

STATEMENT
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Parallel Event

“Inclusive Student Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women Globally”
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Hello everyone. As a student of the Peace and Justice Studies Program of Utah Valley University, I have studied countless examples of women playing pivotal peacemaking roles in their mountainous communities. In order to create peaceful societies and achieve gender equality, states should build the capacity of women to engage as mediators and negotiators through education programs facilitated by emerging information technology systems.

Women have long been at the forefront of peace movements, especially in mountainous regions. Beginning in 1977, the *Mothers of the Disappeared* in Argentina leveraged their cultural authority to demand the right to know what happened to their families. Their actions brought international attention to the state’s human rights abuses and resulted in the end of the military dictatorship in 1983 (*“The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Demonstrate in Argentina”*). In South-Central Asia, Nepali women’s crucial roles in negotiating peace to end the country’s civil war and monarchy secured them a guaranteed 33 percent representation in all Nepali state operations in the 2015 constitution (Upreti et al.).

To support women’s potential for peacemaking in their mountainous communities, states should prioritize expanding peace and justice studies curriculum. While helping organize UVU’s Healing Conversations Conference, sponsored in part by the UVU Peace and Justice Studies Program, I facilitated conversations between public educators; civic, political, and religious leaders; students; and community advocates in our mountainous state. The event helped bridge social and political differences and empowered participants with mediation and negotiation skills to bring back to their communities. The student-engaged Learning model developed at UVU, where students work inclusively as a group to solve real-world problems with faculty serving as mentors, is an ideal structure to replicate events like these for women and girls across the globe to collaborate on complex peace issues and gain hands-on experience. Already, my faculty mentor has met with the Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the US and Canada to discuss holding a conference like Healing Conversations in his country. Utilizing emerging information technology systems will assist in facilitating such an event and building cross-cultural peace movements.

Overall, empowering women and girls from mountainous regions to see themselves as integral actors of social and political change will be a vital part of states’ efforts to achieve gender equality. Thank you.