

Day 3. UIMF's Parallel Event dedicated to the role of Student's Engaged Learning in Empowering Mountain Women and Girls

The third day in New York was a pinnacle of the entire visit for our UIMF delegation, as we got to host a parallel event dedicated to the "Student Engaged Learning to Empower Mountain Women and Girls" which took place on March 19th, 2019 at 8:30am on the second floor of Church Center for the United Nations located across the road of United Nations Headquarters. When it comes to the choice of location, only the side events organized through the state's permanent missions get to take place on UN grounds, while all parallel events affiliated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) occur within the area of a few blocks from UN, such it was the case with our parallel event, CSW Regional Caucus on Europe and North America taking place latter that day in Ford Foundation, and panel on "Recreating a Healthier Environment for Empowering Women and Girls" happening the day earlier in Salvation Army building.



UIMF's Delegation presenting at parallel event

The members of our group started to arrive on location around 8am, proceeding with setting up the auditorium for our presentation, including handing out the brochures and stress balls to

newly arriving audience members. Overall, during our presentation the room was fully packed, with audience members coming to chat with our presenters after the event.

At the beginning we enjoyed the greetings from Dr. Baldomero Lago, CIO/Vice-Rector for Global Engagement for Utah Valley University (UVU) and Mr. Taylor Bell, UVU Student Body President. Both presenters talked about the benefits of UVU engaged learning model and the scope of UIMF regional and international cooperation in promotion of sustainable mountain development (SMD) goals. Next, presentation's moderator and Vice President for UIMF Mr. Michael Hinatsu talked about UIMF's contribution to SMD and non-traditional students' role in implementation of mountain targets. Following him, Mr. Abdulrahman Alghanmi, Political Science Major student from Saudi Arabia discussed his history of involvement with UIMF, while I talked about UIMF's members participation in Utah events, where they contributed support to women and girls worldwide. In addition, I discussed my ongoing research on issues of Carpathian SMD and the benefits of applying successful Utah mountain practices to Ukraine.



Ms. Bahrii in front of the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations

The next speaker, Ms. Noorani Barkat, Ph.D. candidate in Agriculture in Washington State University, explained the relation between her choice of major and her experience with agricultural practices in her homeland Hunza Valley in Pakistan. Ms. Barkat then described the role of women in relation to agriculture in local communities and importance of bringing knowledge about correct

agricultural practices - her endgoal after completing her education - to improve the quality of life for women locally and worldwide.

Next, Ms. Hannah Bieker, UIMF Member and Rotaract Liaison, talked about her book, titled *Lives, Fortunes and Sacred Honor: The Making of an American*, dedicated to her grandparents immigrant experience, and mountainous heritage, while describing her personal engaged learning experience, which includes multiple high-level internships and her affiliation with Rotaract, which in their relief efforts for communities sent 11 Utah students to assist people in Mexico this summer.

Continuing the topic of student efforts, Ms. Rebecca Bindraban, Editor-in-Chief for the *Youth and the Mountains Journal*, talked about the tremendous input from UVU students towards *Youth and the Mountains Journal*, while describing the particular issues of mountain women UVU advocates chose to focus on.



Delegation coordinator, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, listening to the students' reports

Next, Ms. Megan Davids, UNA-USA Liaison and UIMF's Public Relations Specialist, talked about the achievements of Utah female activists, including UVU's contribution to Women

of the Mountains Conference (WOMC), hosted for the first time in Orem, Utah in 2007. Ms. Davids then described her own path in UIMF and how it contributed to her expertise and action towards targets of SMD. Following speaker, Mr. William Gum, talked about his activism in support for indigenous women, while describing the particular range of issues they face and lack of coordinated support for this group on national and international levels. Next, Ms. Hailee Hodgson, Media Specialist for UIMF discussed the issues Mormon women in Utah face, in particular when it comes to their family responsibilities, which seriously affects the women's employment rates despite high levels of education and specialization. Carrying on the topic, Ms. Laila Mitchell, National Security Major student in UVU, talked about how family planning, in particular during pregnancy and afterbirth stages, results into high drug addiction rates (with opioids as a major contributor) for women and children in Utah, while discussing which steps were taken by Utah government and civil society to fight the issue.

The next speaker, Mr. Ezra Pugliano, described his experience in service projects under UIMF and UVU Women's Success Center in assembling hygiene kits for girls and women. Then, Mr. Pugliano talked about the local initiatives which include using businesses for women's empowerment in areas of maternity leave, healthcare, and childcare, and sponsorship for women's scholarships.

Our last speaker, Mr. Aldon Trimble, described the history of his cooperation with UVU Office of New Urban Mechanics with a goal of implementation of the UN sustainable development goals, in particular when it concerns rural communities and families, in light of issues "surrounding the children of incarcerated parents" in Utah. The other area of students' engaged learning Mr. Trimble is active at is research on Air Quality of Utah, the collective findings of which were presented and published by Oxford in 2017.

At the end, Mr. Michael Hinatsu thanked the audience on behalf of UIMF delegation for expressing interest in students' efforts and progress in SMD and women's issues advocacy, as well as made a statement on importance of including mountain women support in achieving the goals of United Nations' 2030 Development agenda.



Group photo in front of United Nation's Headquarters right after parallel event

I personally consider this event to be an enormous part of my UN trip experience, where I've got a chance not only to present the results of my own women's support efforts but learned about the fellow students' contributions towards the issue. Moreover, the entire process of preparation for this trip, which included months of planning, coordination and research, taught me practical organizational skills and provided me with the important networking opportunities, which is an end goal of student engaged learning model.

Ms. Viktoriia Bahrii, Logistics Specialist, UIMF