

## **RECONCEPTUALIZATION AND INNOVATION STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTEERS OF SPORTS MEGA-EVENTS**

Along the many editions of the Olympic Games, several interpretations have defined the support volunteers have given to these sports mega-events. For example, in Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games, volunteering became “semi-professional” after the adoption of professional training in order to prepare volunteers for the local post-event labor market, a distinctive mark for the volunteers as legacy (Sustainability Report, 2009).

London 2012 Olympic Games volunteering counted on the same amount of volunteers expected to Brazil 2016 Olympic Games, in other words, 70,000 participants comprising one of the technical challenges to organizers in this 2016 megaevent as well as in further years, both in Brazil and abroad, in case semi-professionalization options is assumed (Pena; DaCosta, 2014).

In this chapter, professionalization is a route to be followed in 2016 Olympic Games and further editions having the Henry Etzkowitz (1994)’s Triple Helix Theory as a starting point based on the government-university-company relationship for generation of knowledge and innovation. Under these conditions, an interoperable educational platform model is presented as the innovation strategy in the targeted volunteering qualification program. Such selection is placed in contrast either in relation to classic face-to-face volunteering training or distance training experienced in 2007 Brazil Pan American Games, 2014 Football World Cup, and herein prevailing in the 2016 Olympic Games preparation.

The number of volunteers expected for Rio 2016 is the same of London 2012 Olympic Games: 70,000 participants. This is one of the technical challenges not only for the Rio 2016 organizers but also for future mega-events worldwide in case semi-professionalization is adopted (Pena; DaCosta, 2014).

This chapter shows that professionalization is a route to be followed not only for the 2016 Olympic Games but also for future editions, having the Henry Etzkowitz (1994)’s Triple Helix Theory as a starting point based on the government-university-company relationship to generate knowledge and innovation. Under these conditions, an interoperable educational platform model is introduced as the innovation strategy in the targeted volunteering qualification program. This suggestion contrasts against the classic face-to-face training or distance training, experienced by the volunteers of the 2007 Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro and the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, which will also be used to train the 2016 Olympic Games volunteers.

The non-traditional model herein proposed is also based on the 23rd recommendation of Olympic Agenda 2020 published by the International Olympic Committee in 2014. This IOC document suggests an involvement of the communities pertaining to the Olympic Movement all sharing a virtual hub which acts as a content repository, distributing information and knowledge to the general public, youths, students and volunteers in a collaborative network format (Olympic Agenda 2010).

To apply such innovative model, it is necessary that the virtual platform connects contents oriented towards university students from several courses in order to train volunteers for mega-events. For such connection, it is herein suggested the “Moodle” tool, a distance education platform based on public, free, modular, fully open and customizable software. Because of its inter-operational feature, this software guarantees content exportation and importation, and a comparatively easy interface with other platforms.

It will be possible then to create an interactive environment with DE (Distance Education) courses of universities and make them available in a diversified, decentralized and coordinated manner to encourage potential student volunteers.

This study concluded favorably for the feasibility of the shared model here presented in light of the 39th recommendation of Olympic Agenda 2020, which promotes a better dialogue between the Olympic Games’ and the International Olympic Movement’s stakeholders aiming at a better relationship with representatives of civil society institutions (education, culture, etc.). It is then crucial to point out that the development of a volunteering program that aims to be efficient has to face some challenges: (i) to include disabled people; (ii) to perform estimates of the economic value of the volunteers as a response to boost volunteer valuation; (iii) to calculate the number of hours invested by each volunteer as well as the minimum wage rate per hour according to the activity provided, allowing for an economic measurement of the volunteer work.

**Book: The Future of Sports Mega events.**