

## United Nations Day Info Fair at Utah Valley University



On October 24, 2017, Utah Valley University's (UVU) Office of Global Engagement hosted a United Nations (UN) information fair with the support from different programs at UVU and from the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) in particular. UIMF is an alliance of student clubs at UVU which advocated for the United Nations sustainable mountain development agenda in the State of Utah and North America since 2011.

The main goal of the info fair was to promote 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, which the United Nations adopted in 2015 as a benchmarks for the countries around the world to advance a human progress. I was able to participate for the duration of the event and interface with many students about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and especially the mountain targets, which contribute to the implementation of the SMD agenda globally. The opportunity to explain the importance SDGs to interested students from a range of specialties and varied interests was crucial to UIMF's mission of advocacy and student engaged learning. Inviting students with differing backgrounds to contribute to the UN's SDGs with specific mountain targets is our purpose.



*(L to R): Lacey Meyer, VP, UIMF with Bdullah Alahmadi and Abdulmajee Alahmadi, UVU students*

As part of the event, I had prepared information on a subject which has interested me of late, the indigenous Sami people in Scandinavia and how they seek to achieve sustainable development in Sweden. It is a minor project which serves as an example to students of how they can research important issues related to sustainable mountain development (SMD) within their own field. There are many students at UVU who are researching and studying topics which are of value to SMD, but they are not always aware that we offer a platform for them to share the work they do with others around the world through our cooperation with the Mountain Partnership under the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). By encouraging students in this way, we hope to contribute to the international community in a positive way and demonstrate the important role of students and the engaged learning philosophy.

*Derek Garfield, Vice President, UIMF*



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## Sustainable Mountain Development: Sweden and the Sami

### Sweden: Du Gamla, Du Fria

- Area: 173 860 sq mi
- Pop.: 10 065 389
- Capital: Stockholm
- HDI: 0.913, 14th
- Govt.: Constitutional Parliamentary Monarchy



### Sapmi: Sami

Homeland (Stats for Swedish Sapmi and Sami only)

- Area: apprx. 42 500 sq mi (Lapland)
- Pop.: 20 000– 35 000
- 5 Swedish Counties
- 3 language branches, 9 dialects

### Who are the Sami?

- Indigenous people of Scandinavia.
- Semi-nomadic people in the mountain and forest areas of Sweden.
- They have practiced reindeer husbandry for hundreds of years and hunted them for thousands.
- Not all Sami are herders, in fact only about 10%, but many depend on the industry for their livelihoods, e.g. meat processing, leather work, traditional cooking and crafts.
- Many young people move to cities to pursue other opportunities and elders may not embrace their culture do to historical discrimination.
- There are between 225,000 and 280,000 reindeer in Sweden.
- There are 51 Sami villages, called *sameby*, which are not actually villages at all, but administrative and management districts.



### Sustainability Challenges:

- Climate changes threaten sensitive mountain ecosystems. Arctic regions are warming faster than average. Variable temperatures in the winter months can cause snow to melt and freeze, preventing reindeer from accessing food sources as well as weaken ice on rivers and lakes over which the Sami travel.
- National programs to protect predator populations cause financial losses for herdsmen.
- Efforts to shift to green energy often impact Sapmi, resulting in loss of land and changing migration patterns. Mining and military proving grounds destroy habitats.
- Lack of political self-determination and influence for Sami in Sapmi means that sustainability issues cannot be addressed by those who are impacted most.
- Sapmi extends through many countries, increasing the challenges to self-determination and sustainable use.
- Sweden's parliament still controls the laws governing Sapmi and the Sami, with only advisement from the Sami parliament and Sami-focused organizations.