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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>ON THE STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING POPULATION HEALTH  
IN UZBEKISTAN THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION OF OPEN SPORTS AREAS  
IN PUBLIC PLACES**O. Kh. Abdalimov***PhD in Pedagogical Sciences**Professor of the Department of "Theory and Methods of Handball and Rugby"**Uzbek State University of Physical Culture and Sports**Chirchik, Uzbekistan*

## ABOUT ARTICLE

**Key words:** health, sports, sports grounds, accessibility, outdoor exercise equipment, society.**Received:** 10.11.25**Accepted:** 11.11.25**Published:** 13.12.25**Abstract:** Maintaining and improving public health is becoming increasingly important, especially in the context of urban development and rising morbidity due to a sedentary lifestyle. This article attempts to highlight one of the priority areas of Uzbekistan's state social policy: the creation of accessible and effective infrastructure for physical education and sports, specifically the establishment of open sports grounds in public spaces. The author believes that this approach can be an effective tool for increasing citizens' physical activity, promoting public health, preventing chronic diseases, and fostering a healthy lifestyle culture.

**Introduction.** The concept of open sports fields in public spaces is currently quite common and aims to create accessible, safe, and multifunctional spaces for physical activity, social interaction, and improved quality of life. These measures help combat the decline in muscle function associated with a sedentary lifestyle and promote healthy functioning.

The most obvious goal of creating such spaces is to support an active lifestyle. At the same time, such places potentially serve as a factor in social interaction and community strengthening, and, as part of modern urban infrastructure, they make the urban environment more attractive and healthy.

Review of the regulatory framework.

An active lifestyle and sports unite people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. The emerging global trend toward designing outdoor sports facilities is also reflected in the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

For the first time, regulations on open sports grounds with specialized equipment (horizontal bars, parallel bars, wall bars, etc.) designed for street gymnastics and strength training using body weight, accessible to anyone, were included in Decree No. UP-6099 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2020 [ 1], when the coronavirus pandemic exposed the low level of physical health of the country's population. This document established that:

- when constructing new multi-storey buildings, it is mandatory to provide for the construction of modern sports grounds;

- employees of government agencies and organizations must be provided with access to open sports grounds and, in general, conditions must be created for maintaining a healthy lifestyle;

In 2021, Presidential Decree No. PP-5282 [2] of the Republic of Uzbekistan specifically provides for development measures, including for open sports grounds. In order to attract broad segments of the population to physical education and sports, this resolution:

- the Program of measures for the further development of sports such as walking, running, mini-football, badminton, streetball and Workout in 2021-2022 was approved;

- it has been determined that competitions will be held on an annual basis, including in the "Workout" category, the costs of which will be reimbursed from funds provided for in the parameters of the State budget for the Ministry of Sports;

- Quantitative parameters for the creation of 1,164 sports grounds for badminton, streetball, and workout in the regions between 2021 and 2025 have been approved. Furthermore, it has been established that when creating sports grounds, consideration will be given to the convenience of residential areas and compliance with international requirements, as well as the provision of synthetic tartan surfaces and the suitability of these sports grounds for the age and interests of all segments of the population. Regional targeted programs will be developed using standard projects in each mahalla of districts and cities.

- customs benefits are provided for special sports equipment and accessories, inventory, construction materials and material and technical resources not produced in Uzbekistan.

In 2022, with the aim of widely promoting a healthy lifestyle through the systematic organization of mass sports competitions among young people in mahallas, raising their involvement in mass sports to a new level, and ensuring the implementation of the objectives

defined in Goal No. 67 of the Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 [3], Resolution No. PP-201 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan [ 4] was adopted. A separate objective in the resolution is the construction of open universal sports grounds as part of the sports infrastructure.

In 2023, to systematically organize work on developing sports infrastructure, maintaining the cleanliness of sports grounds, and improving adjacent areas in mahallas, the corresponding Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-245 [5] was adopted. This document outlines the procedures for interaction between the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Preschool and School Education, and local governments regarding the construction and maintenance of sports grounds.

The "Uzbekistan 2030" strategy, adopted in 2023 [6], among reforms to state youth policy and sports, calls for the creation of sports grounds for physical education and mass sports in at least 5,000 mahallas, as well as opportunities for approximately 130,000 young people to participate regularly in sports. The primary goal of these measures is to expand the reach of young people involved in physical education and sports.

Contents of the question.

Outdoor sports facilities must certainly meet certain principles and requirements. The key principles for organizing physical activity spaces include:

- accessibility and versatility, in other words, such places should be accessible to a wide range of people, located in areas free from restrictions, accessible without expense, where it is possible to conduct various types of training or games;
- Safety. From a principle standpoint, this isn't about infrastructure or equipment safety requirements, but rather the importance of ensuring protection from vehicles, creating safe conditions for those exercising on the site, and protecting against crime;
- space optimization: Different areas and types of activities should be organized so as not to interfere with each other, ensuring comfortable use and also allowing training for all age groups;
- multifunctionality , that is, the maximum use of space for various types of activities, when the design includes strength and cardio training, places for active games for children and adults, sports facilities based on the needs of different groups of the population, so that all visitors can maintain an active lifestyle.

The main requirements for open sports grounds include:

- quality of the surface: the surface must be smooth, non-slip, with good drainage so that the area is suitable for use after rain or wet cleaning;

- lighting necessary to enable classes at different times of the day, both natural and artificial;

- comfortable stay, where there are places for rest, and access to water is possible.

It seems interesting to highlight modern trends applied in the design and construction of outdoor sports grounds:

- Integration with nature. This means that the future sports ground improvement project is designed and integrated into the landscape to create a sense of unity with nature. People exercise outdoors, admiring the beauty of bodies of water or trees. Functional zones are separated by hedges, flower beds, and wooden structures with plants. Yoga and other personal training areas are planted with turf grass. Solar panels can be installed.

- interactive technologies. Sites are equipped with Wi-Fi modules for free internet access, as well as QR codes that users can use to receive workout recommendations. Additionally, stands or other structures equipped with light indicators or touch panels that offer game-like exercises can be installed;

- Inclusive design, emphasizing the "sport for everyone" principle, meaning sports grounds integrate equipment or individual elements for people with disabilities. This could include special exercise equipment accessible to wheelchairs, or tactile paths and sensor systems for the visually impaired;

- and individuality. While meeting all mandatory requirements and adhering to basic principles, designers strive to emphasize the uniqueness of their property, making it more appealing to users: with striking elements, unusual details, and a signature design.

The Republic of Korea offers a good example of a well-executed approach to organizing exercise facilities in public spaces. Exercise equipment, available for free use, can be found in every park, square, embankment, and even in the mountains. The equipment was installed throughout the country as part of a government initiative aimed at increasing public activity and health. This was a direct response to the rising obesity rate, which correlated with the rise in fast food consumption.

Over the past several decades, the Republic of Korea has gained widespread international recognition not only for its technological advancement but also for its outstanding achievements in various international sporting competitions and hosting numerous major sporting events. However, the country initially focused on the "sports development" approach, while the role of sport as a tool for social and personal development through the "development through sport" approach was clearly underestimated. Recently, however, the South Korean government has begun to express interest in the "development through sport" approach,

striving to become a truly advanced sporting nation. Given its geopolitical location, territorial size, and population, the Republic of Korea's sporting achievements on the international stage are outstanding. In terms of hosting major sporting events, Korea has become one of six countries in the world to have hosted major international sporting events: the 1988 Summer Olympics, the 2002 FIFA World Cup, the 2011 World Athletics Championships, the 2018 Winter Olympics, the 2019 World Aquatics Championships, the 2024 Winter Youth Olympics, and the 2025 Asian Athletics Championships. In addition, Korea has hosted the Asian Games four times in the past three decades: Seoul in 1986, Gangwon in 1999, Busan in 2002, and Incheon in 2014.

Historically, as noted above, Korea has primarily followed a "sports development" approach, which focuses on athlete promotion and emphasizes having sports organizations attract and develop talent for representation at the highest levels. This approach primarily focuses on achievements in specific sports [7].

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Korea has been attempting to harness the intrinsic value and power of sport as a means of personal and social development, as well as positive social change. This approach, dubbed "development through sport" or "sport for development," primarily focuses on the role sport can play in social development and societal change.

This idea is reflected in the explanation and justification of the "development through sport" approach presented by the United Nations:

"By its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. Sport brings people and communities together, highlighting commonalities and transcending cultural or ethnic barriers. Sport provides a platform for learning skills such as discipline, self-confidence, and leadership, and it also teaches key principles such as tolerance, cooperation, and respect. Sport teaches the value of effort and how to cope with victory and defeat. When these positive aspects of sport are emphasized, sport becomes a powerful tool through which the UN can work to achieve its goals [8]."

In the late 1990s, the legal framework for health promotion policy in Korea was established: the Health Promotion Act was passed in 1995 and the Health Promotion Fund was established in 1997, thus emphasizing long-term health promotion policy. The Ministry of Health introduced the practice of formulating a 10-year Health Plan, which is created in accordance with changes in the social environment and reviewed every five years. The first plan was launched for the period 2002–2010, the second plan was announced for 2011–2020, and the third plan is being implemented from 2021 to 2030.

It's worth noting that such plans are developed through an extensive consultation process between private sector experts and government officials, along with expert assessments from fiscal authorities, to ensure the feasibility of the policy. This collaboration has improved the logical linkages, policy effectiveness, and the appropriateness of targets and performance indicators. This work has resulted in the identification of thematic health care areas and performance indicators to support the plan's success.

The main risks of open sports grounds in public places:

- significant initial investments are not adequately related to the costs of subsequent maintenance of such sites;
- uneven distribution of sports facilities between urban and rural areas;
- lack of clear safety standards for equipment installed in open areas, regular inspections and certification to ensure the smooth operation of the equipment and the safety of users;

Based on the above, the following solution options are proposed:

- the introduction of new forms of governance at the level of local government bodies and citizens' self-government, in other words, the mechanisms of interaction between khokimiyats and mahallas should be flexible, understandable and with a clear distribution of powers regarding sports facilities;
- digitalization of management and implementation of information services in the sports sector: a register of sports facilities, a system for recording and monitoring events, procurement and supply on an uninterrupted basis;
- Implementation of public-private partnership models and the attraction of corporate sponsors. Strategic partnerships between khokimiyats and technology companies can accelerate their market entry and facilitate the deployment of equipment in public parks and residential complexes;
- development of the advertising market for healthy lifestyles, leisure and health facilities, physical education and sports.

**Conclusion.** In our view, commercialization, on the one hand, and the optimization of shared resource use (between government and business), on the other, can facilitate the successful implementation of the concept of open sports facilities in public spaces, based on innovation, coordination, sustainability, openness, and collaborative development. It is important not only to build but also to effectively use and manage sports facilities, developing an integrated approach and intersectoral collaboration.

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