

## **Paralympics and Volunteering**

Volunteering is a service performed for centuries, without just and sufficient recognition for its size and importance. The information related with that topic expresses different views from which it was conceived in relation to the historical moment in which society was developing.

The beginning dates, before the eleventh century, were a historical period in which religion determined the binding to the charity of every Christian. Subsequently, a political policy position was adopted in order to ensure control and centralization during the seventeenth century and then transformed into a social aspect in the twentieth century as a result of World War II. The work of Swiss social activist Henry Dunant stands out; whom as a consequence of the war between France and Italy led the search to protect the victims of the conflict and those who assisted them<sup>1</sup>.

During this period, the Second World War provided a landscape of deterioration and deeper social levels. All the while, many soldiers were wounded in combat with unknown injuries to the medical and rehabilitation personnel at the time and where millions of soldiers lost their lives on the front line. The twentieth century has become a truly significant time for the human being evolution. Interestingly enough, these wars have produced and united great movements, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Movements and also the social phenomenon of sport volunteering.

In the search of peace and coexistence for the people, including those who lived through a new reality resulting from the war, were born two inspirational leaders from the Olympic and Paralympic Movement. One was Baron of Coubertin and the other Ludwig Guttmann. The first, sought to carry out the Olympic Games of 1859 in Greece in the midst of a grand economic crisis. In addition Baron also accomplished the Games of the open era in Athens 1896 with Greek family support, and economic support from Georg Aeroff and the participation of volunteers<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, Ludwig Guttmann, applied sport as a rehabilitation method for wounded soldiers of the Second World War and in 1944 by request of the British Government opened a spinal cord injuries center at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. This was where he initially took the sport with a recreational approach and with the passing of time became competitive.

The occurrences of the period pushed economic reconstruction processes, which began a new culture of solidarity as help for the less favored. The Paralympic Sport has advanced rapidly. For the opening day of the Olympic Games in London, 1948, Mr. Ludwig Guttmann organized the first competition for wheelchair athletes which he called the Stoke Mandeville Games. In 1952 he founded the Stoke Mandeville Games and in 1960, the Paralympic Games were held for the first time after the Olympic Games in Rome, Italy. In 1964 the Sports Federation IOSD: International Sport Organization for the Disable was created, as well as CPISRA and IBSA in 1978 and 1980. Later, the International Coordinating Committee of Sports for Disabled in the World" (ICC) was formed

to coordinate the Paralympics Games and finally the International Paralympic Committee (IPC)<sup>3</sup>

Parallel to the growth of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the Paralympic Movement, has been the development of sport Volunteering, which is defined as a participation in sporting activities through an association or club<sup>4</sup>, where the person gives time, knowledge and work without receiving financial compensation. With the development of Paralympic sports, the IPC considers volunteering as the backbone of the organization's networks that promote sporting opportunities for people with disabilities and breaks with the paradigms of charity. The Paralympic Volunteers, like all the members of Paralympic Movement, follow the values of courage, determination, inspiration and equality as the core of all activities to encourage the growth of such activities, as set out in the IPC Strategic Plan 2011-2014.<sup>5</sup>

## Academic Report

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