



— COOPERATION FSI & MONALIIKU —

GIRLS CAN!

FIND YOUR SPORT

A guide to sports activities

MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION AND CULTURE


**FINLANDS
SVENSKA
IDROTT**



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INTRODUCTION

This guide helps immigrant families to understand the activities and culture of Finnish sports clubs. In Finland, sports clubs offer children, young people and adults the opportunity to exercise and have fun. Starting a new hobby can sometimes seem difficult, but this guide gives practical advice to make it easier.

This guide will give you information such as:

- 1** How to start a new hobby
- 2** Where to find a suitable sport group
- 3** What to know before you start

You'll also get tips on what is usually expected of hobbyists and their parents. The aim is to make families feel welcome and confident to take part in sports. This guide will encourage everyone to get involved in sport and help make it a good experience for everyone!

This guide has been produced as part of **Girls Can!** project in collaboration with Finland's Svenska Idrott. The aim of the project is to get girls from immigrant backgrounds and their families more involved in sports clubs. During the project, partner sports clubs were trained on how to organise intercultural sports and a more inclusive sports environment.

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HOW SPORTS CLUBS WORK?

In Finland, sports clubs are important communities where people can exercise together. **They offer opportunities for people of all ages and from all backgrounds to exercise.** They are often local associations run by volunteers or a small number of paid staff. Clubs offer a range of activities just for fun without previous experience, or for goal-oriented training and competitions.

Joining a sports club is usually easy. First, you choose a sport or club and sign up. Most clubs have groups for different ages and skill levels, so you can join without previous experience. There is usually a membership fee and training fees to cover things like pitch hire and coaches' fees. Fees vary depending on the club and the sport, but in many places families can apply for financial support if they need it.

Sport is an important part of many children's and young people's lives. **Through sport, children learn to work in a group, to bond and to respect others.** They can also make new friends and develop their skills in a safe environment. Adults can also get involved in clubs, either as amateurs or as volunteers. Volunteering can take the form of organising events, taking care of the teams or fundraising. Sports clubs offer everyone the opportunity to exercise and be part of a community.





WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO EXERCISE?

IN GENERAL

Exercise strengthens the heart, improves circulation and helps to maintain a healthy weight.

Exercise reduces stress, boosts mood and improves concentration.

Exercise helps you sleep better and improves your memory and learning ability.

Exercise reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis.

Exercise brings people together and teaches important skills such as teamwork.



FROM GIRLS' PERSPECTIVE

Exercise helps girls feel more confident and appreciate their own bodies.

Exercise gives girls self-confidence, which is especially important in adolescence.

Exercise helps girls to know their limits and gives them the courage to stand up for themselves, which is important in life.

Sport helps girls to make new friends and feel part of the community, which supports their well-being and their role in society.





STARTING A HOBBY

FIND A SUITABLE SPORT

Find out which sport you're interested in, there are plenty of options both for individuals and teams. You can also try out many sports free of charge by contacting a sports club.

CHECK OUT YOUR LOCAL CLUBS

Visit your municipality's website or Google it. You can also ask your school or friends for advice if you can't find any information. You can also search for a sport in your town or city using the Suomisport sports search.

CONTACT A CLUB

Many clubs have a website with an email address or phone number. You can contact them and ask how to get involved.

SIGN UP

You can often register via the website, but you can also ask if you can register on the first attempt.

PAY THE PARTICIPATION FEE

Many clubs have an entry fee to cover the cost of the training sessions. In some cases, you can apply for a subsidy if the fee seems too expensive.

COME TO THE FIRST TRAINING SESSION

Bring exercise clothes and a water bottle. Coaches or other players will tell you what else you might need.

DARE TO ASK FOR HELP

If something seems difficult or you don't understand, ask your coach or other participants.





GETTING INVOLVED IN A HOBBY

Once a hobby has started, there are a few things both parents and hobbyists should remember. Here are some examples of how to promote enjoyable activities that everyone can engage in and enjoy according to their own abilities.

- **Participate regularly:** It's recommended to participate as regularly as possible.
- **Encourage and support:** Parents and close ones can encourage the child to feel good about the activity.
- **Help with club activities:** parents can help with transport, fundraising, events, etc.
- **Take care of schedules:** Parents can remind the child of practice times and help them arrive on time.
- **Set a good example:** It is important to behave fairly and respectfully at games and practices.
- **Keep in touch with the club:** If you have any questions or changes, you should talk to the coaches or club officials.



PROBLEM SITUATIONS

Parents can face many challenges when their child is involved in hobbies. Here are some common problems and ways to solve them.

- **Declining interest:** if a child no longer wants to do the activity, a parent can ask why. If it's because they're tired or too competitive, they can consider whether a lighter training regime or a new sport might be a better option.
- **Too much competitiveness:** If your child feels under pressure to do something, it is important to remind them that it should be fun. Parents can talk to the coach if the training feels too demanding.
- **Scheduling problems:** if your child has many hobbies, it can be difficult to find time for school and family. A parent can help make a schedule and think about whether there are too many activities.
- **Bullying:** If your child is being bullied in a hobby, it's a good idea for a parent to talk to the child and find out what happened. Then you can contact the coach or club to make the bullying stop.
- **Loneliness in a group:** if a child feels left out, a parent can encourage him or her to get to know others. The coach can also be informed about the situation so that the group atmosphere is maintained.

The most important thing is that the parent supports the child, listens to them and intervenes early. This keeps the activity a fun and rewarding experience.





QUITTING A HOBBY

If your child wants to quit, it is easy to do so.

First, inform the coach or club contact person of the decision, for example by email or phone.

It is often a good idea to give the reason for quitting, as this can give the club ideas to improve their services. However, this is not compulsory, the most important thing is to inform the club that you are quitting. If you have paid seasonal or monthly fees, check whether you can get some of them back. Quitting is normal and clubs understand that life circumstances or interests may change.





FUNDING A HOBBY

The cost of hobbies varies widely depending on the sport, club and equipment. Sometimes hobbies can be expensive, which can be a challenge for families. However, there are many ways to get financial help or reduce costs.

This section gives advice to parents if a child's hobby costs too much. The aim is for every child to be able to participate and enjoy sport, despite financial challenges.



● ***TIPS FOR FUNDING YOUR HOBBY***

- **Ask your club for support:** Some clubs and families with families in need of support can help families in difficult circumstances. It is worth asking the club directly if support is available.
- **Ask about a payment plan:** Some clubs allow you to split the fees into smaller parts so that you don't have to pay for the hobby all at once.
- **Apply for a grant:** There are funds and associations in Finland that provide financial support for children and young people's hobbies.
- **Ask your social services:** In some situations, the municipal social services can support children's hobbies as part of the family's welfare services.
- **Search for used equipment:** Many clubs and websites offer the possibility to buy second-hand sports equipment at low or no cost.



LIST ON FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

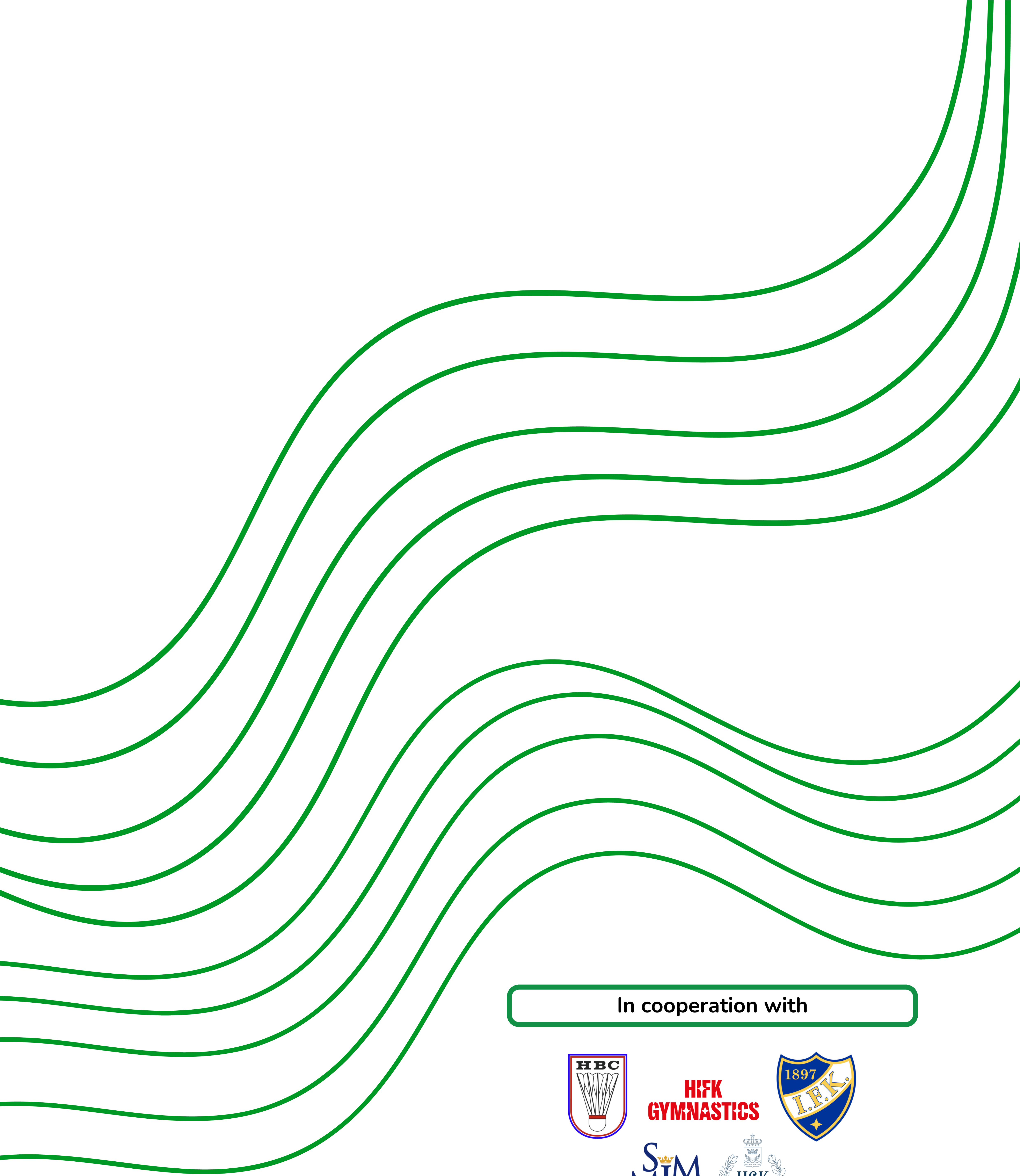
Fund name	What?	For who?	Application period
Valio akatemia	Valio akatemia awards grants for sports activities and well-being of children and young people.	Under 18 year old	Applications open in May
Pelastakaa lapset ry	Intended for children and adolescents who are at risk of starting or continuing a hobby because of their family's financial situation.	Under 18 year old	Applications open in January
Hope ry	The grant is for regular activities and is paid directly to the organiser on receipt of an invoice.	6-17year olds	Apply all year round
SOS-Lapsikylä Unelmista.fi	Unelmista totta-fund enables children from families in financially challenging circumstances who would otherwise not have access to a hobby.	7-17 year olds	Apply all year round
Tukikummit	Tukikummit provides grants for hobbies for children and young people.	5-25 year olds	Apply all year round

LIST ON FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

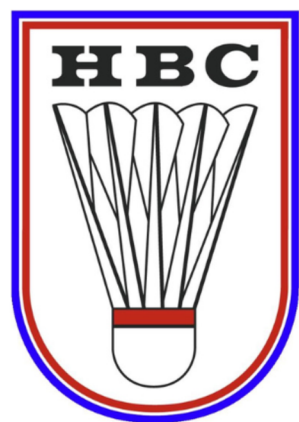
Fund name	What?	For who?	Application period
Tukilinja	Tukilinja's grants are intended to support recreational activities for children and young people with disabilities. Disabilities can include mobility problems, long-term illnesses, mental health problems or neurological abnormalities.	No age limit	Apply all year round
MLL local organizations	Some MLL local organizations offer grants for recreational activities.	-	-

● OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Municipalities - Income support:** Children's hobby expenses can be covered by supplementary income support from the municipality. This allowance can be applied for if the family receives basic income support from Kela.
- **Your sports club:** If you are already involved in sports club, some of them offer financial support to help cover the cost of the activity or possible time off work. Feel free to ask your club's contact person about this possibility.



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