

# FINANCING STRATEGIES FOR KURASH IN UZBEKISTAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH JAPAN'S SPORTS FINANCING MODEL

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The significance of physical activity and sports in modern society is evident through its growing inclusion in daily life, marking it as a crucial component for health enhancement, cultural promotion of wellness, means of communication, leisure, and a deterrent against negative habits. This emphasis on sports and physical well-being is prominently reflected in the strategic vision laid out in the "Uzbekistan - 2030" plan, specifically within its agenda for state policy and sports sector reforms [1].

In Uzbekistan, the sports domain and industry benefit from a stable financial environment. Annually, the government earmarks substantial funds within the state budget for sports through a dedicated program. This financial support facilitates the development of various sports entities, including organizations, clubs, teams, federations, and educational institutions, underscoring the state's commitment to fostering a robust sports infrastructure [2].

**Table 1. Forecast of Social Expenditure Composition for 2024 (in Billion UZS)**

Category	Amount (in million sums)	Percentage
Education	69,076	46%

Healthcare	33,439	22%
Other social expenses	5,177	3%
Social benefits, subsidies and compensations	18,632	12%
Transfers from the budget to the Pension Fund	16,000	11%
Housing and communal services subsidies	1,500	1%
Culture	2,643	2%
Sports	2,851	2%
Science	2,186	1%

*Source: mf.uz-The Ministry of Economy and Finance*

Kurash, a traditional form of wrestling that has its roots deeply embedded in the history and culture of Uzbekistan, represents more than just a sport; it is a testament to the nation's rich heritage and a symbol of its enduring traditions. Originating in the region over a millennium ago, Kurash has played a pivotal role in Uzbek society, serving not only as a form of physical competition but also as a means of fostering community spirit, discipline, and respect among participants. As Uzbekistan navigates the complexities of modernization and global integration, Kurash stands as a bridge between the past and the present, offering a unique blend of cultural identity and contemporary relevance.

Despite its significant cultural value and the growing interest it has garnered on the international stage, including its inclusion in prestigious events like the Asian Games, Kurash faces considerable challenges in terms of financing and development. The transition from a traditional sport practiced in local communities to a globally recognized competitive discipline requires substantial financial resources. These resources are necessary for training athletes, organizing

competitions, and promoting the sport internationally to ensure its sustainability and growth.

The financing of Kurash in Uzbekistan is currently characterized by a reliance on government funding, with sporadic contributions from private sponsors and international sports organizations. This model, while providing essential support, also presents limitations that could impede the sport's potential for expansion and its ability to compete on a global scale. The need for a more diversified and sustainable financial strategy is evident, prompting a closer examination of the existing mechanisms of support, the challenges they present, and the opportunities they offer for the future of Kurash.

The financing of traditional sports, such as Kurash in Uzbekistan, presents unique challenges and opportunities. This literature review extends the discussion by incorporating real sources that shed light on the broader context of sports financing in different regions, offering insights that can be applied to the case of Kurash.

One of the article provides an in-depth look at the historical and cultural significance of Kurash in Uzbekistan, emphasizing its role in the national identity and the efforts to promote it both locally and globally. The study highlights the need for targeted investment to preserve and promote Kurash as a cultural heritage sport [3].

The paper on Financing Sports from the Budget of the Republic of Serbia by B. Dašić analyzes the state's role in funding sports, emphasizing the importance of government support for the development and prosperity of sports sectors. The study suggests that creating favorable conditions for sports development, including traditional sports like Kurash, requires significant financial backing from the state [4].

Another research examines the experience of several foreign countries in financing the physical culture and sports sector, offering examples of grant support, endowment capital formation, crowdfunding, and sports lotteries as mechanisms to support sports entities. The content analysis of normative acts and scientific

publications provides a foundation for adapting successful foreign practices to the Russian context, which can be insightful for Uzbekistan's efforts in financing Kurash [5].

The article on the System of Hungarian Sport Financing, with Special Regard to Public Finance Aspects by Nikolett Ágnes Tóth, Gábor discusses the Hungarian model of sports financing, focusing on the role of public funds and the principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity in their use. The study underlines the shift from extensive to intensive financing phases and the prioritization of innovative technologies in sports. This model offers valuable lessons for the sustainable financing of traditional sports like Kurash, emphasizing the multiplicative return on investment in the sports sector [6].

In our country, the financing of the sports sector is almost entirely sourced from the state budget. However, optimizing the funding system for sports and attracting non-budgetary sources of finance is a top priority. In this regard, looking towards the experience of countries with a balanced system of sports financing, including both budgetary and extra-budgetary sources, is deemed appropriate.

One such country is Japan. The experience of Japan is of particular interest, because the practice of financial support of sports in Japan is characterized by a diversity of funding sources.

Japan, known for its advanced economy and strong global presence in various sports disciplines, offers a comprehensive model of sports financing that encompasses substantial government investment, significant private sector involvement, and a well-established infrastructure. On the other hand, Uzbekistan, with its rich cultural heritage and emerging sports sector, presents a contrasting model focused on leveraging traditional sports like Kurash to foster national identity and international recognition.

## **Table 2. Detailed Comparison of Sports Financing Mechanisms between Japan and Uzbekistan**

<b>Financing Aspect</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Uzbekistan</b>	<b>Comparative Analysis</b>
<b>Government Investment</b>	Extensive investment in sports at all levels, from grassroots to elite.	Focused investment, particularly in promoting traditional sports and developing elite athletes.	Japan's government investment is broader and more systematic, covering a wide range of sports and levels, whereas Uzbekistan focuses on key areas with cultural significance and high potential.
<b>Private Sector Involvement</b>	High engagement with major corporations sponsoring teams, leagues, and events.	Emerging engagement, with some private companies beginning to sponsor sports events and athletes.	Japan benefits from a mature sports marketing environment, attracting significant private sponsorship. Uzbekistan is in the early stages of cultivating private sector involvement in sports financing.
<b>International Collaboration</b>	Active participation in international sports organizations, hosting international events, and	Limited but growing international collaboration, with efforts to gain recognition for traditional sports like	Japan's established presence in the international sports community facilitates greater access to international funding and events, while Uzbekistan is working

	receiving funding for global competitions.	Kurash on the international stage.	towards enhancing its international sports profile.
<b>Infrastructure and Facilities</b>	World-class sports facilities and widespread access to sports infrastructure across the country.	Developing sports infrastructure, with recent investments in major urban centers and for international competitions.	Japan's advanced infrastructure supports a wide range of sports activities, from amateur to professional levels. Uzbekistan is in the process of upgrading and expanding its sports facilities to meet international standards.
<b>Athlete Development Programs</b>	Comprehensive programs offering training, education, healthcare, and financial support for athletes.	Targeted programs mainly for athletes in traditional and Olympic sports, with increasing support for athlete development.	Japan provides extensive support for athletes' overall development, contributing to its success in international competitions. Uzbekistan's focus is on nurturing talent in specific sports, with growing attention to broader athlete support mechanisms.
<b>Public Participation</b>	High levels of public participation in	Increasing public interest in sports, particularly in	Japan's culture of active public participation in sports is supported by

<p><b>and Engagement</b></p>	<p>sports, supported by community programs and school sports initiatives.</p>	<p>traditional sports, with efforts to enhance community engagement and youth participation.</p>	<p>comprehensive community and educational programs. Uzbekistan sees a rising trend in public engagement, driven by a focus on traditional sports and national pride.</p>
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Source: Developed by the author

The detailed comparison between Japan and Uzbekistan's sports financing mechanisms reveals distinct approaches shaped by each country's cultural priorities, economic conditions, and sports traditions. Japan's comprehensive and multifaceted approach to sports financing, characterized by significant government and private sector investment, advanced infrastructure, and extensive athlete development programs, has established a strong foundation for sports at all levels. This approach has facilitated Japan's success in international sports and fostered a culture of widespread public participation and engagement in sports activities.

In contrast, Uzbekistan, while having a more focused approach, shows considerable potential for growth in sports financing. The country's emphasis on traditional sports like Kurash not only preserves cultural heritage but also offers unique opportunities for international recognition and development. Uzbekistan's efforts to enhance infrastructure, attract private sponsorship, and develop athlete support programs are crucial steps towards elevating its sports sector. Increasing international collaboration and leveraging the growing public interest in sports can further support Uzbekistan's ambitions on the global sports stage.

By adopting best practices from countries like Japan and tailoring them to its unique context, Uzbekistan can develop a more diversified and sustainable sports financing model. This model would not only support the development of traditional

and modern sports but also contribute to the country's broader socio-economic development goals.

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