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Utah Valley University student
68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Parallel event
“Empowering Mountain Women Economically Through an Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning.”
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Good morning, Afternoon, or Evening,

My name is Richard Farah, a political science student with a focus on global politics here at Utah Valley University or UVU. First, I would like to thank the UIMF or Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU for allowing me to speak and promote the women of mountain communities, at this year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

First, it is appropriate to give my own experiences with mountain communities and families. I come from a half-Lebanese, half-Armenian background, and while I haven't personally visited Armenia, I have been to Lebanon so many times and been to many different areas, from the streets of Beirut, to above the clouds in Tannourine. I started to notice a pattern, the farther you get from Beirut the more backward it felt. To explain this we need an example, so let's look at my family's home in mountainous Aatchane. They have a focus on heritage and traditional values that include house roles, but that has been changing recently.

Throughout my time at UVU, I have been a part of multiple courses and clubs where I got to experience SEL. Currently, I am taking part in two classes that also use SEL: World Diplomacy, and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In these classes, I am researching diplomacy and the SDGs of Armenia as a state of my choice to study. I looked at the current crisis, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Artsakh, the refugee crisis, among others. During this research, I also learned how much work the women do. One example is Olena Shevchuk, the president of the non-profit organization Dopomoga whose goal is to provide aid to Ukrainian Refugees in Armenia, such as clothes, food, toys, and a classroom where they teach those who have newly arrived in Armenian, English, and other languages like Czech. It is amazing to look at her story and how much of an impact she has on the community.

From the 2021-2022 report of the United Nations Development Program, 52.2% of the population in Armenia are women, and within that percentile, 56% of them have received higher education the representation of women in government is low with parliamentary representation being at 24.4% and within local governments it is below 10%. There are pushes to help women around the nation. In the town of Tsaghkadzor, fifteen chiefs of the regional police of Armenia participated in specialized training on supporting women who have suffered domestic violence and assault.

Additional opportunities for these local communities include programs to adopt educational initiatives like SEL in their universities and schools, which will provide students with opportunities to empower themselves with skills and knowledge about advocacy for mountain women and then help their communities as well.

Shnorhakatutyun.