

Statement

Samantha Davis

**Utah Valley University Rotaract, Utah
67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

Parallel Event

Empowering Mountain Women through Inclusive Student-engaged Learning Educational Initiative

March 6th, 2023

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Samantha Davis, and I am glad to be a part of the student-engaged learning model and speak to you. Today, I want to address the importance of technology education for women in mountain communities in India.

According to the Global System for Mobile Communication, cited by UN Women, "In South Asia, women are 28 percent less likely than men to own a mobile" phone (The Mobile, 2019).

For mountain women, the digital divide is multiplied. Rural women "never knew how to read or write the digits or identify any of the keys on mobile phones." (Zunguze, 2007). In order for technology to empower women in Indian mountain communities, the United Nations needs to support NGOs that not only provide technology access but also technology education to the communities they are helping.

The student-engaged learning model at Utah Valley University (UVU) recognizes that as residents of a mountainous state, my peers and I are in a unique position to advocate for mountain women across the globe by working together to solve practical problems with professors' mentorships. We are not only local representatives of mountain communities with experience and knowledge to share, but we also have partnerships with NGOs who give us opportunities to advocate for mountain women on global platforms.

For example, it is because of student-engaged learning that I was able to participate in hosting the ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United States and Canada, attend CSW67 today, and participate in Rotary fundraisers to fundraise for technology for mountain communities.

AI For Rural, an organization that works in mountainous communities in India and Utah to empower and educate farmers, has partnered with engaged learning students at UVU for almost ten years to promote sustainable mountain development in Utah and globally. My personal work with rural Indian communities has shown me the need for and importance of technology access and education for mountain women. If taught to use it, modern technology can empower women to have a voice in their homes, communities, and government.

Today, thanks to student-engaged learning, I recognized the barriers mountain women in India face regarding technology access and education, and tomorrow I hope you will do the same. Thank you.