

**STATEMENT**  
**Thomas Mogensen**  
**Member of the Utah International Mountain Forum**  
**69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Parallel event**  
***“Inclusive Student Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women Globally”***  
**March 10, 2025**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Thomas Mogensen, I am a political science student at Utah Valley University. I am currently researching how mountain cultures that encourage sustainable development promote more climate activism in voters.

My research has shown that Utah and Germany are very similar when it comes to mountain communities. The highest concentration of rural green party voters are around the alpine areas of Germany, and the more climate-concerned Utahns are all bordering the rocky mountains.

Mountain areas are more susceptible to climate change, and the citizens there are already feeling the effects and want to vote to change it. A healthy culture is what can drive environmental awareness and change. Families are the main driver behind culture in the world. This is a major reason why women are so important in mountain cultures. Statistically, most mountain women use a traditional family structure, where the mother teaches the children from a very young age the culture and norms of a country.

Culture can be learned and strengthened through education and service. The Student Engaged Learning program (SEL) at UVU has provided me with the tools to research these findings and participate in educational and service opportunities, despite the fact I am a very busy nontraditional student with a family and a job.

Immigration forcefully integrates new cultures into existing ones, which can often cause conflict like what is currently being felt in Germany today. The SEL model is very helpful in teaching culture and service, thus creating an understanding between cultures. German education is wonderful, and if the SEL model could be adopted into the current German education system, it could allow refugees, especially women refugees with children, even more opportunities to participate in education and learn about German culture and its delicate environment. Most refugees come from countries where gender stereotypes are enforced, which puts the burden of teaching culture solely on the women. SEL would offer many refugee women a chance to practice more German, be more aware of the German environment and participate in service projects that help the environment. The SEL model creates many opportunities to be a good citizen. I would never have had so many opportunities to help my community without it, and this service is what strengthens communities. Women are where the culture in a civilization starts, and giving as much support as possible to women will lead to a healthier society.

Natural environments rely on the human culture around them. The Schwarzwald, the Rhein, the Donau, the Alps of Germany can all develop an even stronger culture of climate awareness around them through the use of SEL.

Thank you.

