

UIMF at CSW63 Day 2: Participation in Side Event on Human Rights and Women



UIMF members are waiting for passes to the UN

On the second day of our trip to CSW63 we started our official program after receiving passes to the United Nations and being able to involve in the activities which we planned before our trip.

Several of the UIMF members attended an event on the status of Human rights and women. The title of the event was, “Gender, Economic Policy and Women’s Human Rights: Tackling Discrimination to Strengthen Social Protection, Increase Access to Services and Transforms Systems.” The event was hosted by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), there was a panel of incredibly qualified women and experts who presented in an effort to help the attendees of CSW63 to understand the how economic policy can be directed to help subjugated classes like women.

Several of the panelists had great points and each of them had around 20 minutes to make their points. Melissa Upreti's message focused on law and the application of it. Her speciality is that she is an expert, with the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice. She said that laws in place to help equality and anti-discrimination are good, but not sufficient because discrimination still exists.

Radhika Balakrishnan faculty director of CWGL and President-elect, International Association for Feminist Economists (IAFFE) her message focused on how important an economic policy plan was to set in place and that the effect of it can be aimed and pointed to help equality of women. She also stated that systems like capitalism fight against equality. The idea that economic policies can be developed with an end in mind is a very interesting concept. She mentioned more that Spain and Greece has seen a detrimental impacted. Women are disproportionately impacted by economic struggle in these and other places.

A point made by several of these women was that at the current pace the gender gap would not be overtaken by equality for another 108 years, and to them that is too long. The figure of equality in 1st world countries not occurring in their opinion for another 108 years is up for debate, but their perceptions of the current modern countries is that they are not doing enough for equality.

Additionally they spoke on the theme surrounding reprisals for human rights abusers. They spoke and said that the reprisals are troubling for both groups of men and women. They also spoke on the issues surrounding contraception and hygiene products being withheld from women as a form of subjugation, which is troubling in every respect.

Overall the side event went very well and allowed all of use to increase our understanding of the issues surrounding human rights, specifically women's rights. If we continue on our course many women around the world could continue to feel the sting of poor policy, subjugation and sexism.

As the next item on our agenda we were able to attend a parallel event titled, "Recreating a Healthier Environment for Empowering Women and Girls." Several panellist attended and were able to explain and extrapolate their position and how they are helping women and girls accomplish their own goals. The event took experts from around the world with differing missions and academic backgrounds into one room and had them explain their perspectives.



UIMF members pose with panelists at the parallel event.

The first speaker was Hsin Chin Shih, who runs the Jieh Huey Social Welfare & Charity Foundation. She spoke chiefly on her efforts and success in Taiwan helping women become a more integral part of their families and communities by turning what would have normally been unpaid service and labor into paid labor. She joins the need of the elderly for care, and the need for women to work and help support their budding families. Hsin Chin Shih noticeably believes in the foundation's mission, and one can tell then when she explains what she does, that she is doing it for the right reasons. She touched several times on the fact that her mission helps women develop self-confidence in their ability to contribute to providing for themselves and their families. Sometimes it's difficult to provide a need for two parties in a non-profit situation, but however she funds the foundation she may be an actual miracle worker for several people and families that need what she's providing.

UVU Professor Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev and Former Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic to US and Canada spoke chiefly on how his delegation to CSW 63 as well as CSW 62 were run by students, in which the students were given an opportunity to highlight the involvement of women. Many young women with great accomplishments were present as Dr. Abdrisaev was able to highlight, and he helped to train them and mentor them, so that they would know the proper methods and means to highlight their own accomplishments and show the world how others can do the same. Dr. Abdrisaev believes that incorporating and mobilizing undergraduate students, especially non-traditional students, adds value to any endeavour. Non-traditional students tend to be older, and have more world experience, they often have careers and children,

which others have written off as negatives, but Dr. Abdrisaev has been able to tap into their special experience and guide these students to greater heights that originally thought possible. His hopes that through his presentations and the events that highlight the students, he may be able to share his methodology with other experts and institutions seeking the opportunity to mobilize non-traditional students.

Another expert and speaker was, Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams, a Professor of Women's and Gender Studies in New Jersey City University. She had a pointed way with audiences and she performed a spectacular speech in which the main message was breaking down societal and cultural barriers. She started her stories explaining her history as a Jamaican immigrant a tan early age she had to learn how to lose her accent, because she was made fun of by all the children, both the black children in her neighborhood as well as excluded from the white children. Her stories and auto-biographical anecdotes helped to deliver her message that we all need a, "seat at the table," and that if we are not invited to speak at the table we should be assertive and make a place for ourselves.

Overall this panel had an amazing positive vibe, and the room was excited to hear from each of the experts. As each one came to a close there was excitement and applause, people were becoming more informed, and especially the women of the audience you could hear their audible cheers, the experience was great, and more of these should be made available at UVU for the rest of the student body to benefit.

Aldon Trimble, UIMF Member