

2007 - Gender Equity in Sport for Social Change

Women running for Social Change in Casablanca

More than 25.000 women and girls crossed the finish line of the 'Course Feminine', a 10k run organized by Olympic Champion Nawal El Moutawakel in Casablanca, Morocco on 19 May 2007. WSI member Anita White was one of 50 international delegates, who participated in the run and the four-day conference on Gender Equity in Sport for Social Change. Anita is one of the experts of WSI's new taskforce on international development and peace.

The conference began Saturday the 19th and ended Tuesday the 22nd. It was the second year of the conference discussing strategies to use sport as a tool for gender equity. It is initiated by Nike and organized in cooperation with Association Marocaine Sport & Développement (AMSD), Mama Cash, NCDO, Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) and Women Win. It has been attended by 40 NGO's who run development programs all over the world.

The conference "Gender Equity in Sport for Social Change" aimed to convene a meeting with practitioners and others who are interested in how sport can further enhance women's role in society. Special guests of the conference were the Olympic Champions Heike Drechsler (Germany), Daley Thompson (UK), Donna de Verona (USA) and hostess Nawal El Moutawakel; she was the first African woman to become an Olympic Gold medalist.

The attendees, from 20 different countries, noted as the main results that they were able to network and exchange strategies to strengthen the position of women through sports and to overcome obstacles specifically linked to girls' participation in sports. Additionally, the attendees participated in workshops focused on advocacy, networking skills, creating a website and develop different funding strategies. Creative Monitoring & Evaluation tools have been a vital part of the conference; the participatory video* created during these days by the people from the field is one of the best examples.

Participating in the 'Course Feminine' was a unique and symbolic way to start the conference. The race is an initiative of Nawal El Moutawakel to empower women and girls through sports. This year was the 9th edition of the race and the third time that Nike takes part. It is a true example of the power of sport and a viable tool for social change.