

## Vadim Kaputskin

### **Abstract:**

#### Infrastructural, Socio-cultural and Economic Issues Dealing with Disabled Spectators: Lessons from the FIFA World Cup 2018.

FIFA World Cup 2018 took place in Russia during 14th of June – 15th of July 2018. More than 3 million people watched the games of the 2018 World Cup live in the 11 cities stadiums across country. The average attendance at the 2018 World Cup games was 47,371. A combined 3.572 billion viewers – more than half of the global population aged four and over – tuned in to world football's ultimate competition, according to audience data for official broadcast coverage of the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Out 3.03 million football fans 22,000 bought special access tickets to the World Cup. Special access tickets are for people with mobility impairments. That means that officially accessibility at the 2018 World Cup affected 22,000 people. However, that number only represents people who bought the special access tickets. But for sure accessibility for fans with disabilities at the 2018 World Cup affected more people. The author has made his own research based on questioning the 2018 World Cup spectators at the stadiums. Being the person with disability himself the author was able to contact other disabled people at the arena, fan-zone and other places. Above that the author has conducted a survey among volunteers, some officials at the 2018 World Cup stadiums and also fans without disabilities.

The questionnaire was developed by the author to include questions dealing with the different aspects of the accessibility for fans with disabilities at the 2018 World Cup.

While being conducting his sociological research on the basis of a questionnaire the author visited at the 2018 World Cup games seven times at the stadium in Saint-Petersburg. Above that the authors friends have conducted the research in over cities (Moscow, Sochi, Saransk, Ekaterinburg, Kaliningrad, Rostov-on-Don). In total the author has got almost one hundred (97) questionnaires filled by the fans with disabilities, and more than one hundred fifty (156) questionnaires filled by the volunteers, officials and the fans without disabilities.

As the result the author was able to distinguish the major problems, challenges and options for the fans with disabilities during the 2018 World Cup. In general, most of the fans with disabilities have been satisfied with conditions and the treatment in Russia. Some problems appeared in the field of transportation. Russian government has offered free rail way transportation for all spectators between all 11 cities hosting the games. But for the people with mobility impairments only one railway car coupe (for two people) for this category of passengers was prepared per each railway train. So it was not possible for this all of this people to get to the trains. At the same time it should be mentioned that air transportation for the people with mobility impairments was not limited by the number of seats, but it was not free of charge. But this is only one problem investigated through the research.

### **Bio:**

Vadim I. Kaputskin holds his Ph.D. in Economics since 1989. He has been teaching at St. Petersburg (former Leningrad) State University since 1988. Currently he is an Associate Professor at the School of Economics of the same university. Dr. Kaputskin has extensive teaching experience abroad (in the USA, Canada, Finland, Germany, France, Republic of Korea, China and other countries). During the period of 1993 - 2022 he took part in over 60 International Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, Fora in Canada, USA, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Croatia, China, Republic of Korea, Iran, etc. He is an author of more than 75 publications, among them more than 30 are in English, and 7 – in Chinese. He has a disabled person status since 2008.