

HOBBY GUARANTEE: CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOBBY PARTICIPATION

RESEARCH FOCUS

The focus of this research project is to examine children's and youth equal opportunities for hobby participation in Finnish communities. The emphasis is in unfolding 1) municipal-based participation opportunities, thus, hobbies offered by communities, 2) (financial) resources pointed to carry out this task, and 3) the comprehension of the demand of equality.

The ultimate purpose of the project is to produce usable and applicable scholar knowledge of school-aged children's hobby participation in order to advance the hobby guarantee; the guarantee at least of one pleasant hobby for each Finnish child and youngster.

Why study hobby participation? Bronfenbrenner (1979) has argued that some leisure time activities and social contexts represent distinct opportunities for psychological growth. From an economist point of view the quantities of time children devote to different kinds of practices in their leisure time can be regarded as human capital resource (Sweetland 1996). This implies especially time devoted to increase academic performance that create opportunities later in career and employment. Childhood is not just a period of gaining skills needed in work life of adulthood but it should be understood equally -if not even more importantly- as an opportunity for developing intrinsic emotional-motivational experiences later in life than a purely capital resource. These evidently social and cultural capital forms of childhood develop broader life skills such as social competence and dispositions related to healthy emotional adjustment when children spent their time in nonproductive activities.

The project utilizes different data sets of which here is reported the results of a National student survey carried out during 2016-2017 by the Ministry of Education and Culture (N=220 237, school classes 1-10). The survey collected data of the current stage of young people's hobby participation, of the wishes related to hobby type and context, and the obstacles of hobby participation. The data was weighted by a weighting variable counted by province, municipal-level type, gender and class-level.

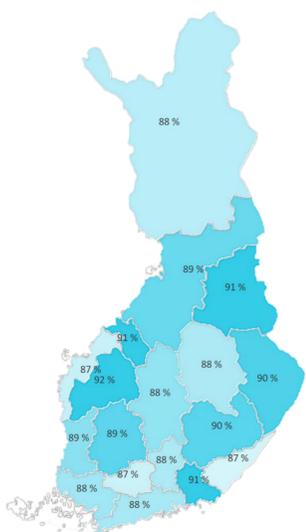


Figure 1. Provincial distribution of hobbies (art/sports).

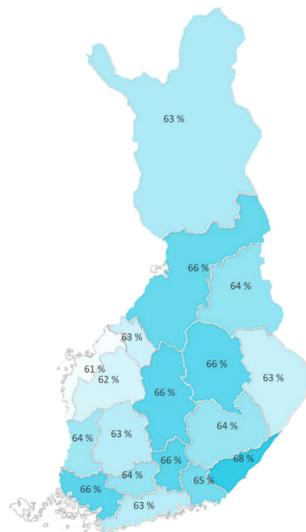


Figure 2. Own perception about the amount of sufficient physical activity by provincial distribution (2016).

NON-PARTICIPATION

The multilevel tests counting for both individual and various communal-level relationships resulted mainly in statistically non-significant association. The results point out that hobby participation more likely depends on other -personal and intrinsic emotional-motivational experiences- such as motives and attitudes towards different kinds of hobbies; arts, culture or sports. Some associations were, however, discovered between regional-level indicators and non-participation.

Figure 3 shows that non-participation rates vary across type of municipality and school-level. It is slightly more prevalent in the dense populated municipalities and among the secondary schoolers. Respectively, a linear association is found with number of inhabitants and non-participation which is predicted also by school-level (Figure 4). School-level points out to be in a decisive role; secondary schoolers, i.e. teenager tend to profile in non-participation which evidently is explained by age and phase of life. Other things beyond hobbies become more crucial, e.g. friends and growing independent.

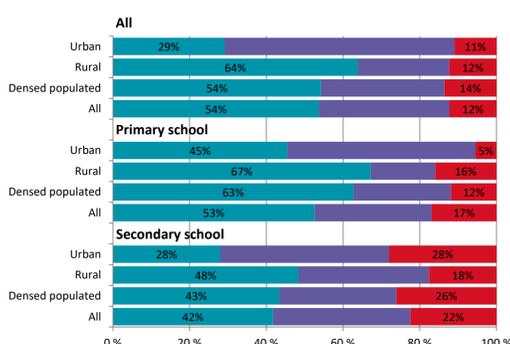


Figure 3. Prevalence of the non-participation by municipal-level in year 2017 (N = 105 437).

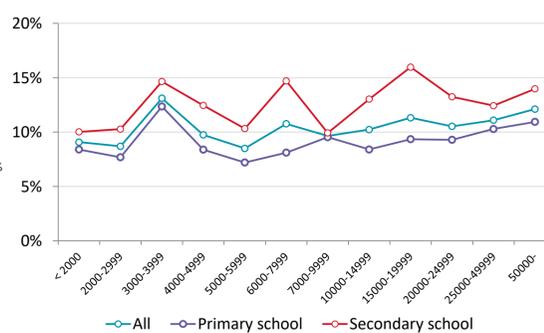


Figure 4. Non-participation explained by municipal number of inhabitants and school-level.

HOBBY PARAMETERS %

- Division of hobbies: girls 91 % / boys 87 %
- Primary school 90 % / secondary school 87 %
- Art hobbies: girls 86 % / boys 70 %
- Sports or physical exercise: girls 84 % / boys 81 %
- Sufficient amount of physical activity: primary 73 % / secondary 51 %

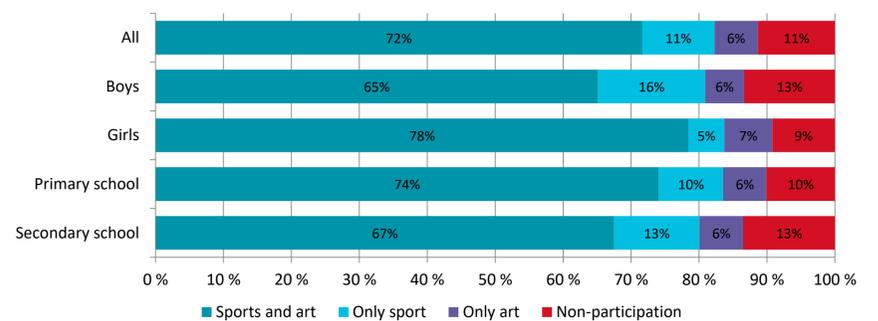


Figure 5. Prevalence of the hobby participation in year 2017 (N = 105 437).

The survey results point out that part of the hobbies are gendered: girls tend to favor creative hobbies, such as visual arts, music or dance.

Depending on the focus hobby participation varies; non-participation is higher among boys than girls, boys do three times more sports as an only hobby compared to girls.

Indoor ball games are more popular among boys (49 %) than girls (30 %).

Accordingly boys play more racket sports (27 %) or ice sports (41 %) than girls (19 % / 31 %)

THE OBSTACLES OF PARTICIPATION

In order to advance young people's opportunities for hobby participation, in year 2017 the National student survey was included questions about the reasons of non-participation. The knowledge of the reasons helps to remove obstacles and create such contexts and circumstances which lower the threshold of hobby participation. A variable was formed which counted the proportions of each individual case of a given reason for non-participation (Figure 6).

The main reason for non-participation is that youngsters have something else to do. In other words, having a hobby is not simply attractive enough. The other reasons remain quite insignificant in proportions, yet important in leisure time policy sense. The time youngsters allocate in hobby activities *per se* is associated with their well-being. In another words, children and youngsters benefit of active participation in hobbies. Having things to do -both organized and unorganized- creates a valuable developmental context for children's growth.

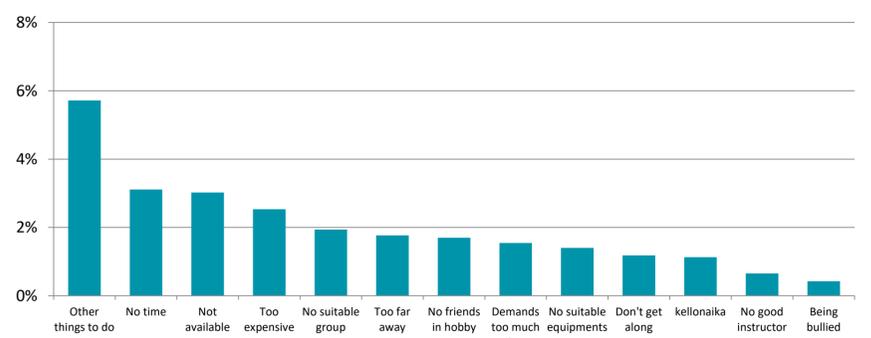


Figure 6. Obstacles of hobby participation in year 2017 (N=11 770).

Table 1. Association between municipal-level and the obstacles of participation.

	N (%)	OR (95% CI)
Too far away		
Urban	108 (2 %)	1.00
Rural	49 (4 %)	1.9 (1.3-2.8)
Densed populated	51 (3 %)	1.4 (1.0-2.1)
No suitable group		
Urban	132 (3 %)	1.00
Rural	52 (4 %)	1.6 (1.1-2.3)
Densed populated	44 (3 %)	1.0 (0.69-1.4)

PROJECT RESEARCHERS

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