

Why it is important to advocate mountain women and their cause globally?

Why should we care about gender relations and resources in mountain communities? Living somewhere in Utah might bring significance to the subject, but Dr. Andrew Taber, the executive director of the Mountain Institute from Washington, D.C. and the other members of his Institute want to bring these issues to a global stage. Why? Because many countries have Mountain communities and each Mountain community brings culture, resources, and markets that help many throughout the world. We all should take notice of the advantages these communities have to offer and we should all want to perpetuate these communities.



Participants of the round table at UVU on October 2nd, 2017

Dr. Taber quickly addressed the students of Utah Valley University by discussing many issues on October 2, 2017 during a Round table under the title “Joint advocacy of mountain women and agenda at the United Nations.” The event was hosted by a coalition of student clubs at UVU named the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF). One issue was the importance of creating proper road infrastructures for nearby markets to reach the mountain communities in the Himalaya Mountains and creating smart settlements that join the markets and mountain communities together. Currently, this is being done at the expense of the ecological system and

this harms the natural resources along with the natural habitat in the local area. This could cause lasting damage while harming potential markets.

In most mountain areas, women provide much of the work force. By promoting gender equality in mountain communities, we can perpetuate the benefits of mountain communities and hopefully protect the culture and the resources. Dr. Jed Shilling, member of the Board of Trustees at the Mountain Institute and his power point outlined how delicate these mountain communities and their resources are. He also offers variety of plans to potentially solve the troubles mountain areas face. We can preserve the local resources to prevent overconsumption, and by educating the women in these areas we can help provide them with a better quality of life.



Dr. Rusty Butler during the round table

Dr. Rusty Butler, a main representative for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, told the crowd of UVU students that they can act to help promote the issues on the world stage by getting involved in the discussion and practical initiatives. UVU has been a part of the United Nations Mountain Partnership, a facilitator of the sustainable mountain development (SMD) agenda of the UN, and contributed to that agenda by hosting international Women of the Mountains conferences (WOMC) since 2007; students have helped promote gender and SMD

agendas by hosting WOMCs during the last several events, and students have even been recognized for hosting on their own the fourth international WOMC in the report of the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2016. It is up to the students to make breakthroughs with promotion of this program at the United Nations.

We are in the most advantageous position in the United States to help these women in mountain regions because we are representing such a mountain community on an advanced stage of economic development. Utah holds over one hundred and fifty years of experience building roads, farming, and education in a mountain terrain and in the state which is the second driest in the entire nation. We might be able to contribute in a more significant way than anywhere in the US. When pioneers first settled in Utah, they faced some of the greatest challenges west of the Rockies. By implementing some of our experiences facing the difficulties of settling in Utah, we might be able to help these smaller communities to benefit from the same economic growth.

The major incentives of helping are three-fold. The first incentive is the promotion of women; this is a great opportunity to showcase the endurance of women, and promote the education of women on the international stage. Second, creating new sustainable programs in mountain regions here in Utah and abroad is beneficial to all parties involved; sharing and developing new and superior infrastructure goes hand in hand with preserving natural resources and maximizing benefits. Third and last, this can create new investment opportunities; expanding the current market of mountain farmed goods could be extremely profitable in Utah and in other countries. This begins here in Utah and at UVU. Students have the unique opportunity to create, develop, and market new products and themselves.

It was a very insightful and encouraging event for me and surely, my peers. UIMF members, who organized this event, deserve recognition for their professionalism and passion for the mountains.

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