, regulation and lobbying mostly take place through official working groups and committees, other organisations' bodies or informally between individuals. In the Finnish model of society, interaction between non-governmental sports organisations and central and local government is seen as a bundle of symbiotic relations. In the 2010s, the number of women who serve as members of several working groups and boards of central organisations has increased. (Lehtonen 2017, 127, 138.)

Decision-making and leadership take place at each node and level of the bundle of relations. In this report, the genderisation of leadership and decision-making is described through the numbers of male and female employees and elected officials in sports organisations and the municipalities' and central government's sports administration. Viewpoints related to careers in the sport sector and their associations to sports are also highlighted.

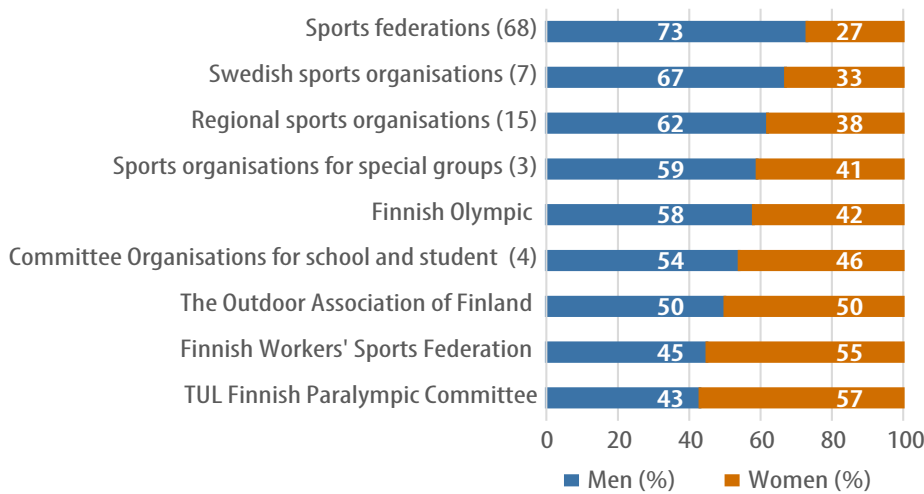
### 6.1 Organisations

While decision-making and leadership roles in sports have mostly been held by men for decades, over the last 20 years, the proportion of women in leadership and decision-making roles in the sports sector has increased. The transformation of the organisation structure in sports and physical activity, which has reduced the number of sectoral and central organisations, is affecting the places available in decision-making bodies and also their gender distribution.

The transformation of sports organisations in the 2010s has been interpreted as a response to a changing operating environment. The idea is that by modifying the

organisation structure, economic benefits could be gained, organisation structures could be dismantled, overlaps could be removed and roles could be clarified, leading to rationalisation. The decentralising structural reform of the 1990s also had the same aims. (Lehtonen 2015.) A reduction in the number of central, sectoral or umbrella organisations is changing the character of the NGO sector, and when examined quantitatively, sports federations account for a greater share of the organisations than before.

According to statistics from early 2017, the boards of all sports organisations have 877 members in total, of whom 600 are men (68 %) and 277 women (32 %). Genderization in decision-making bodies varies greatly depending on the organisation and the role. In the Finnish Olympic Committee, the new umbrella organisation for sport, 42 % of board members are women. In the Finnish Paralympic Committee, women account for 57 % of the board members. The smallest proportion of women, or 27 %, is found in the boards of sports federations. (Figure 23). Examining the numbers of men and women does not, however, provide information on these persons' roles and impacts on decision-making/policies.

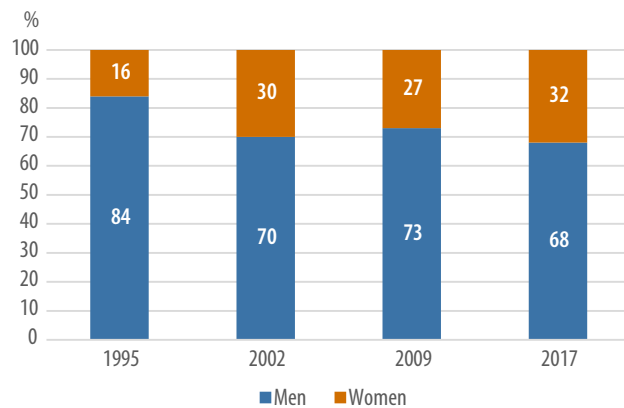


**Figure 23. Gender distribution in sports organisation boards at the beginning of 2017.**

Statistics on gender distributions in sports organisations' decision-making bodies have been kept since 1995. These statistics have been compiled by the umbrella organisations Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu (SLU), Valtakunnallinen liikunta- ja urheiluorganisaatio (Valo) and, most recently, the Finnish Olympic Committee. The data collections have been neither systematic nor regular. However, some conclusions about genderization in the organisations' decision-making bodies can be made based on these statistics. The following section discusses gender distributions among the boards, chairpersons and executive directors in sports organisations (sports federations, Swedish sports organisations, regional sports organisations, sports organisations for special groups, the Finnish Olympic Committee, sports organisations for schools and students, Suomen Latu, Finnish Workers'

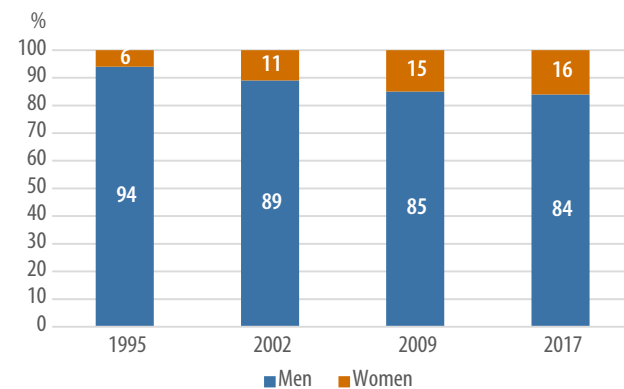
Sports Federation and the Finnish Paralympic Committee, n=101) in 1995–2017. A special emphasis in this examination is on sports federations, as their number is multiple times that of other organisations. The examination excludes organisations promoting physical activity eligible for state aid, on which no comparative data exist from previous years.

In total, the proportion of women in sports organisation boards has increased (Figure 24). While the proportion of women has increased from 16% to 32% between 1995 and 2017, this change has not been linear. The development has been affected by many issues, in particular several structural changes in the NGO sector.



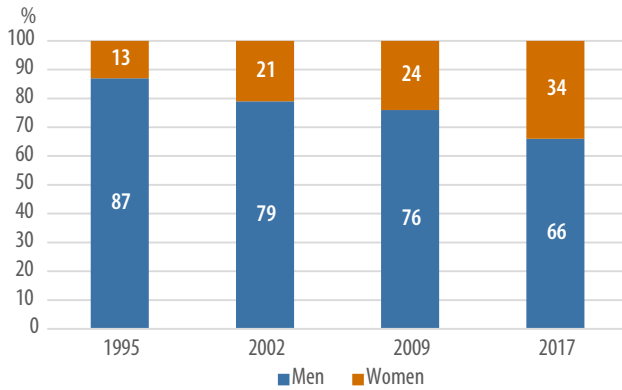
**Figure 24.** Proportion (%) of men and women among sports organisation board members in total in 1995–2017.

The lowest proportion of women is found among chairpersons (Figure 25). Between 1995 and 2017, women's proportion has increased from 6% to 16%, or almost three-fold.



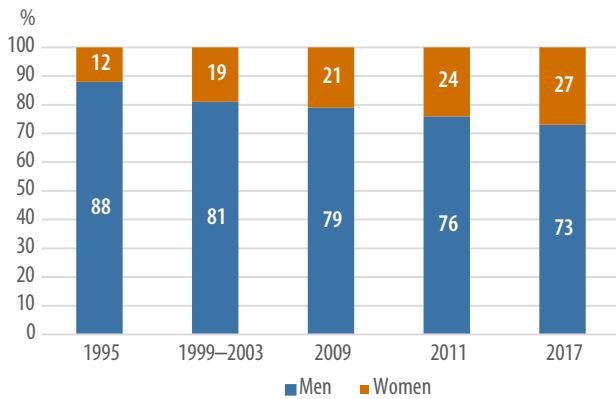
**Figure 25.** Proportion (%) of men and women among sports organisation chairpersons in 1995–2017.

The proportion of women among sports organisations' executive directors has increased clearly over the last 10 years (Figure 26), or from 13% to 34% between 1995 and 2017.



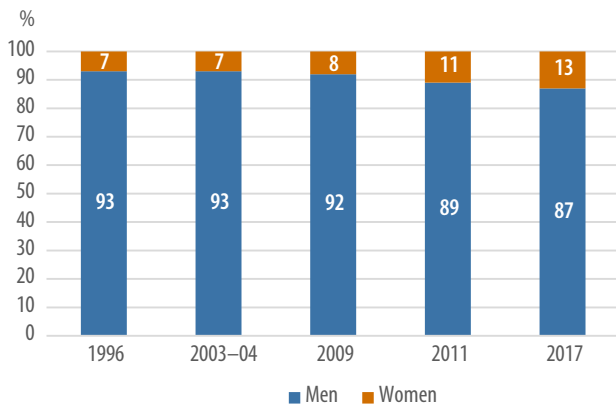
**Figure 26.** Proportion (%) of men and women among sports organisations' executive directors in 1995–2017.

In the decision-making bodies of sports federations, men's proportion is larger than in other sports organisations. However, women's proportion has increased every time statistics have been compiled since 1995. Over 20 years, the proportion of women in sports federation boards has gone up from 12 % to 27 % (Figure 27).



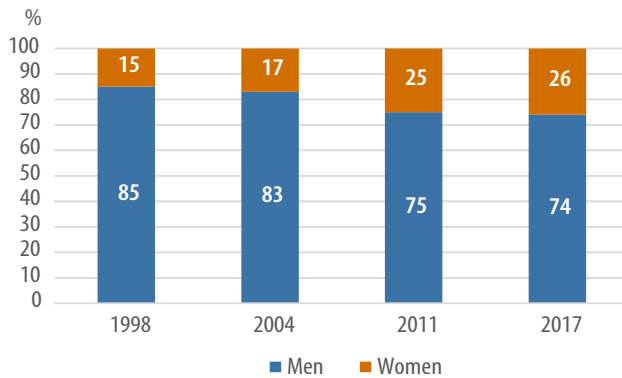
**Figure 27.** Proportion (%) of men and women among sports federations' board members in 1995–2017.

Few women serve as elected officials, especially in sports federations. In 1996, women accounted for 7 % of sports federation chairpersons. In 2017, this figure was 13 % (Figure 28).



**Figure 28.** Proportion (%) of men and women among sports federations' chairpersons in 1995–2017.

In 2017, approximately one out of four of sports federations' executive directors were women (Figure 29). While this proportion grew especially from 2004 to 2010, it has changed little in the 2010s.



**Figure 29.** Proportion (%) of men and women among sports federations' executive directors in 1995–2017.

All sports federations have men as their board members, whereas four sports federation boards have no women. This would not be possible in such countries as Norway. The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports has a quota rule going back to 1987, under which men and women must be represented in all decision-making bodies in the same proportions as among the members. Such bodies as sports club boards must have both male and female members. Compliance with the rule is supervised on the basis of reports submitted by the organisations annually. (Hokka 2014, 11.) The Norwegian rule can be considered progressive, and it has a strong guiding influence. A broadly applied norm, such as the one in Norway, is possible when the organisation structure is clear and hierarchic, and the central organisation is able to dictate terms to its members (Hakamäki 2014). A similar provision could not be enforced in Finland at the moment, as the current Associations Act (503/1989) stresses the autonomy of associations. The umbrella organisation of Finnish sports, or the Finnish Olympic Committee, can of course issue recommendations to its member organisations if it wishes to steer gender equality in organisation and club boards

The rules of the Swedish Sports Confederation (Riksidrottsförbundet, RF) have included a provision on gender quotas for board members since the mid-1990s. Each member organisation of the sports federation must strive to implement gender equality in boards, appointments committees and sub-committees and include young people in these decision-making bodies (Swedish Sports Confederation 2013, 5). New goals for gender equality work (Jämställdhetsmål) were set in Sweden in 2011, according to which the minimum representation of both genders in all decision-making and advisory bodies, coaching positions and leadership roles in sports organisations should be 40% (Hokka 2014, 13).

## 6.2 Municipalities

The reformed Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity (390/2015, section 5), which entered into force in 2015, defines the local government's responsibility as follows:

Responsibility for creating opportunities and facilities for engagement in physical activities at the local level rests with the local authorities. Local government shall provide opportunities and facilities for physical activity:

1. by providing physical exercise services and organising physical activities that promote general health and well-being with due regard to the various target groups;
2. by supporting civic action, including club activities; and
3. constructing and maintaining facilities for physical activity.

The duties referred to in subsection 1 above shall be performed in the municipality in collaboration with the various fields of activity by developing local, inter-municipal and regional cooperation and, where necessary, providing for other forms of activity in response to local conditions and needs. In making key decisions on issues related to sports and physical activity, local authorities are required to consult the residents as part of the obligation under section 22 of the Local Government Act (410/2015) to provide the local residents with the opportunity to participate and exert influence. Local authorities are required to evaluate the residents' level of physical activity as part of the promotion of health and welfare referred to in section 12 of the Health Care Act (1326/2010). Whenever a local government carries out the activities listed in subsection 1, it shall not engage in market competition unless such services are provided on a commercial basis with commercial goals.

In other words, local governments have the important task of creating preconditions for physical activity for the residents, for example by organising physical exercise services, maintaining facilities and supporting clubs. The local government is required to consult the residents in decisions on key issues related to sports and physical activity. The physical activity policies of municipalities play an essential role in the population's wellbeing, as local government decisions have extensive impacts on the entire population's possibilities for being physically active. In their physical activity policies, the municipalities must see to gender equality and non-discrimination. From this perspective, the municipalities' policies on bookings in facilities and the services they decide to organise are highly significant. Decisions made by municipalities have an essential impact on the conditions for and the culture of physical activity in the municipality.



The Act on Equality between Women and Men (1329/2014) obliges the authorities to promote equality between women and men purposefully and systematically in all of their activities. This obligation applies to all local authorities and all sectors. When selecting local government bodies, section 4a, subsection 1 of the Act on Equality between Women and Men should be complied with:

*The proportion of both women and men in government committees, advisory boards and other corresponding bodies, and in municipal bodies and bodies established for the purpose of intermunicipal cooperation, but excluding municipal councils, must be at least 40 per cent, unless there are special reasons to the contrary.*

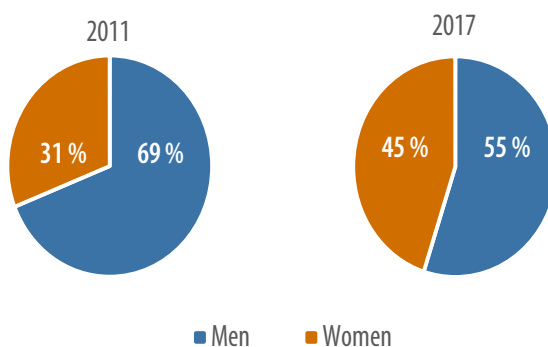
The gender quota applies to all municipal bodies, excluding municipal councils, which are elected by a public vote. Under section 30 of the Local Government Act, municipal decision-making bodies include not only the council but also the local executive and its sub-committees, committees or standing committees and their sub-committees, management boards and their sub-committees as well as commissions. An exception to the gender quota may be made for a special reason. For example, the availability of only female or male experts in a certain field of specialisation could constitute a special reason. If an exception is made to the quota rule, the reason for this must be recorded in the appointment decision. Special reasons justifying an exception to the quota rules when electing municipal bodies are likely to be rare (Myllymäki 2017).

The Government Report on Gender Equality (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2010) assesses that in addition to quantitative effects, the quotas have had a positive impact on the quality of municipal decision-making. The traditional gender-based division of duties is less prominent, especially in committee work. The committees have gained more versatile expertise, and the expertise is less gendered. However, the implementation of the quota provision has done little to promote consideration of the gender perspective in local government decision-making or activate equality work in municipalities (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2010, 101).

No up-to-date information is available on the gender distribution of elected officials in municipal bodies dealing with sports and physical activity. The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities does not monitor the situation regularly. The most recent data are from 2009, in which year 48% of the members and 36% of the chairpersons in committees on sports and physical activity were women (Turpeinen et al. 2011, 51).

Among leading office holders in the sports and physical activity sector, the proportion of women has increased significantly in recent years. The latest pay statistics in the municipal sector (2016) show that of leading office holders in the sports and physical activity sector (n=126), 55% are men and 45% women (Figure 30) (Local government sector wages and

salaries 2016). It has taken approximately 40 years for the number of women to catch up. In the 1970s, not a single woman was found in these positions (Heinilä 1977). In the early 1980s, there were two (Tulisalo 1985) and in the late 1990s nine (Aalto 2003) women serving as heads of sports services. In 2011, 31% of leading office holders responsible for sports and physical activity (25 persons) were women (Turpeinen et al. 2011, 51). Year-on-year comparisons only give a rough indication, however, as the sources used for calculating these figures have varied. The figures for 2011 and 2017 were obtained from Statistics Finland's Local government sector wages and salaries statistics, but the methods used had also changed between these years. The diversity of titles held by the office holders responsible for sports and physical activity also appears to increase constantly, and the titles of leading office holders in this sector currently include director of leisure services, director of youth activities, director of sports services and, especially in smaller municipalities, combinations of the above, such as director of sports and youth activities. Sports secretary is another title that continues to be used in several municipalities. In anticipation of the forthcoming change in local government duties, some municipalities have expanded the title to include the management of wellbeing services.



**Figure 30.** Gender distribution of leading office holders responsible for sports and physical activity in municipalities in 2011 and 2017.

The health and social services and local government reform, which has been under preparation for an extended period, will also change decision-making and leadership in municipalities in the next few years. As part of this reform, new counties will be established, the structure of social and health care will be modernised, and new duties will be transferred to the counties. The reform is due to enter into force on 1 January 2020. The most significant change will be the new division into three levels of government: central, regional and local government. The reform will bring about a major change in the municipalities' tasks. After the health and social services reform, the municipalities will no longer be responsible for social welfare and health care services, as these tasks will be taken over by the counties. On the other hand, the municipalities will continue to be responsible for promoting the residents' health and wellbeing. The municipalities will also

still be in charge of such areas as early childhood education and care, education, sports facilities and planning.

The municipalities' duties in the field of promoting health and wellbeing (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016b):

- monitoring the residents' health and wellbeing and the factors that affect them by population group
- reporting on residents' health and wellbeing and the measures taken to the council annually
- preparing a more extensive wellbeing report for the council once during each electoral period
- formulating goals and measures related to promoting health and wellbeing based on local conditions and needs
- advance assessment and consideration of health and wellbeing impacts
- monitoring measures taken in municipal services
- appointing parties responsible for promoting health and wellbeing.

A special coefficient related to health and wellbeing is being planned to provide the municipalities with an incentive to pursue these measures. This means a supplementary transfer allocated to promoting health and wellbeing included the central government transfers to local government, initially approximately EUR 55 million. The objective is to ensure that the municipalities will also take active measures to promote the residents' health and wellbeing after the health and social service reform. The health and wellbeing coefficient meets the same requirements as other criteria related to central government transfers to local government, or access to data on all municipalities and annual updates of the coefficient. The coefficient is to include indicators describing activities and performance indicators (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016b). Ten indicators describing activities related to sports and physical activity are to be included in this scheme (Figure 31). The indicators are not relevant to promoting gender equality, and no reference is made to data disaggregated by gender in them. However, data disaggregated by gender can be obtained for such indicators as those derived from the School Health Promotion Study if desired. These are decisions to be made at the local government level.

**Monitoring of and reporting on residents' physical activity and sports service use by the leading elected officials – 2 indicators:**

1. Children and adolescents' physical activity is monitored at minimum every second year.
2. Children and adolescents' physical activity is reported on annually in a wellbeing report or similar.

**Cooperation between residents and the sports services – 3 indicators:**

3. A joint expert body of sports clubs, associations and the municipality meets regularly.
4. A joint meeting between clubs, associations and the municipality is organised regularly.
5. The municipality conducts customer feedback surveys addressed to the users of its sports facilities or services at least every second year.

**Physical activity groups and advice offered in the municipality – 1 indicator:**

6. Targeted physical activity groups are provided for children and adolescents who do not participate in sports club activities.

**Cross-administrative co-operation related to sports in the municipality – 4 indicators:**

7. The municipality's most recent wellbeing report contains a description of the residents' physical activity.
8. The municipality has assigned the overall coordination of physical activity that promotes health and wellbeing to a specific administrative branch.
9. The office holders responsible for promoting sports and physical activity have participated in a preliminary assessment of committee decisions.
10. The municipality has a cross-administrative working group that deals with the promotion of physical activity.

**Figure 31. An initial proposal for indicators describing sports sector activities for the purposes of the health and wellbeing coefficient (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016b).**

The government proposal on the health and social services and local government reform (HE 15/2017 vp) notes that the reform may have significant and multidimensional impacts of gender equality. Its impacts will affect women and men differently as service users and providers. The impacts of the reform on men and women as employees or decision-makers will also be different. The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2019 states that the gender impacts of the health and social services and regional government reform will be assessed during the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the reform. The first assessment of gender impacts was completed on 31 August 2016. It discusses service use, personnel impacts, county elections, freedom of choice, taxation and corporatization. The assessment notes, among other things, that there are differences between women and men's modes of service use, which should be taken into account

when developing the services. Systematic data collection, strategic planning and personnel training can help ensure that women and men will receive services that meet their needs, equally and at the right time. The data collection will help identify gender specific service needs and offer gender-sensitive services. (Assessment of the gender impacts of the draft government proposal on the local government reform and the reform of the organisation of health and social services 2016).

### Decision-making on sports facilities in municipalities

The construction and maintenance of sports facilities, allocation of bookings and the question of whether gender equality is realised in the allocation of bookings to men and women have sparked suspicions of the genders being treated differently without a valid reason. No comprehensive data exists on this question. On several occasions, the Ombudsman for Equality has been asked to investigate the conditions of men's and women's sports facilities or access to facilities.

In 2008, a planned change in skating rink bookings allocated by a municipality's sports services was investigated. However, the person having requested the investigation cancelled the request by telephone, reporting that the change had not gone ahead. (Ombudsman for Equality 2008.)

A request made in 2011 concerned investigating if the allocation of pitches for matches in districts were compliant with the Act on Equality between Women and Men. The person who contacted the Ombudsman suspected that women systematically had worse conditions for their matches than men, and that women's matches were organised on sand pitches, even if a free grass or artificial turf pitch was available nearby. Additionally, the complainant claimed that women's matches were played on a sand pitch, even when a boy's junior team was training on the pitch beside it at the same time. The comparison of conditions concerned men's and women's division three, which is the highest district level.

Information was requested from the Football Association of Finland's Helsinki and Uusimaa districts as well as the Cities of Vantaa and Helsinki. A joint meeting was organised to discuss this issue, as a result of which the requests for information were withdrawn. Pitch bookings for district level matches are made with the city. Artificial turf pitches can be used during the clubs' training times, if the clubs so wish. If not, a booking is made for a sand pitch. The bookings are allocated to the clubs based on team numbers. The Football Association's leagues are mainly played on grass pitches, if this is possible within the limits of the restricted times available on these pitches. The sports services have instructed the clubs to allocated their training times so that junior teams and teams that also play their matches on grass would train on grass pitches. Male and female teams in the lower divisions do not train on grass pitches. Regardless of their similar names,

men's and women's division three were not considered comparable division levels, as the women's division has fewer levels. Harmonisation in this issue was also not considered to make sense for the reason that it would push up the prices of women's licences.

The Ombudsman for Equality noted that decisions on the pitches where matches are played are frequently made by the clubs, that it is essential for the clubs to be aware of their responsibilities and support equal allocation of resources, and that the municipalities and the Football Association's districts play a key role in their operating areas. The Ombudsman also stated: "it should be possible for each party, where required and by taking the necessary actions, to contribute to ensuring that factual equality is implemented and that unnecessary suspicions of discrimination are not created regarding the pitch conditions for matches." (Ombudsman for Equality 2011.)

The Ombudsman for Equality has also issued a statement on the position of transsexuals as users of sports services. Among other things, problems are caused by changing rooms and showers that do not provide for privacy. Privacy is particularly vital during the gender reassignment process. This need may also be continuous, as rather than genital reassignment, a so-called legal and social gender reassignment only is sometimes carried out. The Ombudsman for Equality noted that the possibilities for transsexuals' physical activity can be promoted by providing for their privacy in the changing rooms and showers of sports facilities. (Ombudsman for Equality 2006.)

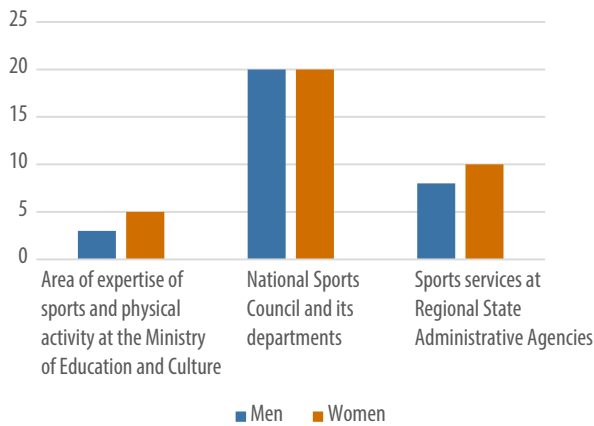
Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services Juha Rehula announced that he would participate in the 100 Acts for Equality project by commissioning a report on the allocation of sports facility bookings to girls and boys as well as men and women (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2017b). According to the Ministry's press release, the idea that the municipalities do not allocated sports facility bookings equally to sports typical for girls and boys is one example of the gender system.

### 6.3 Central government

Under the Equality Act, the proportion of both women and men in government committees, advisory boards and other corresponding bodies, and in municipal bodies and bodies established for the purpose of intermunicipal cooperation, but excluding municipal councils, must be at least 40 per cent, unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Act on Equality between Women and Men 1329/2014). Section 8 of this Act, on the other hand, which contains provisions on recruitments, states that if an employer, upon selecting someone for a particular task, bypasses a more qualified person of the opposite sex in favour of the person chosen, unless the employer's action was for an acceptable reason and not due to gender, or

unless the action was based on weighty and acceptable grounds related to the nature of the job or the task, this constitutes discrimination prohibited under the Act.

In the Ministry of Education and Culture, the area of expertise of sports and physical activity is directed by a woman, while three men and four women are employed as senior advisers and counsellors for cultural affairs (Figure 32). The National Sports Council and its departments count two men and two women as their chairpersons. The members comprise 18 men and 18 women in total. In the Regional State Administrative Agencies, 15 employees work as senior officials and directors of sports services, of whom eight are men and seven women. Consequently, it appears that gender equality is relatively well realised in central government.



**Figure 32.** Number of men and women in leadership and decision-making roles in central government sports administration.

Based on an examination of the board members of five different central organisations in the sports sector, as well as the members and expert consultations of 16 working groups on sports policy in 1993–2014, Lehtonen has developed the idea of an elite network. During the period under consideration, the network as a whole consisted of 373 people, of whom 75 % were men. The proportion of women has increased continuously. As major policy-makers are defined key persons, or those with the greatest number of memberships in central organisation boards and working groups. The proportion of women among these key persons has increased over the period under consideration from 18 % to 50 %. (Lehtonen 2017.) This method of examination is structural: it does not gauge individuals' properties or the level of influence they exercise. Belonging to the network and being linked to a number of different working groups and bodies enables access to information, becoming heard, lobbying and control.

## 6.4 Associations between sport and women's and men's careers

Studies have found associations between sport and success in the labour market, especially when such metrics as the yearly income or the likelihood of finding a job have been used. However, attention paid to the gender equality perspective has varied. Some studies have produced separate models for women and men (e.g. Eide & Ronan 2001; Kosteas 2012; Lechner 2009; Rooth 2011), whereas others have focused on men only (e.g. Barron et al. 2000; Cabane 2010; Ewing 1998; Hyytinen & Lahtonen 2013). In some cases, meaningful results have only been obtained for men (e.g. Long & Caudill 1991), while some studies have ignored gender and included women and men in the same model (e.g. Kavetsos 2011).

A study titled *Liikunta ja työurat* (Physical activity and careers) examined how taking part in leisure time physical activity in childhood and adolescence was associated with academic success at the end of comprehensive school as well as the number of years spent in education and long-term income in adulthood. This study is part of the LASERI monitoring study (Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study), in which the same subjects have been monitored for over 30 years since 1980. The study has drawn on survey data on children's physical activity at the ages of 9, 12 and 15, and their academic success at the ages of 12 and 15. Education and labour market data for the period following comprehensive school were obtained directly in Statistics Finland's registers from 1997–2010.

The study indicates that leisure time physical activity in childhood is associated with both academic success at the end of comprehensive school and the number of years spent in education in adulthood. The average of the basic education certificate grades for girls and boys with a high level of physical activity was half a grade higher than the average for girls and boys with a low level of physical activity. In terms of years in education, the difference between girls and boys with high or low levels of physical activity was approximately one year. The results regarding academic success were statistically significant for both girls and boys, regardless of what background factors were taken into account in the analyses (including the child's health, the parents' education, the family's income, family size and the child's prior academic success).

Regarding years in education, prior academic success was significant, especially for girls: when prior academic success was factored in, the association between leisure time physical activity and years in education no longer was statistically significant. In boys, the association between physical activity and years in education persisted regardless of the background factors. (Kari et al. 2017.)



Studies of incomes (Kari et al. 2016) indicate that especially in boys, physical activity is associated with higher income in adulthood in Finland. Taking part in physical activity was associated with a long-term income that was 10–20% higher on average. No similar association was observed in girls.

These findings are examples of why the associations must be examined by gender. There are differences between women and men when it comes to physical activity (related to both preferences and intensity) and, above all, the development of academic and working careers. This is one explanation for the differences in the findings discussed above. (Kari et al. 2016; 2017.)

According to Aalto-Nevalainen (2017a, b), there has been very little research on management careers in the sports sector from the gender perspective. Aalto-Nevalainen studied the career success of women and men in leadership roles in the sports sector (n=329) and factors associated with it in the public and the third sector in Finland. As indicators of career success were examined pay, satisfaction with career success, and balance between work and family/private life. According to the findings, male leaders in the sports sector had higher pay and were more satisfied with their career success than their female colleagues. The career success of sports sector leaders were associated with some of the sports-related factors in the study. For example, taking part in physical activity and sports at a higher level in childhood and youth (1=Did not take part in physical activity – 5=Competitive sports at international level) were associated with higher pay in both female and male sports sector leaders.

## 7 Gender equality in efforts to promote physical activity

### 7.1 Sports organisations' non-discrimination and equality plans

New discretionary grounds for decisions on government grant amounts include compliance with international rules that bind Finland as well as promoting non-discrimination and gender equality (objectives specified in section 2 of the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity; see also the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the Non-Discrimination Act). Organisations promoting physical activity are required to prepare non-discrimination and equality plans for their operation. If a federation does not have a non-discrimination and equality plan, its eligibility for government grants can be revoked in the future. The application form for general grants also contains questions about non-discrimination and gender equality issues (form 23/24). Key actions of the non-discrimination and equality plan should be listed in the form, including a reference to a completed action plan or, if the plan remains incomplete, any actions already decided on, one of which could be the preparation of a non-discrimination and equality plan.

The objectives of the non-discrimination and equality plans to be attached to applications for general grants from the central government for 2016 include recognising discrimination, assessing and developing activities and practices, and promoting inclusion. The non-discrimination and equality plan should describe how the organisation will promote non-discrimination and gender equality and intervene in discrimination, including sexual harassment and abuse.

The quality and contents of sports organisations' submissions concerning non-discrimination and equality in their applications for central government grants for 2016 were very uneven. However, the majority had not completed their non-discrimination and

equality plans in 2016. Some organisations have not understood the concept and objectives of non-discrimination and gender equality.

In the assessment of non-discrimination plans, particular attention is paid to understanding the concepts of non-discrimination and gender equality and what this means in terms of the organisation's activities. In addition, attention is focused on bringing up concrete measures for promoting this issue and methods for monitoring the realisation of non-discrimination and equality. In 2016, one third of the organisations eligible for government grants had non-discrimination and equality plans that were excellent, one third had plans that were satisfactory, and one third had not produced a plan or it had many shortcomings.

The majority of the federations had started the work by conducting a survey on equity and equality addressed to their personnel and elected officials. Most federations had discussed the issue at the board level and in their various teams/working groups. In some federations, this process progresses in parallel with strategy work, relying on the same working groups and following the same schedule. All federations find it important that the actions are included in the action plan straight away. Depending on the federation, the appropriate interval for updating the plan is one to three years; a review is carried out annually.

Preparing the plan has been assigned to one or two persons in the federations, and/or to a working group with representatives from the board and often also from clubs. Elected officials are considered an important link in terms of communicating non-discrimination and equality thinking to the club level. In addition to surveys, data on the current status of equality have been gathered from annual reports, registers and statistics related to the activities, as well as through working group discussions.

The initiation of this process has already sparked discussions among many stakeholders and had an impact on the activities. To some federations, it makes sense to look at the federation and its clubs as a whole from the start. This way, the implementation of the federation's objectives can also be launched in the clubs. The plan should focus on actions that the federation can complete in order to promote identified objectives and solve problems.

## 7.2 National programmes for promoting physical activity

### Joy in motion!

Joy in motion! is a national physical activity and wellbeing programme for early childhood education and care. The objective of this programme launched in 2015 is to give each child an opportunity to participate in and enjoy sufficient physical activity every day. The programme is underpinned by the new Act on Early Childhood Education and Care

(580/2015), the National core curriculum for early childhood education and care (Finnish National Agency for Education 2016) and the Physical activity recommendations for early childhood (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016a). The objectives of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (section 2) specify that the goal of early childhood education and care is to give children equal opportunities for early childhood education and care and to promote gender equality. The National core curriculum for early childhood states that “early childhood education and care promotes the democratic values of the Finnish society, such as equity, equality, and diversity. Children must have an opportunity to develop their skills and make choices independently of reasons associated with, for instance, gender, origin, cultural background or other reasons related to the person.” These statements underpin the promotion of gender equality in the Joy in motion! programme.

So far, the Joy in motion! programme document has not itemised its goals or collected evaluation data by gender. The communication materials of the programme consciously take into account both girls and boys. In August 2017, Joy in motion! was merged with the Schools on the Move programme. The gender equality goals of the Schools on the Move programme and the requirement of mainstreaming the gender perspective in the Government's key projects will also apply to the Joy in motion! programme in the future.

## Schools on the Move

The Schools on the Move programme implements the Government's key project “New learning environments and digital materials to comprehensive schools”. In keeping with the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality, the gender perspective will be mainstreamed in all key projects; “in connection with the key projects, the ministries will ensure that an effort is made to define equality objectives, that gender impacts are assessed in different project phases, and that the impacts on gender equality are reported. In addition, sufficient skills in gender equality promotion will be ensured.” The ministries will ensure that this mission is completed. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016a, 18.)

The objective of the Schools on the Move programme is encouraging every child and youth in basic education age to be active for at least an hour a day, aiming for a more active and pleasant school day. Each school can implement a more active school day in its own way. Pupils' participation and learning, as well as spending more time moving and less time sitting, are keys to the schools' activities and programme implementation. In November 2017, 2,048 schools had registered with the Schools on the Move programme, accounting for 84% of Finnish comprehensive schools.

The Schools on the Move is about an extensive change in the school culture, and the programme contains a number of different actions for promoting a more active school day: using and spreading good practices, improving teachers' competence, wider introduction of action-based teaching methods, using and developing built and natural environments, encouraging physical activity during recessions and active commuting, improving the conditions for physical activity on the way to school, organising recreational activities that involve sports as part of the schools' morning and afternoon activities, and broad-based cooperation between various stakeholders, especially with the municipality's different administrative branches and the third sector. The actions will be implemented in 2016–2018, and a total of EUR 21 million has been set aside for them during this period. In 2017–2018, the Schools on the Move programme will be expanded to secondary level education and higher education institutions as well as to early childhood education and care through the Joy in motion! programme.

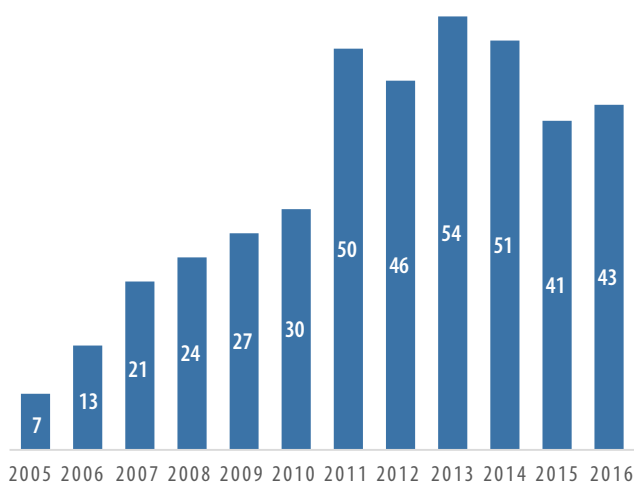
Promotion of gender equality in the Schools on the Move programme is visible at different levels. In development grants made available for Schools on the Move activities, gender equality is integrated in both the special criteria of each application round and the general criteria. The instructions for applicants note that particular attention should be paid to encouraging the physical activity of girls, as girls in all age groups take part in physical activity less than boys. Research projects associated with the Schools on the Move programme gather data and present their key findings disaggregated by gender. In surveys, the terms girl and boy are used. The programme has drawn attention to the need for gender-sensitive communications. An effort has been made to address the gender perspective at seminars and in training programmes. Special seminar themes have included the perspective of girls in higher comprehensive school. In 2018, themes of the programme's regional seminars will include gender and equality.

In 2016–2017, the Schools on the Move programme had a subcommittee titled "Equity, equality and accessibility", which discussed and formulated a policy on promoting gender equality in the programme. In the context of promoting gender equality, the subcommittee proposed the following development measures: 1) Gender equality as well as recognising and dismantling gendered structures will be brought up as one of themes in national and regional steering, 2) the Schools on the Move communication materials will be updated to give visibility to diverse pupils, and 3) more cross-cutting content related to equity, equality and accessibility will be included in teacher education. (Subcommittee on equity, equality and accessibility in the steering group of the Schools on the Move programme 2017.)

Schools on the Move research findings have been discussed in earlier parts of this report.

## Fit for Life programme

Fit for Life is a national programme for promoting physical activity. The programme was launched in 1995, and it is directed at working-age men and women and those who have retired recently. Some two hundred projects are supported annually through this programme. In the early 2000s, the project applications made it obvious that little low-threshold physical activity was offered for unfit men. The Adventures of Joe Finn campaign was launched in 2007 to encourage men to take part in physical activity and adopt healthy eating habits. The campaign also drew sports and health sector actors' attention to men's health. Among other things, the campaign organised seminars, tours, ready-made communication materials and fitness tests. The impacts of the programme included a more diverse offer of sports activities, an increase in the number of applications for projects targeted at men, and stabilisation of the number of supported local projects at 40 to 50 annually. The Fit for Life programme disburses grants to approximately 200 projects every year (Figure 33).



**Figure 33.** Local activities and development projects targeting men funded by the Fit for Life programme in 2005–2016.

## 7.3 Development grants

### Projects developing leisure time physical activities for young people

A report that examined projects aiming to develop leisure time physical activities for young people in 1999–2011 (Lehtonen 2012) notes that during all project periods, more boys than girls participated in sporting afternoon activities. Efforts have been made to encourage girls and increase their participation. For example, the projects have offered sports which are of interest to girls, or stressed the non-competitive aspects of the activities.

Many projects have found that in some cases, separate groups for girls and boys are needed to realise equal opportunities for participation. Positive experiences have been gained of both joint groups for boys and girls and separate groups. This issue must always be decided on a case-by-case basis. During all programme periods of sports-related afternoon activities, efforts have been made to increase girls' inclusion and participation. Effective means for increasing the proportion of girls are not the same in all projects. It is essential to listen to children's needs and have knowledge of local conditions and situations. (Lehtonen 2012, 34–35.)

### Development grants for club activities

Development grants for club activities (club aid) are intended for developing the activities of sports clubs. They are allocated to children and adolescents' physical activity and family activities under section 14 of the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity (390/2015). Club grants are used to implement Government Programme policies, especially on children and adolescents' equal and equitable opportunities for participating in leisure activities, and to promote the development of and measures related to low-threshold club activities. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017c.)

Club grants are the most significant form of central government aid to grass-roots level development in sports clubs. In 2013–2017, club grants amounting to a total of EUR 20.8 million were disbursed to 1,453 different club aid projects. In particular, these grants have been directed at low-threshold physical activity and the hiring of employees. An effort has been made to use the club grants to support projects aiming to attract more children and adolescents to instructor-led physical activities and to diversify the possibilities for participating in such activities. In euro amounts, the largest share of the club grants has been allocated to hiring employees for clubs, and 400 clubs have hired employees on these grants. (Turpeinen et al. 2018.)

The emphases of the club grant allocation criteria have varied from year to year. Improving equal and equitable opportunities for participation has been included in the criteria every year, albeit with more emphasis in some years than in others. According to the most recent allocation criteria (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017c), the projects to be supported must implement one or several of the sub-objectives set by the Ministry of Education and Culture, one of which is associated with gender equality: "promoting equitable, equal and accessible opportunities for participating in leisure activities". The club grants are disbursed as discretionary special grants. On the nine-point list on the basis of which the projects' scope and impact are assessed, one in particular is related to addressing gender equality. As an example, it cites setting up groups for girls in sports dominated by boys and vice versa. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017c.) According to the presenting

officer, in 2013–2017 club grants have been “disbursed to all applicants whose projects aimed for establishing leisure activity groups for the minority gender”.

In club grant project applications, the goal of promoting gender equality usually is setting up new groups to increase the number of participants representing the minority gender. Some projects have organised special events or engaged in other types of marketing to attract representatives of the minority gender to the sport. In the context of the annual assessment of club grant applications, the number of projects in which the application makes specific reference to promoting the participation of girls or boys has been tracked. The share of such goals stated in the project applications has varied from 6% to 17% of all applications in 2013–2017. Girls have been mentioned as the object of special attention in the goals more often than boys. The beneficiaries of club grants in 2016–2017 included more projects aiming to increase boys’ participation than in earlier years. Dance and gymnastics clubs, for example, intended to attract more boys to their activities in a number of projects (Metsälä 2017).

According to a survey addressed to employees hired on club grants (Riekki & Hentunen 2017), 58% of the club employees were men and 41% women (n=168). The gender of one employee was not specified. Gender differences came up in the employees’ educational backgrounds: on average, men had a higher level of education than women. One man out of two (52%) had a higher education degree, whereas this figure for women was 44%. 51% of the women and 38% of the men had a secondary level qualification. Women were more likely than men to work part time in the clubs; men accounted for 63% of full-time employees. There were also gender differences related to the titles and tasks of the club employees: 72% of coaches and head coaches were men. Women, on the other hand, worked more often in the role of a development officer or a coordinator in the club (66%). The gender distribution in executive director roles was more balanced, with 55% women and 45% men. (Riekki & Hentunen 2017.)

While gender equality has been emphasised in the club grant criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Culture, little attention has been paid to it in the projects. The club grant data indicate that sports clubs need support in promoting equality.

### **Development grants for immigrant integration through sport**

Since 2011, the Ministry of Education and Culture has provided grants for the integration of immigrants through sport. In 2015 and 2016, two thirds of the participants in financed projects were immigrants, while the remainder represented the mainstream population. (Pasanen & Laine 2017.) Reaching out to women and girls with an immigrant background was one of the particular areas of emphasis in the development grant scheme (Pyykönen 2016). Based on follow-up data, most projects financed in 2015 and 2016 find it difficult



to reach girls, women and (stay-at-home) mothers with an immigrant background. The report indicates that frequently, “the challenges are associated with the Islamic dress code”. (Pasanen & Laine 2017.)

## 7.4 100 Acts for Gender Equality in sports

Minister of Education and Culture Sanni Grahn-Laasonen announced that her ministry would participate in the 100 Acts for Gender Equality project launched to celebrate the centenary of Finland's independence by challenging sports federations and other organisations to take concrete actions for promoting gender equality. As a particular theme to be promoted was picked increasing the proportion of women in leadership and coaching roles. The Ministry of Education and Culture took on the challenge together with the Finnish Olympic Committee and the Finnish Paralympic Committee. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017d.) The Ministry granted a special award to the best acts approved for the 100 Acts for Gender Equality project, which was coordinated by the National Council of Women in Finland. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017e.)

Acts in the field of sports and physical activity approved for the 100 Acts for Gender Equality project included:

- Football for refugee women festival (Monaliiku)
- Documentary film Heikoilla jäillä (Mahla Films)
- First woman as the competition manager of Joensuu-Jukola 2017 orienteering relay and women's Finland 100 celebratory relay (Joensuu-Jukola 2017)
- Johtaa kuin nainen ('Coaches like a woman', Finnish Olympic Committee)
- Judo on tyttöjen juttu project and major camp ('Judo is for girls', Jigotai's judo division)
- Towards more equal sports journalism: an analysis of the realisation of gender equality in contents and consequent actions (Finnish Broadcasting Company)
- Towards more equal American football jargon (American Football Association of Finland)
- Naiset Jalkapallojohtajina training programme ('Women as football managers', Football Association of Finland)
- Naiset yhdessä liikkumaan ('Women exercising together', City of Helsinki sports services)
- Promoting women's participation in referee activities in Finnish baseball (Suomen Pesäpalloliitto)

- Decision to make monthly donations to UN Women (Hämeenlinnan Tarmo athletics division)
- Report on the allocation of sports facility bookings to women and men (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- Sata tyttöjäkiekkotapahtumaa ('One hundred ice hockey events for girls', Finnish Ice Hockey Association)
- Award promoting an equal sporting culture (City of Oulu sports services)
- Tyttöjen tie tähtiin events in Helsinki and Rovaniemi ('Girls' journey to the starts', Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities VAU and the Finnish Paralympic Committee)
- Panel discussion on empowerment through sport (Finnish Gymnastics Federation)
- Valmentaa kuin nainen ('Coaches like a woman', Finnish Coaches Association and ball game federations)
- Yhtä jalkaa – Fair game workbook and training programme for riding ('In step', the Equestrian Federation of Finland)
- #AllMaleSports social media campaign to spark discussion about women's role in sports journalism and the world of sports (Finnish Student Sports Federation)

The Finnish Broadcasting Company received a special award for acts promoting gender equality in sports and physical activity. Awards were also presented to the Football Association of Finland and Jyväskylä Jigotai's judo division.

## 7.5 National Sports Council's Non-discrimination and Equality Committee

The National Sports Council is a panel of experts assisting the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. It is called upon to address major issues of fundamental importance related to sports and physical activity and, in particular, evaluate the impact of government action in the field of sports and physical activity; submit initiatives and make proposals to develop sports and physical activity; and issue opinions on the allocation of state appropriations for sports and physical activity within its purview. The Council includes sections responsible for the preparation of the issues to be addressed. (Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity 390/2015.) One of these sections is the Non-discrimination and Equality Committee. Under Government Decree on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity (550/2015), the National Sports Council's tasks also include submitting initiatives and making proposals, among other things on issues related to gender equality.

## 8 Conclusion

The themes of the Sport and Equality 2017 report stem from the reformed legislation as well as the goals and information needs specified in sports policy documents. Key contents of the report include physical activity as well as leadership and decision-making. The overarching idea is that statements on sports policy and gender equality should be underpinned by evidence-based information.

A quantitative analysis reveals gender differences related to physical activity, leadership and decision-making alike. Objective measurements show that girls accumulate less physical activity than boys. Fewer girls than boys participate in organised physical activity. This contributes to women finding themselves a minority among sports and physical activity sector actors. There has been a moderate growth in the proportion of women in leadership positions and among leading office holders in sports organisations and municipalities' sports services. On the other hand, a slower increase has been seen in the proportion of female elected officials in sports organisations. However, the number of women in leadership roles in the sports sector continues to be smaller than the number of men.

Measures have been taken to change this situation, some of which concern organised sports and leadership in the field of sports. Means for achieving this have included the requirement of preparing a non-discrimination and equality plan in order for sports organisations to be eligible for general grants from the central government. Women's coaching activities and leadership have been supported through mentoring and training projects as well as networking and awards. As the latest action, the Ministry of Education and Culture challenged sports organisations to take part in the 100 Acts for Gender Equality project in 2017 in order to mainstream equality and, in particular, to increase the number of women in sports leadership and coaching roles.

Sports policy instruments that extend beyond the culture of organised sports include national programmes aiming to promote physical activity. One goal of the Fit for Life programme was to find ways of influencing men's health behaviour. As a Government key

project, the Schools on the Move programme is required to mainstream the gender perspective in all programme activities.

The knowledge base related to both women's and men's perspectives in the field of sports and physical activity has been built up in recent years, but more information continues to be needed on areas that have been studied less, including the use of sports facilities, or the allocation of resources to women's and men's sports and physical activity. In the absence of this knowledge base, any discussions are based on generalisations or suppositions. A report on the allocation of bookings in sports facilities under preparation in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will contribute to responding to these information needs.

In the future, attention should also be focused on creating the preconditions described in the Act on the Promotion of Sport and Physical Activity as the health and social services and local government reform will bring about significant changes in the tasks of the municipalities and counties. Gender differences in modes of physical activity should be taken into account when developing services. Systematic data collection – for example by using the indicators contained in the municipalities' wellbeing reports – can contribute to making services equally available to all residents. The regular collection and systematic utilisation of gender-disaggregated data may help to identify the needs of the two genders, monitor changes and target separate measures at women and men, or girls and boys, as necessary.

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## Appendix 1. List of persons who participated in producing report contents and their background organisations

Aalto-Nevalainen Päivi, Ministry of Education and Culture  
Aira Annaleena, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Hakonen Harto, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Heiskanen Jarmo, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Inkinen Virpi, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Joensuu Laura, University of Jyväskylä  
Kallio Jouni, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Kari Jaana, University of Jyväskylä  
Korhonen Nina, Joy in motion! programme  
Kuosmanen Sari, Finnish Olympic Committee  
Kämppi Katariina, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Laine Kaarlo, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Lehtonen Kati, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Lämsä Jari, Research Institute for Olympic Sports  
Malvela Miia, Fit for Life programme  
Piispanen Toni, National Sports Council  
Puurunen Anna, Fit for Life programme  
Rajala Katja, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Syväoja Heidi, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health  
Tammelin Tuija, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health





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