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# ASSOCIATIONS FOR ALL

WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATION?

WHAT DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSOCIATIONS ARE THERE?

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASSOCIATIONS?

WHY SHOULD I JOIN AN ASSOCIATION?

HOW DO I FIND ASSOCIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES?



*This brochure provides information about associations, hobbies, and how to meet people in Finland. You will also get to know why it might be a good idea for you specifically to have an active free time.*

## NETWORK

- A network consists of everyone you know and are in contact with (family, relatives, classmates, colleagues, neighbors, etc.).
- When you move to a new country or city, your network is often small; therefore you must actively work to get to know new people.
- The network might be important when you are looking for employment, hobbies, or just need someone to socialize with in your spare time.
- In Finland and Ostrobothnia, jobs are often found through networks and contacts.
- One way to expand your network is by being active in your spare time, for example by taking a course or being part of an association.



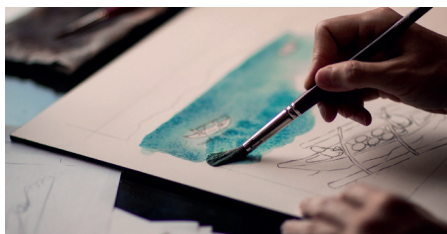
## WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATION?

- An association is a meeting place where people who share the same interests gather.
- The activities carried out via associations are not done with the goal of making financial profit. People meet to do something they enjoy doing, in a group environment.
- The leaders or trainers of the association do not normally receive payment for their work, but they serve on a voluntary basis.
- Anyone who wishes to, can join an association.
- There are associations for children, youths, and adults.

## WHAT TYPES OF ASSOCIATIONS ARE THERE?

*-There is something for everyone!*

- Athletic** associations for people who enjoy sports, e.g. floorball, equestrian sports, or skiing.
- Cultural associations** for people who like theater, art, or choral music.
- Craft associations** for people who like handiwork, e.g. handicrafts, carpentry, or weaving.
- Trade unions** assist when there are problems at the workplace. There are different trade unions for different industries.
- Pensioners' associations** for elders who want to socialize and have fun with other people.



- Support associations** arrange meetings for people with certain diseases, such as diabetes or cancer.
- Relief associations** are associations for social engagement, such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, or animal welfare associations. Through these you can, for example, be involved in raising money for important causes.
- Political associations** gather people with similar political views.
- Other associations** can include friendship associations, scouting, hunting, 4H, Folkhälsan, Martha, Hem och Skola, student associations, etc.

It is estimated that there are about 100,000 active associations in Finland today, and about 15 million association memberships. There are only 5.5 million inhabitants in Finland, which means that each Finn is a member of approximately three different associations.

## ASSOCIATIONS IN HISTORY

- Associations have existed in Finland since the end of the 1800's.

- Associations were started to meet needs in society. For example, a women's association could found an elder care facility, and Martha associations arranged education for women within child care, agriculture, and cooking.

- At the beginning of the 20th century, an increasing number of factories were built in the cities, which meant that new workers were

needed. Therefore, many people moved from the countryside to the cities. Workers gained more spare time as working weeks became shorter, and they needed to find activities to engage in.

- Those interested in things like wrestling, gymnastics, soccer, singing, and theatre founded associations.

- If one was new to a city, the associations became an important place to find new friends.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASSOCIATIONS?

### MEMBER

- If there are no members, there is no association – the members are the association.
- Each member pays a membership fee to the association. This can be once a month or once a year.
- The money from membership fees goes to the association. They do not go to any individual in the association or on the board.
- The money raised as membership fees is used for things like rent of association facilities, equipment, transport, and association activities.

### BOARD

- An association is led by a board that anyone in the association can be elected to. The board decides what happens in the association.
- The board usually contains a chairperson, a secretary, a cashier, and some additional members.

### TALKO

- "Talko" is very common in associations. It is a unique concept that means you work together and assist one another with various tasks. This work often takes place during evenings and weekends.
- Talko can include baking, making coffee, grilling sausages, and selling at various events. You can even assist as a security guard or parking attendant. Children and youths often sell things like candy, cookies, raffle tickets, or toilet paper for the association.
- The money collected in this manner goes to the association. Those who participate in talko do so voluntarily, without pay, in their spare time.

### EQUIPMENT AND COSTS

- For some associations you must provide your own equipment. The equipment can sometimes be expensive. It is often a good idea to look through notice boards, flea markets, or online for used equipment.
- If you have difficulty paying the membership fee, you can ask if it is possible to divide the payment into smaller portions.

## WHY SHOULD I JOIN AN ASSOCIATION?

- You will have something fun to do in your spare time.
- You get to practice your hobby alongside others with the same interest as you.
- You get to learn new things.
- You feel better when you have meaningful spare time activities.
- You get a chance to use your Swedish or Finnish.
- You get new acquaintances.
- You get a chance to learn Finnish social codes.
- Your network will grow. You might get to know people who can give you employment tips. Many jobs in Finland are found via contacts.
- When you apply for a job, you can include your association activities on your CV.



## STATISTICS ON BEING ACTIVE IN AN ASSOCIATION:

**95%**

*feel better after engaging in an association*

**93%**

*develop as individuals*

**67%**

*feel less lonely*

**90%**

*feel fellowship with others and make new friends*

**40%**

*feel that their involvement has helped them in their working lives*

**97%**

*have gotten a more meaningful life*

**92%**

*have fun*

Source:  
Volontärbyrån,  
Volontärbarometern 2020


## SAID BY NEW FINNS THAT ARE ACTIVE IN ASSOCIATIONS

“I have found others to exercise with, and don't have to go to the gym alone anymore.”

“It also feels good that the people in the association have gained confidence in me and that I have been given responsibility for my own groups as well.”

”You get to know people within the community. You have someone to say hello to at the grocery store.”

**JULIA / USA**



“The hobby becomes a fixed point in your everyday life and something to look forward to. Relieves stress and provides meaning.”

”If possible, common interests will bring you closer to the Finns and make you understand them better! :)”

“It's good if you, in your new country, can continue with a hobby that you had in your home country. It becomes a continuation and a feeling of security.”

**THEODOROS / GREECE**

## HOW DO I FIND ASSOCIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES?

- Ask someone, such as a teacher, supervisor, neighbor, or a friend.
- Search online, on Facebook, and on the city's or municipality's website.
- Libraries, city halls, and other info points.
- In addition to associations, there are also adult education centers (Arbeter- och Medborgarinstitut) in many municipalities. There you can also find many different courses, events, and lectures.
- Do you want to try out a hobby with someone? Find out if there are spare time volunteers in your municipality.

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ammattikorkeakoulu

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i Österbotten

the integration port  
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**Svenska  
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2014–2020



Europeiska unionen  
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