

Physical Activity Factsheet

BANGLADESH



Demographics¹

Capital: Dhaka **Population:** 171 466 990 **Urban population:** 40% **Life expectancy:** 74 years

Gini inequality index: 0.33 **World Bank income category:** Low middle income

Introduction on physical activity promotion

Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and treat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer. It also helps to prevent hypertension, overweight and obesity and can improve mental health, quality of life and well-being. In this factsheet an overview is presented of the status of physical activity promotion and policy response in Bangladesh.

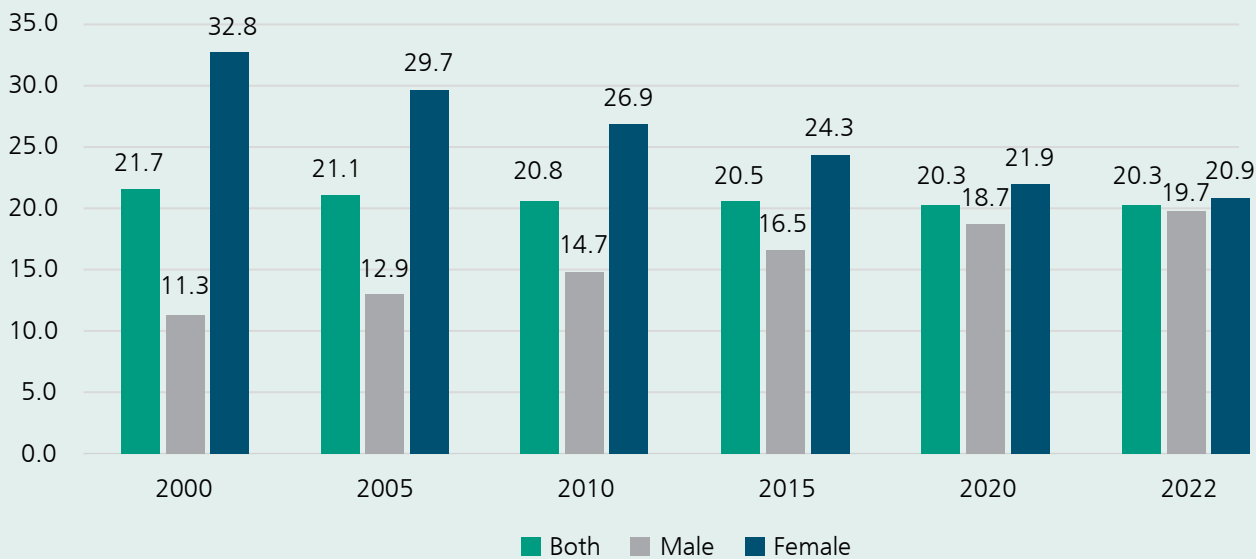
Physical activity participation

Estimated prevalence of physical inactivity²
Adults (18+ years)



Total: 20.3% Male: 19.7% Female: 20.9%

Prevalence of insufficient physical activity among adults aged 18+ years
(age-standardized estimate)²



National surveillance

Bangladesh has a national STEPS survey which includes questions to assess physical activity among adults. The questionnaire has been administered in 2022 the PA questions included are based on the GPAQ questionnaire. There is no national data on sedentary behavior.



Policy response

Bangladesh has no stand-alone national physical activity action plan, however policy actions to promote physical activity are included in the national Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2018–2025³.

The promotion of physical activity is addressed directly or indirectly in other policy domains, such as transport, road safety and urban planning. In 2023 Bangladesh conducted a national situational analysis using the WHO SAT tool to collate what is being done in terms of policy action to promote PA. All relevant policy domains, sectors and stakeholders were engaged.

National guidelines to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviors for both children and adults as well as an implementation roadmap to promote physical activity are currently being developed.



PA policy actions⁴

National target for PA	Yes
(sub)national PA communications campaign	No
National road-safety policy	Yes

Promotion of PA in the workplace	No
Brief intervention on PA in PHC	No
School based approach	Yes



National coordination mechanism and leadership in promotion of physical activity

There is a national focal point that addresses NCD risk factors, among which PA, within the Noncommunicable Disease Control Programme, Directorate General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW).

There is one National Multisectoral NCD Coordination Committee (NMNCC) under multisectoral action plan for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2018–2025 for prevention and control of NCDs including Physical activity.

Currently there is no separate national steering committee or coordination for PA stakeholders.



Promising initiatives

A description of national initiatives/success stories per policy domain

- ◉ In Bangladesh there are 64 district sports officer positions. They are responsible for organizing different sports training and inter-schools, colleges, and Madrasa competition for boys and girls in their respective districts.
- ◉ Physical activity is a mandatory part of the education curriculum in Bangladesh and schools are required to employ trained teachers to provide physical education classes. However not much is known implementation of the policy.
- ◉ The rights and protection of persons with disabilities act of 2013 was developed to ensure that people with disabilities are included in all spheres of society and not.
- ◉ Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority has drafted a regulation for pedestrian safety to ensure a safe walking environment for people in and around the urban areas of Dhaka city.
- ◉ High Court ordered the government to prohibit vehicles, especially motorbikes, from straying into walkways and footpaths in the capital city.

Data sources

- (1) The World Bank. Data on population, urban population, life expectancy, gini inequality index, and country income category. Accessed March 2025.
- (2) World Health Organization (2024). Global Health Observatory Data. Prevalence of insufficient physical activity among adults aged 18+ years (age-standardized estimate).

- (3) Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh (2018). Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of noncommunicable diseases 2018-2025.
- (4) NCD Country Capacity Survey (2023). World Health Organization.