

Taking Part at the International Mountain Day at UVU

I really enjoyed going to the International Mountain Day commemoration at Utah Valley University (UVU) on December 2, 2016. Due to my work obligations, I was only able to go to the first presentation, but I wish I would have been able to stay longer as it was all really interesting.



Dr. Patience Kabamba, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, UVU and Jacques Baraketse, UVU Student during presentation .

The first speaker was Dr. Patience Kabamba, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, from UVU. He spoke about his research with a focus on mountain communities in Congo, his home country. As internally displaced people, the Nande represent a group that moved during the civil war in Congo to a more peaceful place. They paid off the rebels so that the fighting factions moved around them and did not hurt them. When the war was over, they were the most powerful people in the country, and are now ruling the country. These people lived in mountainous areas in the Eastern part of the Congo as the mountains protected them. While in central Africa, the Eastern part of the Congo has the largest population density in the country where local people can provide their own food because of a very moderate climate there.

The war in Congo was because of land disputes, and the minerals that are available there such as gold. Out of a population of 58 million people, 4 million have died, not because off bullets but because of curable and incurable diseases: 7 million have suffered malnutrition, 3 million were HIV positive, and at least 40,000 had been victims of sexual violence.

How come that these people who were living in the mountain were in peace and were prosperous when everyone was in war around them? This was the main focus of the research of Dr. Kabamba. He studied the group which he called the “G8,” a group of people that live in this mountain community. They were able to control the economy of the area as they import textiles, motorbikes, and automobiles and export coffee, potatoes, and beans. They also export minerals such as gold, wolfram, and cassiterites. They imported and exported these goods during the war as well.

Pre-Colonial Trade: They learned three things from the Protestants: 1) dedicated to hard work 2) don't waste money on alcohol and prostitution; 3) the importance of learning to delay gratification. This is how the G8 group became very wealthy.

These people have a lot of trust. For instance, if there was someone who borrowed \$40,000 for a business and didn't sign any paperwork, if he doesn't repay the loan then everyone will know that he didn't repay it and no one would trust him anymore. The group that made the mountain area safe had a militia who were put there by the traders to protect the mountain city. These people aren't resentful of each other. By living in the mountains they have the character of hardworking people, and that is why they remained intact when the country imploded. These G8 groups gives back to the community that made them rich.

A lot of these people haven't been to school, but they have a safe place to live and they have a booming business. They have a different mentality than most people, they are very hard workers. Their mentality is very focused on mercantilism.

I really enjoyed going to the International Mountain Day conference, and I was happy to be able to be a part of it.

Rachel Critchfield, UVU Student