

# YOUTH AND THE MOUNTAINS

Student Papers on Sustainable Mountain Development



1 NO POVERTY

2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

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**CSW61**  
Commission on the Status of Women

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK  
13–24 March 2017

11 December  
**International MOUNTAIN DAY**

Volume V  
2017



# Youth and the Mountains

## Student Essays on Sustainable Mountain Development

Youth and the Mountains is a journal composed of student articles on sustainable mountain development. The journal is supported by the Department of History and Political Science, in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as the President's office at Utah Valley University (UVU). The Journal is an undergraduate publication with the aim of providing a forum for undergraduate students to share research and encourage active pursuit of quality academic scholarship. Students who have questions about the Journal, or those wishing to contribute (IE: filling staff positions or submitting a manuscript for review), should contact the Editors-in-Chief, Rebecca Bindraban and A. Kathryn Chapman by e-mail at: [YouthMT@uvu.edu](mailto:YouthMT@uvu.edu) with the subject line of JOURNAL SUBMISSION. If you would like to see previous issues go to: <http://www.uvu.edu/hps/student/youthjournal.html>

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# Editorial Board

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# Editors Notes

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Sustainable mountain development is a long process. This process includes economic, cultural, and infrastructure changes. These changes can be local and international in nature.

This purpose of this journal is to promote Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) in the State of Utah, North America, and globally. Additionally, this journal provides students the opportunity to involve themselves in Utah Valley University's (UVU) engaged learning model. Developed as a co-curricular pedagogy with the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of clubs at UVU at its core, the initiative engages students across the campus, including both non-traditional and traditional students, in the implementation of the United Nations (UN) SMD agenda since 2006. Different institutions under the UN officially recognized UVU and UIMF for its engagement in the SMD agenda during 2017.

The first section of this journal includes written joint statements made by the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, the Mountain Institute, Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development, and Commerce, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. Three NGOs recognized the UVU student contribution to the SMD through the engaged learning initiative. These recognitions occurred at two major forums of the ECOSOC: the 53rd session of the UN Commission on Social Development and the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Student research papers included in the main part of this journal focus on subjects that range from mountain issues in the Hindu Kush to Utah's energy and infrastructure to refugees in the United States. This journal provides a unique perspective on Sustainable Mountain Development in mountainous regions worldwide. The plight of the mountainous are often overlooked, but the people in these areas need the most support and assistance. These ar-

areas need development in order to become viable in the world's economy. Changes must be made to allow these areas to become self-sustainable. This journal shines a spotlight on mountainous regions and provides an increased perspective on how to improve the lives of people who live in these regions around the world. Another purpose of this journal is to increase awareness of the SMD agenda by providing an opportunity for research and reflection.

As a part of the established tradition of demonstrating another element of the engaged learning model, the journal includes in the third section two student reflective essays on the different aspects of student education.

The last section of the journal is dedicated to the memory of Josman Cereceres, President of the Sustainable Mountain Development club and UVU student, who untimely passed away in November 2017. Instead of publishing his research paper, which he was not able to write, the journal includes the Op-Ed on constitutionalism, which he published as a co-author in *Deseret News*.

This journal would not have been possible without the diligent research performed by the students in UVU's engaged learning model. We greatly appreciate the support of our advising faculty members and managing editor. Without their support, this journal would not have been a success. This journal continues the tradition of faculty and students working together to advocate for the SMD agenda.

Increased knowledge and understanding expands our ability to enact change.

**Rebecca Bindraban, Co-Editor-in-Chief**  
**A. Kathryn Chapman, Co-Editor-in-Chief**

The Youth and the Mountains journal provides students with an opportunity to engage in research on sustainable mountain development. Using existing thriving global mountainous communities as case studies, student research topic on raising awareness to importance of mountains in the overall health of our planet. The journal promotes the sharing of knowledge across boundaries to better improve the development of sustainable mountain communities and showcases student lead and run events that further promote the sharing of knowledge across borders. The journal promotes engaged learning research as well as through participation in campus events.

Working on the Youth and the Mountains journal has been an opportunity for us to gain editorial skills as well as increase our understanding of the importance of engaged learning on a college campus. We look forward to working more in the future with the journal to further promote sustainable development goals, mountain targets in particular and engaged student learning.

**Carlos Alarco, Managing Editor**



## Section I

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# Official Documents

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General  
1 December 2017

Original: English

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**Commission for Social Development****Fifty-sixth session**

31 January–7 February 2018

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social****Development and the twenty-fourth special session****of the General Assembly: priority theme: strategies****for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable****development for all**

**Statement submitted by the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences,  
Mountain Institute, and the Utah China Friendship Improvement  
Sharing Hands Development and Commerce, non-governmental  
organizations in consultative status with the Economic and  
Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution [1996/31](#).

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

This statement highlights the practice of engaging students, in particular non-traditional students, in hands-on involvement and practical implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to address the eradication of poverty, principally in impoverished mountain regions of the world.

Today, mountain communities, being disproportionately affected by the challenges of living at high altitudes, and left almost on their own to deal with emerging new threats such as climate change, etc., are among the world's poorest. They must be at the centre of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On their behalf, we must address poverty and hunger eradication; promote gender equality; provide decent work opportunities and economic growth; and develop industry and infrastructure. Lack of access to education and information further deepen their dependence.

About 39 percent of the mountain population in developing countries, or 329 million people are estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity, according to a recent study of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in collaboration with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat. When only rural areas are considered, nearly half the population is at risk. During the period 2000–2012, despite food insecurity decreasing at the global level, it increased in mountain areas. The study revealed a 30 percent increase in the number of mountain people vulnerable to food insecurity from 2000 to 2012, while the mountain population increased by only 16 percent.

As one of the ways to raise awareness about the need for sustainable development and poverty eradication for mountain communities, the Mountain Partnership, with which the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences collaborates, focuses efforts in mobilizing grassroots activists, youth and students in developed and in developing nations. In North America in particular, the Mountain Partnership has encouraged the faculty and students of one of its members, Utah Valley University, to be an active contributor to the sustainable development of mountain communities in the developing world.

Utah Valley University is the largest university in mountainous Utah, a state with one of the most successful models of sustainable development in the United States. While the United Nations encourages youth in promoting and implementing the sustainable development goals, the Utah Valley University model was able to engage significant numbers of non-traditional students, or students who are often older than 25 years. Non-traditional students are defined as the ones who may have delayed enrolment into postsecondary education; attended university part-time and work full time; are financially independent for financial aid purposes; have dependents other than a spouse; are single parents; or do not have a high school diploma. These students represent more than 30% of college students in the United States and many are women. However, most have diverse professional skills and experiences which they are ready and eager to contribute to benefit the global communities — mountain ones in particular.

As its major contribution to sustainable mountain development advocacy globally, the university hosts, together with its partner the Kyrgyz National Centre for Development of Mountain Regions, the international men of the Mountains conferences. The conferences became one of the major grassroots-level forums in North America to promote and contribute to the gender and sustainable mountain development agendas of the United Nations globally.

The first Women of the Mountains conference hosted by the university in 2007 served as an academic forum to both raise awareness and advocate eliminating gender inequality, as well as address sustainability challenges and poverty eradication in mountainous areas in North America and overseas. In follow-on conferences, students undertook service learning initiatives under the umbrella of the Mountain Partnership where they played major roles in organizing and hosting through the engaged learning model. Under that model students gained professional skills and experiences by addressing real-world problems of mountain women advocacy in addressing poverty eradication at local, regional and United Nations levels with an instructor serving them as a mentor.

The fourth international Women of the Mountains conference was hosted in Utah, October 7–9, 2015 solely through the efforts of the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University. Members of the coalition, the majority of whom are non-traditional students, raised funds to host the event and brought diplomats, experts and women from mountain nations worldwide to Utah. The goal was to engage students in creating awareness and seeking solutions compatible with gender-related Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

The United Nations Secretary-Generals Report on sustainable mountain development [A/71/256](#), from 29 July, 2016 highlighted the Utah Valley University model of student engagement in advocacy of gender and sustainable mountain development agendas of the United Nations. It emphasized the important role which students play not only in hosting the conference but also in adopting the final document of the conference with recommendations concerning the implementations of sustainable development goals and mountain targets in particular. The document recommended that goal #5 needs to have strong support for improving women's rights and welfare, including women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; that target #6.6 requires stressing the role that women play in the protection of the environment and water sources; and the implementation of target # 15.1 takes into account the critical role women play as promoters of innovation, development and cooperation for the common good.

The model allowed students, non-traditional ones in particular, to gain professional skills and experiences through the advocacy of different initiatives with a focus in particular on poverty eradication among the mountain communities on local and global levels. They did it by not only hosting the international Women of the Mountains Conferences and conducting research on gender norms, sexuality, and religion in Utah, but also by successfully teaching women business management in Zambia; working with students in Indonesia on tsunami-preparedness community education projects; conducting research on water quality in Senegal, the impact of mining and oil pipelines on indigenous people in Ecuador and globalization impact to Tarahumara Mexican women.

This experience demonstrates that students of all ages can play an essential role in the implementation of the 2030 development agenda of the United Nations, and in poverty eradication in particular. It can be used by other universities in rural and mountain states of North America and globally to provide similar benefits to their students, and at the same time encourage them to contribute to advocating the post-2030 Development agenda with a focus on poverty eradication.

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General  
7 December 2017

Original: English

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**Commission on the Status of Women**

Sixty-second session

12–23 March 2018

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

**Statement submitted by Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution [1996/31](#).

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

This statement demonstrates best practices in engaging students, in particular non-traditional ones, in hands-on involvement to implement the Sustainable Development Goals addressing gender inequality, principally in impoverished mountain regions of the world.

Across mountain communities, women are frequently among the world's poorest and must be at the centre of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Being engaged in traditional roles as mothers and family caregivers, women are disproportionately affected by the challenges of mountain life. Limited access to education, information and credit further deepens their marginalization.

About 39 percent of the mountain population in developing countries, or 329 million people, is estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity, according to a recent study of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in collaboration with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat. When only rural areas are considered, nearly half the population are at risk, particularly women. During the period 2000-2012, despite food insecurity decreasing at the global level, it increased in mountain areas. The study revealed a 30 percent increase in the number of mountain people, including women and children, vulnerable to food insecurity from 2000 to 2012, while the mountain population increased by only 16 percent.

We would like to highlight the importance of addressing the needs of communities and families in mountain regions, where women and children continue to be left behind and are at extreme risk of neglect in the global agenda.

As representatives of the mountain people around the world, we must emphasize the urgent need to reach the most remote, marginalized communities, especially those at higher elevations, who are left almost on their own to deal with emerging new threats such as climate change and others. On their behalf, we must address poverty and hunger eradication; greater gender equality; decent work opportunities and economic growth; industry and infrastructure; and sustainable communities.

As one of the ways to raise awareness about the need for sustainable development for mountain communities, families and women, the Mountain Partnership focuses efforts in mobilizing grassroots activists, youth and students in developed and in developing nations. In North America, in particular, the Mountain Partnership has encouraged the faculty and students of one of its members, Utah Valley University, to be an active contributor to sustainable development of mountain communities, families and women in the developing world.

Utah Valley University is the largest university in mountainous Utah, a state with one of the most successful models of sustainable development in the United States. As its major contribution to sustainable mountain development advocacy globally, the university established, together with its partner the Kyrgyz National Center for Development of Mountain Regions, the international Women of the Mountains conference as a major grassroots-level forum in North America to promote the gender and sustainable mountain development agendas of the United Nations.

While the Commission on the Status of Women engages youth in promoting the gender agenda, the Utah Valley University model also engages non-traditional students, students who are usually older than 25 years. Non-traditional students are defined as the ones who may have delayed enrolment into postsecondary education; attended university part-time and work full time; are financially independent for financial aid purposes; have dependents other than a spouse; are single parents; or

do not have a high school diploma. These students represent more than 30% of college students in the United States and many are women. However, most have diverse professional skills and experiences which can benefit the world, e.g., especially in gender-related issues.

The first Women of the Mountains conference hosted by the university in 2007 served as an academic forum to both raise awareness and advocate eliminating gender inequality, as well as address sustainability challenges in mountainous areas in North America and overseas. In follow-on conferences, students undertook service learning initiatives under the umbrella of the Mountain Partnership where they played major roles in organizing and hosting through the engaged learning model. Under that model students gained professional skills and experiences by addressing real-world problems of mountain women advocacy at local, regional and United Nations levels with an instructor as a mentor.

The fourth international women of the mountains conference was hosted in Utah, October 7-9, 2015 solely through the efforts of the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University. Members of the coalition, the majority of whom are non-traditional students, raised funds to host the event and brought diplomats, experts and women from mountain nations worldwide to Utah. The goal was to engage students in creating awareness and seeking solutions compatible with gender-related goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development documents.

The United Nations Secretary-Generals' Report on sustainable mountain development [A/71/256](#), from 29 July, 2016 highlighted the UVU model of student engagement in advocacy of gender and sustainable mountain development agendas of the United Nations. It emphasized the important role which students play not only in hosting the conference but also in adopting the final document of the conference with recommendations concerning the implementations of sustainable development goals and mountain targets in particular. The document recommended that goal #5 needs to have strong support for improving women's rights and welfare, including women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; that target #6.6 requires stressing the role that women play in the protection of the environment and water sources; and the implementation of target # 15.1 takes into account the critical role women play as promoters of innovation, development and cooperation for the common good.

The model allowed students, non-traditional ones in particular, to gain professional skills and experiences through the advocacy of the mountain and rural women causes on local and global levels. They did it by not only hosting the international Women of the Mountains Conferences and conducted research of gender norms, sexuality, and religion in Utah, but also by successfully teaching women business management in Zambia; working with students in Indonesia on tsunami-preparedness community education projects; conducting researches such as water quality in Senegal, the impact of mining and oil pipelines on indigenous people in Ecuador and globalization impact to Tarahumara Mexican women.

This experience demonstrates that students of all ages can play an essential role in the implementation of the 2030 development agenda of the United Nations, and gender issues in particular. It can be used by other universities in rural and mountain states of North America and elsewhere to provide similar benefits to their students, and at the same time contribute to advocating the post-2030 Development agenda and sustainable development goal #5 on global gender issues, in particular.

This statement is supported by:

The Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with ECOSOC;

The Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands & Development & Commerce, an NGO in special consultative status with ECOSOC.

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## Section 2

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# **Undergraduate Research, *Mountain Issues in Utah and Worldwide***

# Mountains and Mormonism

**By: Trevor Williams**

*Trevor Williams is a Senior at UVU that will graduate this April with a degree in Integrated Studies. He was recently accepted to the University of St Andrews for a Master's program in Political Violence and Terrorism and will be attending there in September.*

Mountains have had a profound impact on Mormonism for many different reasons. As with many religions in history, mountains hold a special place. The historical significance of mountains in a religious sense is cross-cultural. There is documentation of the importance of it in ancient religious traditions of Greek mythology, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and even the Incas. , , , There are many more traditions that also revere mountains. Of the religions mentioned above, Christianity and Islam alone, include almost four billion people and half of the world's current population. Due to this, they are important in considering the tradition of venerating mountains. Of course, many of these religions now have more of a symbolic way of interpreting the significance of mountains, so it is not as if the same understanding is still present today, but the importance is still prevalent. This applies to the Judeo-Christian background, of which Mormonism also claims lineage. Mormonism in addition extends its claim on the significance of mountains through modern-day scripture and contemporary interpretations of ancient scriptural prophetic texts. As such, when considering the significance for Mormons, it is important to go back to the Abrahamic tradition in order to see where the roots began.

Abrahamic religions have interesting insights in relation to the worth of mountains. The Qur'an stated, "Have we not made the earth as a bed, and the mountains as pegs?" "And He has set firm mountains in the earth so that it would not shake with you." This is seen as prophetic. The mountains have underlying roots that are embedded in the ground, much representing the shape of a "peg," as alluded to in the Qur'an. Islamic Scholar Z.R. El-Nag-

gar, gave an explanation of the importance in the practical sense of the reason God created mountains. El-Naggar stated that, “the Qur’an consistently describes mountains as stabilizers for the Earth’s surface which hold it firmly lest it should shake us.” This is interpreted as predictive as “Such knowledge was revealed more than twelve centuries before man... could realize any value for the existence of mountains on the surface of our globe, a value that is only being currently conceived by a very limited number of specialists in the field of Earth Sciences.” In other parts of the Qur’an, however, the mountains are referred to as a spiritual setting. According to the Qur’an, the mountains are part of other earthly elements that are always prostrating to Allah. They are also multiple references where it was written that the mountains are “subjected with praise” to Allah. , As such, the mountains can also be seen as participants in worship. As far as spiritual events are concerned, the Cave of Hira, which was located on the top of the Mountain Noor was where the Prophet Muhammad went to worship and at the age of forty. It was where he received the first revelation given to him by the angel Gabriel. This clearly showed that adherents of Islam revered mountains as sacred, and they hold a special place in regard to their function and role on the planet Earth.

Arguably, the first significant mention of a mountain in the Bible was in Genesis where the writer mentioned Mount Ararat. According to the Bible, this was where Noah’s ark rested after the flood. In the account of Moses, he was commanded to ascend Mt. Sinai to communicate with the Lord, saying, “Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” The importance of Mt. Sinai cannot be emphasized enough as per tradition during that time, there were multiple gods. This was the reason that the first commandment given to Moses was that “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” This was seen by some as an affirmation that other gods did exist due to the Jewish belief that a local god, YHWH, presided in the region and Mt. Sinai was his throne. This was the purpose of the Arc of the Covenant, wherein they were able to transport their deity, thus

removing him from the limits of locality. Later, in 2 Samuel and Kings (books of the Old Testament), David captured Mount Zion and it becomes the City of David, and later a location for Solomon's Temple. On Mount Carmel, the prophet Elijah challenged the ancient prophets of Baal to call down fire from heaven. This serves as another example of the importance of mountains..

In the New Testament, a rogue branch of Judaism evolved into the biggest religious group today; The Christian religion also venerates mountains. There are many examples of Jesus Christ going to mountain peaks for different reasons. In Matthew, Christ went up into a mount to be secluded and pray. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Christ was transfigured before his disciples on the Mount of the Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah, who are famous for their own religious encounters in the mountains, also appeared to the disciples. In Luke, Christ went up to the Mount of Olives to pray before his arrest and his crucifixion. Perhaps Christ's most famous moment (aside from the crucifixion/resurrection) occurred on a mountain as he gave his world-famous, Sermon on the Mount, which still, after two thousand years, holds tremendous weight in the world of ethical considerations. , After his resurrection, Christ appeared to his eleven disciples on a mountain. He commanded them to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There are additional accounts in the New Testament, following the death of Christ, where mountains are mentioned as a place where people received revelation and saw angels. , As the evidence shows, mountains were important as transcendental locations where otherworldly experiences occurred. As a location, given the right context, mountains would categorically be part of the numinous.

Taking a broader reduction in terms of the origin behind why mountains are/were considered sacred within a Judeo-Christian context, it seems that their ability to ascend to great heights would also be considered just as much their ability to transcend the human plane of existence to reach the divine. As Arne Naess

wrote, “Every ‘ascension’ is a passage to the beyond, a rupture of the level, a passage from the region of the trivial or profane to that of sur-passing, over-whelming importance. In short; to reach the mountain top is to trans-cend the human condition, reaching the unreachable.”

Often, the concept of a God includes God existing above us, which is why a mountain is “the nearest to heaven.” Although bowing ones head in prayer or in communicate with the divine can be used to show respect, looking up seems to indicate that one was actually trying to face the deity in the heavens. In the Gospel of John, it stated that Jesus lifted up his eyes to thank God. Jesus offers the great Intercessory Prayer while on the cross. It stated, “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven...” The Judeo-Christian tradition of looking to the heavens for God was evident even further back in history with the case of Abraham, in which God told him to “look now toward heaven, and tell the stars.” Looking up to the stars to look for God gave one a sense of humility being below him. As such, scaling large summits would give people the sensation that they are getting closer to the divine; at least closer to the heavens than they have ever been in any other setting with the exception of visionary experiences. Historical evidence clearly showed that a mountain is where man can “meet” with God. In the story of the Binding of Isaac, God commanded Abraham to take Isaac to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him. Based on scriptural text, the Bible placed an emphasis on meeting the Lord on his ground when it came to significant events. Mormonism inherited these same traditions from the Old and New Testaments by affirming its Judeo-Christian background. Mormonism’s additional scriptures also contributed to the broader picture. In the Book of Mormon, the book’s first writer, Nephi, recorded a vision that he had in which he “was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot.” Even in a vision, God would still take his prophet to a mountain. After having the vision, The Book of Mormon stated that Nephi “did go into the mount oft” to “pray oft unto the Lord” where Nephi was

shown “great things.” These clearly were not cases where Nephi was lifted up in a spiritual vision, but rather where he physically journeyed to a mountain simply to communicate with the Lord. Another account in The Book of Mormon described a situation where “the brother of Jared” went to the “top of the mount” to pray to the Lord. It was there that the Lord appeared to the brother of Jared. The Book of Mormon does not teach that one must always go to a mountain in order to pray to God. However, the mountains traditionally were a place to go when special revelation or communication was sought with the Lord.

In contemporary Mormonism, ‘mountains’ are significant, but in a different way. Mormons built the temples to represent the mountains in a symbolic manner. However, there were cases where before temples were available to the Mormons, mountains were used for religious purposes. Such was the case with Ensign Peak, often referred to as Utah’s “version of a Mount Sinai.” This was where Brigham Young, a Mormon leader, had a vision in which he saw Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism. Smith gave him instructions for how to proceed with the development of the land. The early Mormons used this mountain as an area to conduct religious ceremonies and rituals. Mormons often chose high places to build their temples, “carefully selected, usually for a combination of remoteness and high visibility.” This means “a point on the crest of a hill.”

Temples are important to Mormons because they are continuing a tradition that stemmed from the “time of Solomon.” The purpose of temples for Mormons is being able to be “married for time and eternity” and performing “proxy baptisms for their ancestors who died without enjoying the blessings of this saving ordinance.” For Mormons, the temples serve this purpose. Mormons believe that within the temple, “the earth touches the divine, and members can feel a serenity that is enhanced by the beautiful structure.” Inside the temple, there is, a room referred to as the “celestial room” which is symbolic of “heaven.” Jewish Rabbi Dosick commented on the Celestial Room, that it was “where Mormons

come to sit in peace and serenity, enveloped in beauty, to contemplate their lives and feel a spiritual closeness to God.” It is also a place to “reflect on life.” This is not to say that Mormons were the first to create temples. In fact, it is the opposite as Mormons cite their inspiration coming from these examples of ancient prophets. As such, in contemporary times, Mormons have recreated the spiritual significance of mountains through their construction of temples. Mormons are encouraged to frequent the temples often, just like the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi “oft” frequented the mount to be closer to God. ,

Additionally, mountains are extremely important to Mormons as they see them as a fulfillment of a Biblical prophecy. In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.” Mormons see Isaiah’s words as being fulfilled by the construction of the Salt Lake City temple. When the Mormons petitioned for statehood in 1849, they were rejected by the U.S. Congress because of the vast amount of land the Mormons requested. Later, the federal government created the “Utah Territory” and eventually it gained statehood. The story behind the name “Utah” was that it originated from the Native American “Ute” tribe, which means people of the mountains. Mormons believe that the name Utah was a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that the Lord’s house would be established in the “top of the mountains.” Mormons also believe that the phrase Isaiah used, “mountain of the Lord,” in the scriptures refers to the temple and temples built in this region, as this is the way that “Zion will be established.” Mormon leader, Bruce R. McConkie said in reference to the scripture, “This has specific reference to the Salt Lake Temple and to the other temples built in the top of the Rocky Mountains.”

In addition to Mormons, the Native American tribes who have original ties to the Utah area also have a “strong belief of some mountains and natural formations being sacred.” An example of

this is Navajo Mountain, a 10,388 foot high monument located in Utah, which has its access restricted to outsiders. Leo Manheimer, who is chapter president of the Navajo Mountain Chapter House said that it is very sacred to the tribe. Another sacred mountain for the Utes, located in southeastern Colorado is called Ute Mountain. Some Utes believe it to be a deity who “angrily collected rain clouds and storms come from clouds that escape his pockets.” Another Mountain held sacred by the Native Americans in Utah is Mt. Timpanogos, which is said to resemble a sleeping Indian princess who sacrificed herself to a god in order to end a drought. Even within the confines of the Utah area, one can see that importance given to mountains in regards to sanctity was not first done by Mormons, but rather, Native Americans.

Mountains have long held importance in experiencing the realm of the divine. In ancient times this was more prominent. Among certain traditions it still exists today as is the case with the Native Americans of Utah. There are other cases, such as with Mormonism, where the meaning has shifted from just mountains to also including temples, as they draw this inspiration from the words of Isaiah and the Biblical references of ‘mount’ that are in regards to Solomon’s temple. As such, the significance of mountains, both literally and symbolically, carry on today in the context of religious traditions.



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# Current Views on Refugees in America: Benefits Of Refugees

**By: Marie-Chantal Niwenshuti**

*Marie-Chantal Niwenshuti is Rwandaise. She is currently pursuing a degree in psychology and pre-law at Utah Valley University and hopes to become an attorney. She works at UVU`s prospective student office as a UVU Student Ambassador, assisting with student recruitment. Other duties include giving campus tours, visiting high schools, and attending student events. This gives her the privilege to meet and serve people from all walks of life. She is also part of the Foreign Affairs Club at UVU -- an organization that builds leadership skills and makes connections with foreign diplomats through the Office of Global Intercultural Engagement at UVU by co-hosting dignitaries. This opportunity empowers her with the knowledge of the world and helps her acquire or discover better ways to serve the world. Marie also serves with the United Africans of Utah (UAU), a Utah organization that helps unite local African communities. Hobbies include hiking, biking, reading, and spending time with family. September.*

In shared experiences, refugees feel more welcomed in countries that help them resettle. They eventually overcome tremendous adjustment difficulties, gain a sense of loyalty, and develop the capacity to give back to their newfound home that welcomed them. They do this by establishing businesses and encouraging their offspring to pursue higher education.

Since the beginning of President Donald Trump's presidency, the issue of refugees has been at the center of the political scene. Many citizens argue that bringing more refugees into the country takes jobs away from Americans. There is a widespread belief that refugees increase the threat of terrorism. These, among other concerns, vividly show that misconceptions, fear, and ignorance need to be addressed the United States. "Correcting these issues will

provide the US" population with accurate information based on actual experiences and facts, about "incoming" refugees. Research shows that refugees do not take jobs away from Americans and that they contribute to the US economy by becoming employed, paying taxes, and starting small businesses. (Preston, Julia) They enrich American society by obtaining an education and diversifying US culture.

Americans may wonder where refugees come from, why they come in such large numbers to the United States, and why they cannot stay in their own countries. The United Nations (UN) Refugee Agency stated that, "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence." (UN what is a refugee). A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War, in addition to ethnic, tribal, and religious violence are the leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

There are many different reasons that people are forced to leave their country of origin. Some countries may have corrupt leaders, governments, courts, social clubs, and communities. One of the most common reason for corruption in these countries comes from different ethnic and tribal groups. This can lead to discrimination against certain groups of people in a country. It is natural for one tribe to want to be more powerful than another. There is a tendency for the more the more rich and powerful tribe to attempt to gain power. The inability to compromise when making decision for a country causes disagreements, which can lead to violence against the weaker tribe. This is often the precursor to international genocide.

The Rwandan genocide was a civil war caused by tensions between two different tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis. Gerard Prunier in his article *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, states, "The growing awareness among the Hutu of the imposition of Tut-

si oppression led to the 1959 revolution which drove the Tutsi from power and established the ‘first (Hutu) republic.’” According to Prunier, “The Hutu gradually transformed the cultural myth into an absolute principle of (Hutu) democratic majority rule, something which would play a rather perverse role in the run-up to the genocide” (430-431).

Belgium first colonized Rwanda in 1916. After 46 years of colonization, Rwanda gained its independence on Sunday, July 1, 1962. During this period of colonization, Belgium allowed the Tutsi to have power over the Hutus. When Belgium gave Rwanda its independence, it transferred power from the Tutsis to the Hutus. According to Prunier, Belgium did not understand that giving the power to the Hutus would cause tribal hatred and civil war.

Citizens of countries like Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Assyria, and Chile do very little to prevent their leaders from causing internal strife between ethnic or tribal groups. They do little largely because they fear persecution from their leaders. They do not want to bring harm to their families. Leaders in these foreign countries tell the people what to say, what to do, and for whom to vote. There is usually no freedom of speech of the press for citizens in these countries. As a result, when the violence increases between different tribal leaders, the innocent people suffer the most. When the war expands to the point where people are no longer safe remaining in their homes, they seek asylum in foreign countries. These countries have a democratic system, which protect civil liberties. These countries include the United States, Canada, Australia, France, and Belgium.

Many Americans today do not understand the complexity of the refugee crisis. They complain that refugees take American jobs, but research shows that these are jobs most Americans do not want to do (Preston, Julia. Immigrants aren’t taking Americans jobs). Hillary Clinton once said, “Immigrants contribute to the economy whether they are here legally or not, by providing labor for American employers and opening businesses that create jobs



for Americans rather than taking them.” (Clinton) According to Julia Preston, research also shows refugees skilled in technology and science have a significant “positive impact” on working-class Americans. She continued by saying that they spurred on and created innovation, resulting in new jobs. Refugees are “integral to the nation’s economic growth.” (Julia Preston) Refugees bring new ideas and add to an American labor force. They help to ensure continued growth for the future of America. The majority of refugees work as housekeepers, janitors, house cleaners, taxi drivers, grounds maintenance crews, meat processors, and construction laborers. (Preston, Julia)

A perspective on America’s view of refugees is found in a speech by Angelina Jolie. It focuses on a rising tide of nationalism masquerading as patriotism. She addresses how people are beginning to fight against each other instead of helping each other; “with many refugees coming, with more wars fought, people are enacting fear in each other.” She states that she is an internationalist and believes that anyone committed to human rights is one who sees the world as a fair and humble place. Although her speech was addressed to the American people as a whole, one could tell that her message was mainly meant for the politicians in this nation. She made it clear that Americans should understand that a strong nation such as the United States should not be afraid to welcome refugees because a strong nation does not fear the hopeless or people seeking refuge. Instead, it welcomes them, helps them become independent people, and start a new life. Just like Angelina Jolie, there are also many other Americans who stand with refugees, who understand the plight of the refugee. They have sympathy for the hardships of being a refugee. Angelina Jolie is simply reminding us of the simple act of service. Although helping a refugee might not be as easy as helping someone find their way home when they are lost, she says one should still try to help even just by giving a little, especially when one already has enough. There are many things people can do to help, whether it is physical help, time, support, or encouragement. Angelina Jolie concludes her speech by adding that if one does not

have anything to give a refugee, or simply does not want to help a refugee, then one should just stay out of conditions or situations one do not understand. They should stop giving false information to fellow citizens and perpetuating fear that refugees are dangerous and not safe for our nation.

Some Americans see refugees as terrorists and dangerous criminals, yet research indicates that refugees commit crime at lower rates compared to native-born citizens. (Swell) Certainly some crimes are committed by illegal refugees. Research shows that these crimes involve sexual assault, overstaying their allowed time, and lying on documents to obtain citizenship in the United States. Truly, these crimes are unacceptable, but one must remember that they are not only committed by refugees. They are also committed by native-born citizens as well.

Interviews of two African refugees show how refugees come to the United States from difficult conditions in hopes of making a better life. Rosine Nibishaka, a refugee from Zambia, said, "My mother moved to four different places to have four children. The reason for this was because of the war, and she needed a safer place to raise her children. Her family came to America in the year 2009 by the United Nations. Her mother's reason for bringing her to America was for a better education and a chance to chase her dreams through opportunities and live a different life than her mother's." Nibishaka is very grateful. She is humble and full of grace, and the only thing she wants is to make her mother proud. Nibishaka has done well in making sure she seizes all the opportunities that come her way. She is a straight A student and has won many honor roll awards at her school, Granite Park Junior High. Nibishaka resides in Utah with her family, which has become their home. Nibishaka is involved in her school as well. She is on the track team where she gets to competes with others schools from Utah. She is also serving as part of the Student Body Officers (SBO's). She is a voice for her fellow students and represents her school. Nibishaka represents her school well by contributing to the community and earning good grades. She under-

stands the importance of education, and she does not take it for granted. Though Nibishaka came to Utah as a refugee, but many people today can testify how her work ethic is benefiting the community that she now calls home.

Gloria Nduwimana, a refugee from Tanzania, explains how it was very hard adjusting to America when she first arrived. “To come to the US wasn’t that easy, like we took so many shots, we got lot of medical check-up, we had a lot of physical tests and when I found out I was coming to the US I couldn’t believe it. I couldn’t imagine myself in the US. Because I really thought US was only for people who are educated, so as my family because we were poor, I didn’t think we would make it. Because they said in America food is in the house, the bathroom is in the house and I was excited for the opportunity because in Africa things were not that way. We did not have food nor bathrooms inside our house. We ride to the airport in a big bus, I was so excited and scared at the same time because it was my first time riding in the plane.” Gloria has since grown to love America. She gets along with her fellow classmates. She is very social and very friendly to anyone that she meets. She even started a culture dance club at her high school, where she teaches her fellows classmates and friends how to dance her traditional dance. Nibishaka and Nduwimana are great examples of how most refugees in the United States are grateful and proud to have the privilege of living in America.

Refugees possess extraordinary resilience partly due to their struggle to adjust to a new country. This resiliency is inspiring and is an asset to the US. Not only are they inspiring, but refugees bring diversity to their new home. Refugees teach people about their customs and culture, providing an education on global culture. This is beneficial to people in the communities in which they live. Many Americans still refuse to see the positive contributions the refugees bring.

Saida Dahir is a refugee from Somalia. She also resides in Utah. Dahir came to America at a young age and she is cur-

rently a sophomore in high school. Although, she gets criticized for being involved in organizations such as, “Black Lives Matter” she has never stopped standing up for others and being a voice to those that cannot speak for themselves. Dahir is politically active in Utah, fighting for human rights and equality. Dahir organized many “Black lives matter” movements in Utah. She met with the Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski countless times and worked with her on March for Lives. She organized counter protests during the Salt Lake City protests on immigration. She helped organize it and also recited one of her poems. She is truly an activist, a poet and a fighter. Dahir serves as an excellent example of how refugees contribute to society. She has shown the true definition of a young activist who works tirelessly for the betterment of society. She has also shown why it is so important for youths to take lead in their communities.

Hodan Abdi is another Somalian refugee who also resides in Utah. Just five years ago she was in Ethiopian refugee camp. When Abdi arrived in the Utah five years ago, she spoke very little English. She mastered the English language through Ted Talks and movies. She graduated with a degree in Chemistry from the University of she also gave a commencement address. In her speech she said “School is everything. I remember the refugee camp. I have many hardworking friends who don’t have the same opportunities as me.” Only a few years ago she lived in a camp with no cars, no town, nor stores, where the wind blow sand everywhere. Then the rain would come and flood the camp. Abdi had to walk two hours just to wash clothes. The United Nations delivered food monthly to the camp, but it was never enough. Medical care was difficult to obtain, as well. “I was just surviving.” Abdi said, “I was not sure of my future.” Abdi and her family fled Somalia to escape from the violent civil war that her country has been facing for decades. Aside from the risk of of bullets and bombs, there were frequent droughts, little clean water, no electricity, cholera outbreaks and no vaccines. Abdi said that she almost died from an illness. Her hard work and example show that she is an asset to America. She will not only inspire young refugee girls like herself, but also

young girls all over the US. Her hope is that she can inspire and improve the lives of many people. Refugees are not here in the U.S or Utah to steal jobs or make the lives of others worse. Rather, they are here to move the country forward with their resilience, hard work, values, and ethics.

Maxwell, another successful young refugee who also resides in Utah and has done well for himself and his community, migrated from Ghana. He came to the United States in 2013 to earn his Associate of Science in business from Salt Lake Community College and a bachelor's degree in Accounting from the University of Utah. He is currently pursuing his masters of Accounting at the University of Utah and he is a potential Certified Public Accountant (CPA) candidate. Maxwell is equipped with leadership skills, strong technical skills, and computer knowledge. Maxwell gained experience working at Convergys as a supervisor, banker, an accountant, and an auditor. Maxwell loves to mentor friends, students, and other individuals as well as volunteering at the homeless shelters, and the Utah food bank. Maxwell`s life motto is “Everything you want is out there waiting for you to ask, seek, knock. Everything you want, you just need to take an action to get it”.

Research shows that when refugees are welcomed in a country, they build friendships. They take any given opportunities to better their lives and serve their new found communities. When given resources to help them adjust they use them to their advantage. They grow to love the country that welcomed them. They work to improve their lives by establishing businesses, working at low paying jobs, and encouraging education in their families. By doing these things, the American economy improves, and society as a whole is enriched by the infusion of diverse customs and traditions. Refugees enter the United States only after rigorous security clearances, some of which take many years to complete. They are the opposite of terrorists and usually are the victims of terrorism. Because they have been through tremendous obstacles to escape from the conflicts in their own countries, they have resilience and strength that help them work hard to improve their

lives. Their lives have been turned upside down by the upheaval of war, starvation, torture, and loss, so they want to learn new skills and they work hard to adapt and adjust to a completely new way of life. They do whatever they can to fit into American society and extend friendship to others.

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# Utah Mountain Accord

**By: William Crist**

*William was born in Henderson, Nevada, but has spent most of his life in Utah. He graduated from Pleasant Grove High School in 2012, and has been attending Utah Valley University (UVU). William was diagnosed with type I diabetes at the age of 3, which has heavily impacted his work ethic and drive to be a healthy and active individual. In his time while attending Utah Valley University (UVU), William has worked toward his B.A. In Political Science, and will graduate this summer and pursue further education to a Masters Degree. As a member of the UIMF and Foreign Affairs Club, William has contributed his time and passion for promoting sustainable mountain development. He enjoys attending sporting events and playing sports, and playing video games with his friends and family.*

As a member of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) working in Jason Chaffetz's office has allowed the author to get an in-depth view of legislation that is helping to improve life for those who reside and visit the mountainous regions of Utah. This essay shows research about legislation, which will affect citizens in Rocky Mountain/Wasatch range that aims to improve quality of living in several different areas. This proposed legislation is called the Utah Mountain Accord. The areas of focus include transportation, economic improvement, environmental improvements, and recreational interests. Each of these topics has a great deal of overlap. The research in this paper presents various projected plans for economic and recreational development and gives recommendations for the best course of action to solve the transportation and environmental issues. The author of this essay interviewed Laynee Jones, the main author and director of The Mountain Accord.

The Mountain Accord is a large piece of state level legislation that will have a direct impact on the citizens of Utah. The Mountain Accord has many purposes. Due to urbanization along



the I-15 Corridor it is important to prepare for a large population increase. In Wasatch and Summit Counties alone, the population is projected to double by 2025. This increase in population puts a great deal of strain on numerous auxiliaries and can create new problems in the near future. As described in the plan, “the signers of this Accord agree to pursue a comprehensive and interdependent package of actions including land exchanges, land designations, transportation improvements, environmental monitoring, and other actions, as described in the remaining sections.” (The Accord 2016) Additionally, the legislature is discussing the struggle between protecting recreational land and allowing private landowners to develop. All of these problems have been divided into the four areas listed above.

### Transportation

The surge in population will negatively affect traffic and parking congestion. Jason Chaffetz’s office labeled transportation as a top priority. In the Mountain Accord’s official statement of its intents, they explain that:

To create transportation connections between the economic and population centers in the urban areas and the recreation destinations in the Central Wasatch Mountains that support the environmental, recreation, and economic goals of the Accord and serve residents, employees, and visitors. Such transportation connections should increase transit use, walking, and biking and decrease single-occupancy vehicle use. To focus transit improvements in locations that are compatible with the unique environmental character of the Central Wasatch Mountains. When considering the various options of travel from the I-15 corridor into the Wasatch mountains, the Mountain Accord council is first looking to study the impact that each type of transportation would have on the environment. An EIS (Environmental Impact Study) would provide the pros and cons for each choice. (The Accord p.4)

The main modes of transportation that have been considered are light rail, bus rapid transit, and enhanced bus/TSM improvements (Transportation Systems Management). Light rail

plans propose the most ambitious choice of transportation in the Wasatch Mountains. By using electric power, this option provides the most fuel efficient and environmentally conscious choice. This opportunity also creates a very reliable system of travel because it would face less challenge in weather complications than cars or buses. Additionally, this light rail would be the quickest option to and from the canyons and would help a great deal with parking congestion. These canyon areas tend to have parking issues because of high recreational usage. Drivers would also be discouraged from using personal vehicles to travel through the canyons by toll roads. While this would make driving more difficult, it would also encourage the use of the light rail, and promotes all the benefits listed above. The light rail plan also has a major detractor; the cost for the entire plan would be notably more than the two alternatives. In the short term, capital cost would be needed to fund the project, but would be much more manageable in the long-term with lower costs of operations.

Bus Rapid Transit plans would be the simplest plan to implement. This proposal would provide exclusive lanes to buses, and has been referred to as “light rail on tires.” Tolls and pricing would also be incorporated into this plan, once again discouraging use of vehicles outside of the plan. The buses used in this scenario would also be much more reliable than local bus systems, and would be a more beneficial use of the land. While not as dependable in hazardous weather scenarios as the light rail, this type of transportation would prove more effective in different types of weather. It would also still be safer than a car. The negatives in this option would be additional right of way problems, and a high construction cost paired with additional high operational costs involved.

The Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and Enhanced Bus option is the final proposal for answering the need for transportation between the canyons. This solution concentrates on using existing roadways for buses, and making a larger restriction on cars usage in the canyons. Another decision would

be to take a similar approach to travel as what is used in Zion National Park. In that system, cars are not allowed in certain areas in the Park, which forces people to take alternative transportation in form of the shuttle buses. This example has quite a few negative outcomes. There is a much larger chance that traffic will continue to be a problem in this situation, and the reliability due to weather is definitely something that has to be considered. While there are large problems, this plan sets itself apart on the cost approach, compared to the two other replacements. It is cheaper than installing a light rail system and installing a bus lane is not physically feasible. From the suggested ideas, residents who have been asked to share their opinions have only one majority suggestion, “Do Something!” Although it would be costly in the short term for the local public, a light rail appears to be the best overall choice, particularly looking into the next fifteen years, as the population will rise dramatically.

### Transportation Analysis

While each plan has its pros and cons associated with it, there is an overarching groundwork of focusing development and access toward “Nodes.” Nodes serve as locations with convenient access to other destinations. The Mountain Accord (2016) looks to create, “A recreation system that provides a range of settings and accommodates current and increasing demand by encouraging high levels of use at thoughtfully designed locations (nodes) with convenient access....” For example, one plan will focus on restricting mountain development in the Cottonwood Canyons to specific “Nodes.” From these nodes, connections will be made to “economic sectors.” These blueprints will promote economic growth in multiple areas between the Salt Lake Valley area with the greater Park City area (Parley’s Corridor), and between Park City and Big Cotton Canyon. It is imperative that the Mountain Accord focuses on these areas for development to keep recreational areas well used and preserved, and to promote economic stability in all the accompanying regions.

## Environment

A key feature of this legislation is an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Without first creating an EIS, almost all the other policies being implemented would be ineffective. An EIS would compare the alternatives and specifically look at the impact it would have on the local environment, as well as the effect it would create for recreational lands. In terms of transportation, the EIS would study the positives and negatives of each plan, and would play a large role in determining placements of new roads and railways. This study would also designate sites as “No-Build” zones and would help preserve watersheds and other environmental resources. Additional impacts that can and should be studied include: watersheds, water supplies and quality, visual and aesthetics, emissions and air quality concerns, land use, safety and reliability, tourism use, and recreational use.

There are two philosophies one might encounter in the creation of an Environmental Impact Study. Laynee Jones explained these conflicting philosophies. The first attitude is that a EIS should be charted and completed before any decisions or blueprints for transportation are made. In this method, a broad idea of what needs to be done and what will be affected is created. Then the proposed changes in the accord can be compared to the EIS. Alternatively, the US Forest Service recommends what type of transportation should be used. Once this is agreed upon, a EIS would be created. This provides a more detailed look into a specific type of transportation and its effects. However, this relies on a blueprint being in its final stages. This would require legislative and political action that The Mountain Accord does not have. Jones has explained that a third option has been heavily considered, in which a transportation system (such as the Rapid Bus Transit system) that does not look to change any landscapes. This would be the most effective in terms of an actual solution. Because this does not affect the landscapes and terrain directly, a EIS would not be required in this situation.

A projected land exchange would be the next large scale proposal to have a direct effect on the environment. As recommended by the Utah Mountain Accord presents a resolution, on land issues currently plaguing upper Cottonwood Canyon,

...The Executive Board in November 2014 convened task forces consisting of ski areas, local and federal government, and advocacy groups that had traditionally been in conflict with each other. The task forces recommended: The ski areas would put into public ownership over 2,000 acres of land they own outside of their resort boundaries for the purpose of recreation (backcountry skiing, hiking), and watershed preservation and to protect iconic ridgelines. In exchange, the resorts would receive land at their established base areas. In the National Conservation and Recreation Areas, the federal government will permanently designate protection over 80,000 acres of USFS lands from development and environmental degradation.

### Environmental Analysis

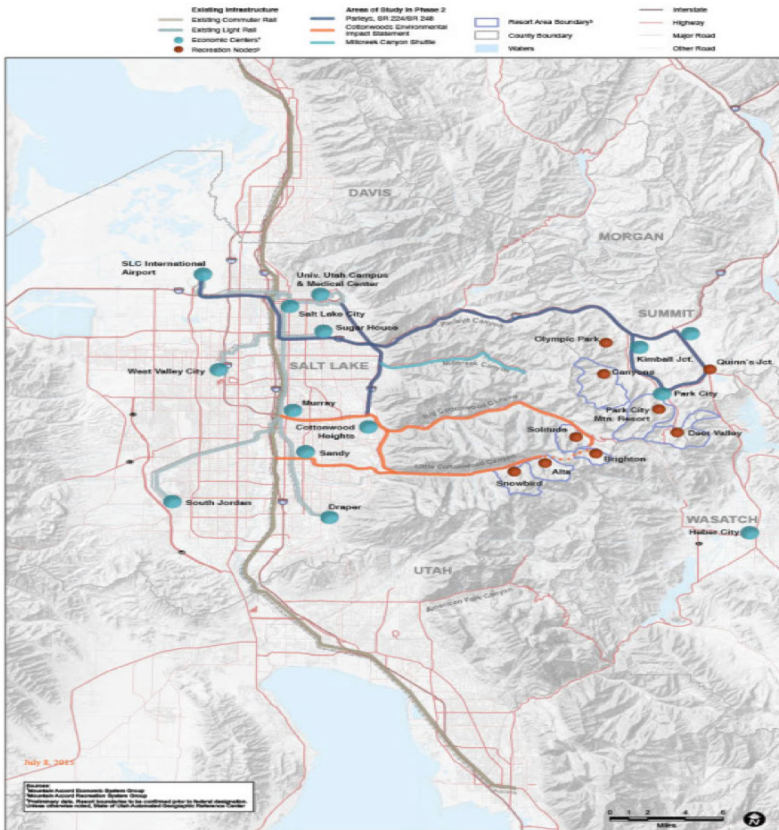
First and foremost, an Environmental Impact Study before any serious actions are made is an essential requirement. This study would help protect the Mountain Accord legislation and protect the environment in the most proactive way possible. It also provides a satisficing solution. This approach allows constituents and municipalities to make decisions based on the findings of environmental research professionals, instead deciding upon a type of transportation before the facts are laid out. Ideally, each county would follow the proposed actions in the Land Exchange. However, The Mountain Accord group has already faced significant backlash, specifically from Utah County. These representatives have chosen to be completely removed from that part of the Accord proposal (England).

## Economic Impacts

One of the emphases in the Mountain Accord is the interconnection of economic sectors on both sides of the Wasatch front. The signers of The Accord acknowledge while improvement and attention is being focused on the popular ski areas and tourist locations up the canyons, attention must also be focused on the economic sectors below the canyons. A key decision that would improve this connection lies with transportation choice. If a reliable method is chosen to move tourists through the canyons, the entire I-15 corridor can prosper as well. The Land Exchange would also provide additional benefits to the economy of Utah residents and companies by improving upon the recreational and tourist destinations. By improving destinations in the canyon and creating additional recreational areas through the Land Exchange, the citizens of Utah will see an increase in commercial activities.

## Economic Analysis

Economic and Recreational Nodes as seen in the diagram below need to be a key feature in ensuring equal sustainability for all parties involved in the accord process. By creating and maintaining practical access to these nodes through reliable transportation means, both the I-15 corridor and the Wasatch Canyon locations can benefit from the Mountain Accord process. As mentioned in the Transportation Analysis, a light rail system for travel would provide the greatest benefit in terms of dependable and efficient travel to and from each economic center and recreational node.


**MOUNTAIN ACCORD TRANSPORTATION - ATTACHMENT 7**


## Recreation

The Lands Package mentioned in the Environmental section also plays a large role in terms of recreational opportunities. In the package, ownership adjustments between the forest services and ski resorts would be made. Lands that the forest services deemed not needing protection would provide beneficial locations to the Ski resorts would be traded. Jones has commented that there has been a great deal of compromise on this subject by the two parties, but private land owners in the area have shown a good deal of opposition to this proposition.

Hiking trails are another key component to the accord and would provide a great opportunity for recreation in the mountainous areas involved. This infrastructure would add more trails and create a regional travel network. More people are looking to use trails and hike in the area, and the strains caused by this needs to be resolved. The process of creating these trail networks would also allow access to trails that see high recreational use (like those in Snowbird and Alta), to be maintained properly. The accord signers recognize changes and, "...anticipate growth in year-round use of the ski areas and expressly support changes to recreation infrastructure (e.g., lifts, trails, etc.) that respond to changes in demand within the ski areas' respective U.S. Forest Service Special Use Permit boundaries."

### Recreation Analysis

All plans and recommendations made from The Mountain Accord appear to be beneficial to the parties involved. The main difficulty in these changes being proposed is the cooperation required between the ski resorts, in the area, and the U.S. Forest Services. Although these two entities have appeared to be working well to meet one another's needs, private citizens with property in the area have shown a great deal of criticism to these suggestions. The Mountain Accord signers must take into account the third parties who may be involved in these proceedings and work as a mediator to make certain that everyone involved is fairly treated.

### Summary and Overall Recommendations

In terms of transportation, Jones conveyed that the most feasible plan, both in terms of support from the legislature and residential peers, would be a Rapid Transit Bus system. While some might agree with her in terms of attainability, others stand by the blueprint of a light rail system through the Wasatch canyons. The light rail system would be the most forward thinking approach to the transportation dilemma Utah is currently experiencing, and will continue to experience in the future. It is the most reliable, efficient, and environmentally friendly option provided



in the Mountain Accord. The citizens of Utah who want to see the greatest return on investment and the most beneficial future for Utah should support this type of transportation system.

The Environmental Impact Study must be a priority in the grand scheme of this accord. Too much vital information can and will be missed if this EIS is not made a priority. The focus on recreational centers and nodes would provide a great boost to both recreational opportunities and economies in the area. Economic nodes must also be a high priority to see that each area included in these decisions receives benefits. By creating an efficient system of connection between these nodes, both the Utah Valley and Wasatch locations can profit from the Mountain Accord together. Last, a land exchange package must be adhered to, primarily to preserve Utah's vital watersheds and forest areas. Through compliance and cooperation, both economic and environmental practices can thrive.

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# Utah's Energy and Infrastructure: How Utah Grew from a Mountain Desert to One of America's Fastest Growing States

**By: Derk Horlacher**

*Derk Horlacher is a student of Utah Valley University (UVU) and is working towards a B.S. in Information Technology with an emphasis in security. Derk works as an IT technician for a software company in Utah. As a technician, Derk works on improving network reliability of the company, as well as implementing security parameters for the company, as well as assisting users who are both remote as well as local with technical issues. Derk has also worked on projects for the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) for UVU. Derk has also engaged in courses at UVU centered around mountain development and studies of mountain countries, and is working towards combining his IT knowledge and degree with his understanding of the unique challenges that mountain nations face.*

When people think of technological hubs in the United States, cities like Austin, San Francisco, and Seattle might come to mind. However, there are several cities that have a significant amount of technological companies in Utah, a state located in the Rocky Mountains, in the United States. Utah is a prime example of the potential economic and civic success that lies within regions, which are predominantly mountainous when long-term planning works in tandem with the strengths of the region. The growth that Utah has seen in the technology field is not the only thing that has caused Utah to grow. The growth that Utah is experiencing is caused by several factors. The major reasons for Utah's economic success can be broken down into a few main areas of focuses. Utah is slowly becoming known as a major technology location, and has even acquired the name "Silicon Slopes." This has encouraged major companies to start building satellite buildings in Utah and has allowed for unicorn companies, companies that are estimated at over \$1 billion net worth, to emerge throughout

the Wasatch front. Utah also owes a lot of its growth to mining as well as the energy sector, where renewable energy companies are emerging and moving to Utah, as well as fossil fuels companies, which have already been operating in Utah for decades. The final factor that seems to have had a significant impact on Utah's growth and success is the culture, which can be significantly attributed to the state's major religion, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also known as Mormons. This paper discusses these factors in depth, including the early days of Utah, which paved the way and to success in the areas of technology, energy, and tourism.

It is important to establish an understanding of Utah's geography, as well as the economic, cultural, and religious makeup of Utah. The area, known as the Great Basin Desert region, which includes Nevada, parts of California, Oregon, and Idaho, is an arid desert situated slightly over 6,000 feet above sea level. Utah is also located at 39 degrees above the equator, leading to an even harsher environment where temperatures range substantially between summer and winter months. Nearly 80% of Utah's 3 million people live in an area called the Wasatch Front, the area located against the western side of the Wasatch Mountains. This environment would normally deter many people and could be a valid reason that settlement would be difficult.

Utah's economy is primarily made up of mining operations, technology, and tourism. Utah mines are leading suppliers of materials such as copper, zinc, gold, silver, and others. Utah is also a center for aerospace research and the production of missiles, spacecraft, computer hardware and software, electronic systems, and related items. Many of these companies started during World War II. Utah also mines various materials used for energy, such as coal. The growth of the technology sector has increased greatly since the 1980's with companies such as Novell and Word Perfect, but has also found itself as home to new, highly successful companies such as Domo, Qualtrics, and Vivint, among others. Utah has also attracted other technology companies such as Adobe, Amazon and Ebay to relocate or build new facilities in Utah.

Utah's dominant religion, Mormonism, makes up around 55% of the Utah's adult population, with 73% of Utahans identifying as Christian. Utah's majority religion has a long history in Utah because the early white settlers of Utah were Mormons. They developed a very industrious culture, which had a positive impact on the early growth of Utah's mountain communities. Much of Utah's success and community planning can be attributed to early Mormon city planning and standards.

An early part of Utah's history serves as a basis for Utah's economic and civic success, which can be attributed to Mormons. The Mormons established a settlement in what is now Salt Lake City in the summer of 1847. After escaping persecution in Missouri and Illinois, the early Mormons moved over the Rocky Mountains and stopped in the Great Basin area, an area that was currently owned by Mexico. The Mormon's established a method of self-governance and economic policy before settling in Utah, illustrated in the cities of Nauvoo, Illinois, as well as in Kirtland, Ohio. The significance of these policies was seen when the Mormons settled in a place of near complete isolation.

### The Mormon Model

The Mormon church was founded in New York and experimented with economic and financial models as the group moved across the United States. The early Mormon leaders placed special emphasis on education and group progress. To the early leaders and members of the church "Economics, and secular policy in general, thus placed on par with – or incorporated in – religion". The Mormon congregation believed in revelation not only regarding spiritual matters, but also temporal things. Of the 112 "revelations" received by Mormon leader, Joseph Smith, eighty-eight dealt with economic matters. As stated by a scholar on Mormonism "Mormonism, though a religion, is largely, if not primarily an economic movement". These principles of economics were taught from the early days of the church and were principles that both

leaders and followers took to heart and incorporated into their daily lives. Many of the economic ideas taught were the basis for the banking, mercantilism, and real estate programs that were set up for the congregation. When the church left New York, the group first settled in Kirtland, Ohio, where they started to institute the early forms of many of the principles they would use to build Utah's mountain communities. One of these principles remained an integral part of the city development and planning for future communities. Joseph Smith created the development and called it the "Plat of the City of Zion." The initial plan stated that the town would be divided into one-mile square blocks, each with a set amount of lots per block, with roads running north and south, and east and west.

City planning was as an important part of Utah's ability to expand successfully, just as it is with many other communities. The leaders of the Mormon communities developed towns and encouraged industry as a way of supporting the settlement of Utah. This focus on industry gave immigrants opportunities for employment as blacksmiths, carpenters, and other crafts. They created the needed building materials or contributed to physically constructing homes, businesses, and factories. These projects were organized and led by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Works, which was created in 1850. This organization helped immigrants, who otherwise would have had little natural impact on the community, to use their skills to benefit everyone. The public works office took on many projects, absorbed various companies, and when necessary, allowed certain ventures to be abandoned.

An example of allowing a business to close was Deseret Pottery. This company struggled to produce products on its own and was absorbed into the public works to try and make it profitable. The company was not able to become successful and "after some \$12,000 in labors and materials were expended on the enterprise." It was closed. The Utah communities also saw failure with the manufacturing of sugar beets, and after 5 years of failure, abandoned that venture as well. The Mormon communities also failed

in their endeavors of creating a wool, iron, and lead markets based in Utah. While there were a variety of factors, which contributed to these failures, there was one overarching theme behind it. This was the lack of training given to those placed in charge of these enterprises and the Mormons' desire to be self-sufficient. The main source of economic sustainability at the time came from the food produced in Utah and exported to the various mining settlements in the surrounding area.

Mormon communities eventually saw success. These investments included farming and raising livestock. This success created an environment where a community could develop and endure, instead of mining towns, which only exist for a short time and then disappear. Mormons did mine, but the mines were under strict guidance and materials were only mined in a way that allowed them to be processed and used in the local economy. Miners were also encouraged to use their funds to buy things which would allow them to build farms in the surrounding area. Utah's economy started to grow as they it became less isolationist. The main factor that introduction of Utah into the national economy was the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. As the railroad passed through Utah, Brigham Young, a leader of the church and the region, secured multimillion dollar contracts from both railroad companies for local communities. The railroad would not only help bring future immigrants, but also allowed for better trade between Utah's isolationist economy and the national economy. To better sustain Utah's economy, the state leaders also instituted a Board of Trade, which regulated the supply and demand of various products in the local economy. It also served as a starting point for researching and developing new markets. All of these things helped to diversify Utah's economy. Eventually, much of what the Mormon church controlled and regulated was privatized, but what the church accomplished in the previous decades created a region in which long term prosperity was possible.

The second factor which allowed Utah to develop is mining and energy production. As previously stated, early Mormon settlers did not support the idea of mining, neither did they see success in their endeavors in their early years of attempting to mine out the various minerals located in the region. Due to the Mormon church relinquishing their hold on companies associated with mining in the 1800s, Utah developed significant mining operations. This led to the state of Utah supplying a significant amount of their own energy. This has come mainly in the form of coal, oil, and natural gas. Today, energy is a \$20.9 billion industry, and generates around \$673 million in state and local revenue. Utah is the third largest producer of geothermal energy, ranked in the top twenty for coal, oil, and natural gas production in the United States. Utah is also home to the Green River Formation, the world's largest known oil shale reserve estimated to hold 3.15 trillion barrels. The energy sector has also allowed for the creation of more than 40,000 jobs. The number of employed people in energy jobs continues to grow as more companies emerge, especially in the field of renewable energy. Utah is home to sixty-eight solar energy companies, and the revenue and jobs produced by these companies has grown consistently each year. According to a report carried out in 2012 by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah, solar companies in Utah have grown from generating a meager \$300,000 in state and local revenues in 2007, to over \$11 million in 2011.

Utah's solar and renewables industry is not the only successful form of energy production in Utah. Utah's primary form of electricity generation comes from coal, with smaller percentages coming from natural gas, and oil, respectively. Roughly ninety-eight percent of the energy produced in Utah comes from these three resources, with seventy-six percent of that coming from the usage of coal. Utah has become so good at producing energy, that it typically produces over thirty percent more energy than it needs, which allows it to be a net energy exporter.

The success of coal has led to the creation of over 1,500 direct jobs and hundreds more in the area of coal processing. The rapid growth and acceptance of renewable energy options has allowed more of Utah's residents to find places to work as well. Utah's solar jobs have seen a growth rate of over 3,517 percent between the years of 2007 and 2012. Overall, the energy sector in Utah led to the creation of over 18,000 direct jobs, which expands to nearly 40,000 jobs when other forms of associated employment are included in the statistics.

### The Silicon Slopes

Utah has seen substantial growth over the last twenty years, much of which is attributed to technology companies. The layout that early Mormon city planners established with Joseph Smith's guidance under the "Plat of the City of Zion", allowed for the cities around the state to grow to accommodate higher populations as well as transportation changes. The amount of energy, among other things, has created an inexpensive environment for companies, which has allowed the startup culture in Utah to thrive. In addition, this environment encouraged big names, such as Adobe, Ebay, Google, Oracle, and many others to move to Utah's Wasatch Front. It is also important to note that there are three major universities within an hour of each other, which supply many tech-oriented graduates. In 2014, these three universities had 663 computer science graduates and 750 engineering graduates. The amount of readily employable, skilled workers in the area also incentivized companies to either move or start in a business in Utah. However, the number of graduates cannot keep up with the demand from these businesses. For the above reasons, Utah is a prime location for technology companies to do business.

In 2015, the Brookings Institute reported that in the Salt Lake City and Provo areas, computer systems industries are the fastest growing industry in the state, followed by other computer related industries such as software publishing, data processing, and other information services. Evidence for these statistics show



that the number of tech companies has grown from 1,000 to over 5,000. The amount of jobs in high-tech industries in Utah is also well above average. Salt Lake City, Provo, and Ogden-Clearfield sit at the 15th, 12th, and 14th highest percentage in the nation, respectively. Utah's technology industry employs over 57,000 people, with an extra 15,000 jobs that are unfilled due to the ever-increasing demand from various technology companies. The amount of jobs in this field is increasing, and the low cost of living is attracting workers to Utah, causing cities like Salt Lake City to be the fifth fastest growing city in the nation.

These factors have either directly or indirectly encouraged companies to stay in Utah, which has made the investors look to Utah for new startups that might become "Unicorns". There are four companies that have already achieved this status in Utah: Pluralsight, Qualtrics, Domo, and InsideSales. These companies exemplify the success that Utah has been experiencing and will most likely continue to experience. Two of these companies have had a large impact on the technology field in Utah in recent years. While companies like Novell and WordPerfect helped start the technology movement in Utah, companies like Qualtrics and Domo are helping to make Utah's Silicon Slopes a true rival with other tech hubs.

Qualtrics was founded in 2002 and for the first decade operated on a limited budget. In 2012, Qualtrics hit unicorn status, and brought in \$150 million in revenue. That has since increased to \$250 million in 2016. Qualtrics's founder, Ryan Smith, has started looking at bringing the company public. If Qualtrics does decide to file an IPO, it would not only benefit the company, but the entire technology industry in Utah. Qualtrics is currently valued at \$2.5 billion, and when a company of this size goes public, it increases the interest and attention for Utah's Silicon Slopes. If Qualtrics were to go public, more talent would come to Utah, which would allow companies to fill the numerous open positions that they have. In addition, it would attract more venture capital funding for other Utah technology companies, allowing Utah's economy to continue to grow at an above average rate.

Another company that hit unicorn status is the business intelligence company Domo. Founded by Josh James in 2010, Domo is currently estimated at \$2.3 billion and has garnered the attention of venture capital firms willing to invest. Domo's CEO previously founded web analytics company Omniture, which was founded in 1996, went public in 2006, and was sold to Adobe for \$1.8 billion in 2009. Domo has had even more success than Omniture, and took less time to become more successful. Similar to Qualtrics, when Domo goes public, it will also greatly benefit Utah's economy and technology industry.

While unicorn companies are impressive to look at, they do not make up most Utah's high-tech companies. Many of the smaller companies that are operating within Utah's borders greatly contribute to the economic and population growth in the state. The technology field in Utah will continue to become a more dominant part of Utah's economy as more companies in that industry see success, and as more local entrepreneurs start up their own companies like Ryan Smith and Josh James did.

Utah's overall success can be attributed to many events, policies and an understanding of the various resources that it offers. Utah has experienced population growth for much of its history, which can be attributed to the Mormon faith. This is also due to the recent influx of workers moving to the state for technology and energy related jobs. This growth could have affected the state negatively if state leaders were not prepared and did not look to future. City planning has allowed Utah communities to grow and expand to accommodate more people and businesses, and has created a dense, urban network of cities along its mountain ranges. The early Mormons concepts of self-sustainability and community involvement allowed the early settlements to develop and thrive in a harsh environment where other towns and cities vanished. These traits have also been carried on by posterity in Utah, which has created numerous entrepreneurs in many industries within the state. Utah's energy production and the early techniques uti-

lized in coal mining allows them to power the state, and export a valuable resource to neighboring states. Utah was conservative and careful in the beginning stages of its creation, and by preparing and developing its resources, has found success.

Utah can and should be used as a model for finding success in unlikely places. Other mountainous regions throughout the world can look to Utah's planning and resource development as a pattern on which to base their own plans. While other communities will have different resources, finding, planning, and developing resources which play to a community's strengths will allow other mountainous communities to start down the same road that Utah has traversed, and develop their own prosperity.

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# Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Examining Challenges for Economic Development of Mountain Nations through Albania and Utah

**By: David N. Schwartz**

*David N. Schwartz is a new transfer to the University of Utah, currently finishing his final semester with Utah Valley University. He is working on a BA in linguistics, with a minor in Conflict and Peace studies, as well as a certification in International Relations. Coming from a diverse family, David developed a keen interest in intercultural relations, and having been fascinated with language and writing since a young age, studying to explore the intersection of intercultural relation and conflict through a linguistic lens was a natural progression. After finishing his bachelor's, David plans to continue his education to Master's and Doctorate degrees in order to ultimately work with global issues.*

Since before recorded history, people who settled in mountainous regions faced a unique set of challenges not found in other environments. Though located all across the globe, these biomes are typically harsher to live in, with intense weather, diminished accessibility to water, arable land, and a high altitude coupled with a rough terrain. Human conflict seems prevalent in these areas. Mountainous regions in Afghanistan and the Congo are militarily active locations; mountainous regions like the countries of the Balkans have had persistent conflict for years.

An example of one of these countries, Albania, stands on the cusp of overcoming both natural and human conflict, due to economic growth and state stability in recent years. A wealth of oil located within the country and possible membership in the EU both offer a promising future for Albanians<sup>1</sup>. However, decades of cultural conflict stemming from repeated totalitarian regimes, unsolved environmental challenges, and government corruption all stand in the way of progress.

Given that all mountainous regions share a degree of similarity in their environmental challenges, the mechanisms of success in overcoming these difficulties in one region can be applied to others. Following this principle, it is harder to find a better example of economic success despite political, environmental and social challenges than the state of Utah in the United States. Utah is a success story from which other mountainous regions can draw inspiration. This is due to its diverse economy and fast growing communities.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Utah's success was one of the primary reasons for Alexander Salabanda, the Albanian ambassador to the United States, visited the state and participated in the first International Women of the Mountains Conference, held at Utah Valley University in 2007.

Overcoming numerous challenges and conflicts since settling in their current location in the Rocky Mountain region in 1847, settlers carved out something great for themselves. As a mountain community of comparable size and geography to Albania, the Utah model has applications which can directly benefit the people of Albania both economically and culturally. In order to best examine what factors led to the current situations in both Albania and Utah, thus highlighting the similarities, relevant policy applications, and possible solutions, it is necessary to examine the pertinent histories of both areas.

Albania is a country of about 11,100 square miles—roughly half the size of Ireland, or just bigger than the state of New Jersey. Over 70% of the country is covered in mountains, and a majority of the land is also 300 or more meters above sea level. About three million people live within its borders, and while specific demographic numbers provided by the state are disputed, the majority of the population is ethnic Albanian, with Greeks, Macedonians and Montenegrins being recognized minority groups. Albania is also Europe's only majority-Muslim country, with 58% of the population being Muslim, while a Christian minority makes up 17% of the population, and the remaining 25% being either religiously

unaffiliated or belonging to another religion.

While Albania is a majority Muslim country, it fails to meet most of the stereotypes typically associated with the Islamic religion. Even though historically religion has been a difficult issue for Albanians, currently the Albanian approach to religion is liberal. As such, most Islamic religious holidays are observed at the family level, typical dress like headscarves are rarely seen, and the country's religious groups coexist peacefully<sup>3</sup>.

Like many other countries in the Balkan peninsula, Albania was exceptionally turbulent during the 1900s. During the earliest part of the century, Albania's political system was based on a pluralist society similar to those found in western Europe at the time. However, in 1925, President Ahmet Zogu started a seven-year term. During this period, he ran a harsh police state, ultimately transforming Albania into a kingdom, and declared himself King Zog I. This devolution of the country into a centralized and brutal autocratic form of government was a catalyst for Albania's continued political conflicts up to the present day but would also become an oppressive status quo.

At the start of World War II, Albania was invaded by Italian forces and put up little resistance, due in part to the 1926 Treaty of Tirana. This agreement abdicated Albania's power into the hands of the Italian government. Though having practically welcomed the Italians with open arms, Zog quickly fled the country, fearing for his and his family's lives when he realized that his autonomy as king was to be replaced by Italian leaders. As a result, the Italians placed Victor Emmanuel III on the Albanian Throne to act as a puppet king.

Left as an occupied state with no functional government of their own, the Albanians eventually organized themselves into three major movements. The Legalists, who desired the return of Zog as their legitimate ruler, the Communists, backed by the Yugoslavian Communist Party, and to a lesser extent, by Moscow, and the National Front, an anti-communist and nationalist right-wing



organization. From 1939 to 1941, these disparate forces coalesced to fight a war for national liberation, first from the Italians, and then from the Germans after Italian surrender.

Though different groups helped with the revolution, the Communist Party ultimately came out on top. They had gained large popularity by inspiring the young people of Albania to fight for national liberation, with their leader, Enver Hoxha. Their leader exercised his accumulated power after the end of World War II to ensure that the Communists would take control of the provisional government, set up to help transition Albania back into a democracy. Political rivals, the middle class, and farmers were all targeted by punitive laws after the Communists were elected.

By the first elections for the new official government, Hoxha and his Communists regime had transformed themselves into the Democratic Front Party and were able to strong-arm voters during the election. As a result, Hoxha won the election with 93% of the votes. Throughout most of the 1940s, Hoxha's government operated as a democracy, however, by 1950, party in opposition to the Communist Democratic Front were disallowed by law. Mirroring actions taken during the time of the provisional government, Hoxha targeted political dissidents with discriminatory laws to make sure that no one would oppose his rule.

From this point, Hoxha's reign would follow in the footsteps of King Zog. As the situation degenerated, political dissidents were more than just punished legally-- they would either be punished physically or bullied economically, and many were outright disappeared. Hoxha's paranoia and strict adherence to communism found him cutting ties with the USSR in the late 1950s, after a long period spent doubting the leadership and ideology of Soviet Communist party members in power just before and then after Stalin's death. Hoxha drew inspiration from the leader of China's communist revolution and one of his few remaining Communist allies, Mao Zedong. By making sure that the Communist Party was the only legitimate political authority according to Albanian law, he

was able to quickly disseminate propaganda which elevated him to almost deific status in the eyes of the people.

From there, Hoxha's Maoist tendencies began to flourish. He continually kept down the middle class not only by killing protestors and removing political dissidents but also by spreading fear of foreign invasion. Having just come out of brutal fascist occupation during World War II, Hoxha continued to haunt the minds of the Albanian public with the ghouls of foreign occupation. One of his biggest moves was to litter Albania's mountainous landscape with defensive bunkers, building strong fortifications, while stoking the flames of fear in the Albanians.

Additionally, Hoxha exerted his power to quickly transform traditional Albanian culture. Communism being the dominant political force, opposition to religion was prevalent throughout the country. While already a radical change for the majority Christian Albanians, this put an incredible strain on the poor minority of Muslim Albanians, who already faced discrimination. Even further, where once were large patriarchal family structures, Hoxha forced women's liberation and fragmented families into smaller units by replacing large, traditional houses with apartment buildings. These culture wars, waged with fear and propaganda, ultimately helped to break down the forces of nationalism that had once opposed Hoxha. As a result, Albania was ruled by one of the most repressive and insular regimes amongst the communist countries within the USSR's orbit.

Ruling until his death in 1985, Hoxha successfully repressed any attempts to depose his rule. After his death, Hoxha was replaced by Ramiz Alia, who faced Albania's dire economic straits. Alia reopened negotiations with Germany, Italy, and the UK throughout the 1980s, softening the hardline communism and Warsaw bloc policies of his predecessor. Mikhail Gorbachev began to introduce glasnost and perestroika, eventually leading to the dissolution of the USSR. Alia, too, focused on reforms.

Finally, in 1990, the rule of the communists came to an end, and other political parties were once again legalized. Free elections were held in 1991, and though the Communists fought against losing power, they were ultimately replaced by the Albanian Democratic Party in 1992. The Democratic Party tried to manipulate the next elections in 1996, repeating the cycle and ultimately leading to the collapse of the Albanian government in 1997.

Since 1997, Albania continued to face many of the challenges that plagued the country throughout the 20th century. Though power has shifted back and forth between the socialist and democratic parties several times since 1998, elections have remained contentious and a major source of anxiety. Widespread corruption continues to plague the government at all levels, exacerbating an already delicate political system.

Though technically a democracy, this troubled history has left Albania economically crippled. As other neighboring countries from eastern Europe and former Soviet satellite states advanced and built economies structured around a working middle class, Albania lost an entire century of economic evolution to Stalinist economic planning. Albania has a small working class. Half of Albania's economic activity remains in the agricultural sector, despite the fact that it only accounts for roughly one-fifth of the country's GDP<sup>5</sup>.

Albania's economic situation is exacerbated by extreme mismanagement and regime change over the 20th century. The majority of the territory is covered in mountains at least 300 meters above sea level, only around 21% of the country's land is dedicated to farming.<sup>6</sup> Within that 21%, improper cultivation and soil conservation practices have resulted in soil degradation, which remains unchecked due to under-fertilization of soil. 200,000 hectares of land are being mismanaged in this way, the majority of which lies in the potentially productive coastal areas<sup>7</sup>.

Unfortunately, corruption and mismanagement are noth-

ing new for Albanians. According to the EU's 2012 Transparency International Report, corruption cost Albania approximately \$1.3 billion between 2005 and 2010. Frequent intrastate conflict and corrupt politicians have enabled rampant mafia activity in Albania over the years. While not the first country most people think of when the term "mafia" comes to mind, however, mob activity in Albania has been a lucrative way to make money in the international drug trade since the 1980s. Within the borders of Albania, the mafia wields immense power. Seizing this opportunity created by the country's lack of official infrastructure, organized crime in Albania traffics everything from gasoline to human beings.

Corruption in Albania is so prolific that the mob has actually been responsible for infrastructural development where the government has failed. Smuggling large quantities of gasoline between the oil-starved Balkan countries was a prime opportunity for the Albanian mob during the Yugoslavian Wars of 1991-2001. However, they faced one prime issue, Albania's mountainous roads were particularly harsh. To this day, most roads remain unpaved and difficult to traverse, with a few highways which are poorly maintained.

Finding vehicles that could not only survive these roads, but also had large gas tanks for smuggling and were affordable resulted in large quantities of older Mercedes-Benz being imported into the country. This influx of affordable, durable cars helped the average Albanian traverse the country's poor roads, and has left most Albanians brand-loyal to this day. Since most of the country lies within the mountains and road development has been marginal at best, these cars are still the best option for most Albanians.

Repeated armed conflict between Balkan countries allowed for more than just the smuggling of oil. Displaced women, coming from other war-torn countries in the region, started fleeing to the relatively peaceful Albania starting around 1999. Due to the influx of poor and displaced women entering the country, the human trafficking trade became prolific. This crime entered the

international arena and in 2015 it trafficked the largest number of victims in the UK. This was a 40% increase in total victims from the previous year.<sup>10</sup>

These problems are one of Albania's biggest challenges in gaining membership to the EU, something it desperately needs to help its economic development. In February of 2018, Albania was issued an ultimatum that it must hold "free and fair" elections this summer in order to proceed to the next step of its membership negotiations<sup>11</sup>. Since then, conflict between the ruling Socialist party and the opposition Democrats forced diplomatic intervention from the EU and the US<sup>12</sup>. Fortunately, this intervention seems to have worked, with the two political parties coming to an agreement and openly stating a bipartisan plan to root out corruption. Additionally, Muslim leader Ylli Gurra promoted a message of peace during this upcoming election cycle, asking that political parties continue to peacefully coexist, despite their tensions and for all religious communities to be respectful of each other<sup>13</sup>.

Such a positive turn of events and other possibilities for success will ultimately mean nothing, however, unless they are properly utilized; a missed opportunity would not help Albania. In order to plan for future success, it is best to look at other communities who have faced similar circumstances to find what does and does not work for economic development in such a situation. The state of Utah provides just such a solid comparison.

Utah can provide important lessons for overcoming many of the challenges facing Albania, because it was founded out of cultural conflict, ultimately creating thriving communities in a mountainous region. Utah has approximately 84,916 square miles of land and it is just under eight times the size of Albania. It has three distinct climate regions: one consisting of mountain ranges and plateaus, another consisting of transitional landscapes, and the last, which is the state's lower basins, valleys, and flatlands. Each zone makes up about a third of the state.<sup>14</sup>

Originally founded by Mormon settlers driven out of their homes in the eastern United States. Mormons make up a majority of Utah's population, about 58% of Utah's roughly three million people. With around another 25% of the population consisting of other Christian groups, and the rest belonging to minority religions, these numbers are comparable to Albania's. Both countries also, despite a major cultural divide lying between the majority and minority religious populations, have found ways to coexist peacefully.

The original Mormon pioneers moved to the Utah territory in order to escape the US government. They desired to live their religion that required the practice of polygamy. This practice, in addition to clannish behavior caused the local people to drive Mormons out of many areas in the eastern US. In the face of adversity, the Pioneers clung to the strength of their community and ultimately settled down in Utah.

However, it was not merely luck or utopian enthusiasm that allowed Utah to see the early successes that it did. Brigham Young, leader of the Mormons, was instrumental in helping to advance their prosperity. Community planning was meticulously well-designed; each settlement was planned and designed for efficiency and self-sufficiency. Working together, the Mormons were able to design their settlements to fit the needs of both the natural conditions presented by Utah's mountain terrain and arid climate, and their community as a whole<sup>15</sup>.

In order to make sure their communities did not fall prey to isolation in a harsh desert, mountainous climate, the settlers situated each town about 25 miles from each other, about a day's travel by wagon<sup>16</sup>. Each township also followed pre-planned grid designs for roads, and included important structures like meeting houses and telegraph lines. Land rights were given out to farmers, who were encouraged to develop and properly utilize their plots.<sup>17</sup> Under the direction of church leaders, they built vast irrigation systems to help communities prosper even under the arid

climate<sup>18</sup>.

Much like modern day Albanians, the Mormons were deeply suspicious of their national government. Experiencing stark opposition to their beliefs in their early history made them opposed to government resolution as a whole, preferring to err on the side of autonomy. This legacy of self-sufficiency culminated in the 1970s when massive growth and immigration prompted lawmakers to create a land use commission for strategic development. Despite support from the state government and most local counties, the people still rejected the idea, forcing it to referendum and ultimately rejecting the idea.

Failure to act and properly develop left Utah in an economic crisis in the mid-1980s, thanks to the 1983 recession which put the steel industry in shambles. Knowing that something needed to be done to prevent an economic tailspin, but having seen the past failures of government order on a distrustful and self-sufficient people, community leaders came together to create the Coalition for Utah's Future<sup>19</sup>. This 34-member group took a grassroots approach to gathering support for urban development. They took the initiative in developing a technology industry in the state. They created a light rail system and other transportation initiatives, and drafted laws aimed at strengthening the health of families and workers in the state. This helped Utah get out of its recession by the 1990s, and it became one of the fastest growing economies in the nation. This success and growth created a bubble in Utah that was about to burst. Leaders had to find a way to maintain quality of life and affordability, which had been one of Utah's attractions.<sup>20</sup> In 1994, the government knew the perils of forcing top-down reforms. Instead, Governor Leavitt suggested another grass-roots approach. Tapping into the ideals of communal participation and intelligently directed, rather than mandated, development planning, Envision Utah was formed.

Gathering together members of the community and leaders in all facets of local industry, ranging from church leaders, in-

dustrial interests to local workers, Envision Utah was able to create a space for discussion. It brought both the issues, and those who could solve them, to the same table. Thanks to the 30-year master plan and the groundwork that came as a result of these community efforts, Utah continues to have steady growth, despite national recessions<sup>21</sup>.

According to Derek B. Miller, President of World Trade Center Utah, an NGO that is officially a part of the World Trade Centers Association and which promotes international business and economic growth within the state, the key to Utah's current economic success rests on three pillars. These are fiscal prudence, global leadership, and free enterprise.<sup>22</sup> By utilizing Utah's free enterprise to organize smart development projects which promoted growth through fiscally responsible programs, state leaders were able to position Utah as an international business leader by attracting industries and skilled workers from all over the globe.

Utah's legacy of self-sufficiency and community participation offers a guiding light to other communities, and it is an example not only to Albanians, but other growing economies, as well. Community action is essential to growing local economies, especially in the face of a corrupt or untrustworthy government. Further, this type of community unification can not only stimulate economic growth but also put pressure on unjust governments.

It should thus be a top priority to foster individual and community action within Albania. While the EU stepping in to help mediate and diffuse the situation developing around the current elections is a necessary step, such a top-down approach will be ineffective in clearing out corruption. Albanians, having seen many regime changes the past century, have learned the same lesson that Utahns have learned. That is a strong arm is ineffective in facilitating stable and lasting success within a state.

Following this idea, grass roots community leaders should begin to organize where they can, promoting local economic de-



velopment and political action. Applying the expertise of NGOs who specialize in grassroots organizations and community building will be crucial in this situation. Given the time lost in terms of organizational development for Albanian citizens, compounded with their current economic and political situations barring many from access to higher education, it is likely that many average people do not yet have the skill set for such grassroots organization.

Ultimately, success in Albania will boil down to both the people's ability to organize themselves together and prevention of further top-down oppression. Support should be given from the EU, and other IGOs Albania is involved with, like NATO, as well as relevant NGOs to help educate Albanians on political action, giving them the tools to support themselves and work from the bottom-up in cleansing its political system. Breaking out of a cycle that has repeated itself over a hundred years can certainly be hard, but Albania has strong potential to succeed with the support of other mountain communities, including Utah. The Mountain Partnership under the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization facilitates this cooperation between mountain communities across the globe, with focus on the promotion of Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) worldwide. As two mountain communities, Albania and Utah could work together under the auspice of The Mountain Partnership and share their experiences through this channel to help refine the process of sustainable mountain development.

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# The Continued Struggle for Peace in Hindu Kush Range

**By: James Nielsen**

*James was born in Easton, Maryland but grew up in the Washington, D.C. area. Growing up in the shadows of the White House and Capitol Building sparked a political interest in him from a young age. At 14, James moved to Provo, UT where he attended Timpview High School. After graduation, James enrolled at Utah Valley University where he was heavily involved in UIMF activities and represented UVU at the Model United Nations Conference of the Far West in San Francisco, CA. James transferred to the University of Utah after his junior year to be closer to family, where he continues his studies in Political Science with an emphasis in International Relations. He also spent a summer studying U.S.-Russia relations at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (МГИМО). James' time abroad taught him that there is a need for greater collaboration between nations in order to promote prosperity and peace for everyone. His hobbies include skiing, skydiving, and traveling.*

Since George W. Bush, the 43rd President of the United States, declared the indefinite “war on terror” following the horrific events in New York, Arlington, VA, and Shanksville, PA on September 11th, 2001. It is likely he, nor anyone else knew just how lofty a task that the war would inevitably become. The 2001 incursion into Afghanistan was extensive in its action and objective. The U.S. war in Afghanistan proved to be the longest war the United States ever faced, yet fourteen years later, little progress has been made. While this operation decimated the terrorist network, substantial instability remains in the mountainous regions still harboring al-Qaeda and the Taliban to this day. The main crisis facing this region is the potential for a relapse into radical control by the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Without the continued application of American military pressure, it is quite possible that the Taliban, or its affiliates, could potentially tighten its control over the highland regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. There is great cause for

concern, because the majority of Afghans and Pakistanis are not willing to make the necessary changes required of them in order to prevent a second uprising. It is easy to blame the mistakes of the past, or to assume the conflict is impossible to resolve, therefore this essay is aimed at supplying solutions to certain regional issues. These solutions include a three-point plan to help the Afghans in their efforts to achieve a stable economy, infrastructure, and political system. To understand the situation, it is essential to take into account the Hindu Kush range, its history, and its people. The Hindu Kush mountain range is a 500 mile (800 km) range that spans from central Afghanistan through Northern Pakistan. It is a subrange of the Hindu Kush Himalayan Range. Its highest peak is 25,230 ft. above sea level. The Hindu Kush range consists of several major passes; the main passes are Salang, Wakhjir, Dorah, and Gomal. The climate is similar to that of Utah; it can range from 100+ degrees to temperatures below zero. According to Britannica, The Hindu Kush range is “one of the great watersheds of Central Asia, forming part of the vast Alpine zone that stretches Eurasia from east to west” (Allan, Nigel John Roger, 2015). The Hindu Kush is often divided into three main sections the eastern Hindu Kush, spanning from the Karambar pass to the Dorah, central Hindu Kush spanning from Shebar Pass to the Northwestern portion of Kabul the capital of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the western Hindu Kush also known as the Baba Mountains. The Baba region is home to a community of rural farmers and sheepherders. The majority of its inhabitants on the Afghan side of the border are Pashtun nomads, who roam the hills and pastures in search of fertile ground. The “Kochi” people, which when translated to English means “migration”. These individuals come primarily from the Ghilji tribal confederacy. This network of mountainous people is made up of many tribes, the main groups being the Sulaimankhel, Kharoti, Andar, Tanoli, Tokhi, and Hotak tribes. The Ghilji are devout Sunni Muslims and abide strictly by the Pashtun Code of Honor known as Pashtunwali. Pashtunwali is defined as “the code of conduct every Pashtun follows, he may live in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or as a refugee anywhere in the world.” (Aftab Ali, Yaseem, 2015). Pashtunwali is actually older than Islam itself, yet is

compatible with the religion in many ways. It promotes strong personal values such as self-respect, independence, hospitality, love, justice, revenge, forgiveness, and tolerance towards all. It strongly encourages Pashtun people to be especially kind to strangers and guests. To better understand the psychology of the Hindu Kush people, it would be essential to break down Pashtunwali, its principles, and its 21st century following.

The first principle of Pashtunwali is “Melmastis” or hospitality in English. It proffers hospitality and exuberant respect for every visitor to a village regardless of their race, religion, country of origin, and socio-economic status. “Nanawatai” (asylum) is the second principle; it is the duty to protect a person from his enemies. The Pashtunwali must protect people within their sphere at any cost. This idea even extends to those evading law and order. The best example of the extent the Pashtun tribe will go to the defense of a person, regardless of his background or position is that highlighted in the book *Lone Survivor*. Marcus Luttrell, a Navy Petty Officer, was the only member of his team to survive a vicious Taliban attack. He was found by the villagers of the Sabray tribe who hid him in their village. The tribesman fought relentlessly to protect Luttrell, beating off wave after wave of other tribe’s attacks. Finally, the U.S. military was able to rescue Luttrell, but it is doubtful, if not certain, he would have been killed if not for the bravery of the Sabray tribe.

The third principle is “Nyaw aw Badal” or Justice and Revenge. In the code of the Pashtunwali, both revenge and forgiveness are listed. For some people this may seem confusing. Nevertheless, one viewed as insincere in their actions must have revenge brought against them according to Pashtunwali. The code hints towards a “blood feud,” in which men must seek revenge at any cost, including death. Blood feuds can last for an indefinite period, even becoming generational conflicts. At times, the blood feud can involve every member of conflicting tribes, and can result in small-scale warfare. Although this may seem extreme, it is often still viewed as part of the culture.

The fourth teaching of Pashtunwali is Turah, translated as “bravery.” It is essential that a Pashtun defend his rights to his property, land, and respect, as well as defend his family at all costs. A weak man is deemed unworthy of life and an exceptional case of cowardly deeds can even result in the death of the offender. This is a more clear-cut term under Pashtunwali. Bravery is essential to the Hindu Kush culture, and weakness, especially by a man, is unacceptable. The fifth principle is Sabat (loyalty), this deals with the dedication a worthy Pashtun must have towards his family, friends, and all members of his tribe. If a disloyal Pashtun is shunned or shamed it also affects his family. The sixth Pashtunwali pillar is Khegara/Shegara or righteousness. It is essential for a Pashtun to search for truth and goodness in word, deed, and thought. This element is essential to all others, as a worthy Pashtun must see the value in all the elements of the Pashtunwali in order to abide by it in its entirety. This even includes protection of the environment; the meaningless destruction of nature is strongly condemned by Pashtunwali.

Groh, or faith is the seventh principle; it contains a wider definition of trust or faith in the power and fairness of god (Allah in Arabic, Khudai in Pashtun). This is the most straightforward aspect of Pashtunwal; believe in god and his power, and he will bless you and your fellow tribesmen. The eighth principle, Pat, Wyaar aw Meraana or respect, pride, and courage, deals with the notion that Pashtuns must be especially courageous because of their situation and the type of life they lead. The Pashtun life is nomadic and therefore can be quite difficult at times. This can test the courage of many Pashtuns, but to be courageous, one must first respect themselves. According to the code, respect must begin at home, amongst all the members of the immediate and extended family. Betrayal of a family member, for any reason, is considered one of the most severe infractions a Pashtun can commit.

The final three teachings are the most vague, the ninth, Naamus, deals with the protection of a tribe’s women. It is the duty



of all tribesmen to respect the female members of a community. It is their responsibility to protect them against those who disrespect them or worse, attempt to harm them physically. The tenth aspect is known as Nang or honor, it is the most brief. It simply means that a true Pashtun must defend the weak around him. The final principle of this expansive code is Hewaad or country. This principle is one of the most prominent reasons the Taliban is harbored by these communities and conflicts the most with the United States' effort in the region. Pashtunwali states that all Pashtuns must defend the "land of the Pashtuns." This is not limited to territorial integrity, but also to "hasob", which refers to Pashtun culture. They have an obligation to protect their fellow citizen, no matter who they are. This extends even to the Taliban members and al-Qaeda jihadists.

Understanding the doctrine of the Hindu Kush people makes it easier to understand how we should go about rallying internal support for U.S. efforts in the region. The first and most important socio-economic step in solving the problems in the Hindu Kush would be to eradicate economic dependency on opiates. Afghanistan's history of opium production began in the 1980's during the Soviet incursion into the country. Drug traffickers began to take advantage of the unstable situation, in order to grow poppy plants freely. However, the Afghan opium boom did not occur until the early 2000's when the Taliban began growing it to fund their fight against U.S. forces. Many people believe that the best solution to this issue would be to eradicate all opium fields in Afghanistan. This is woefully unrealistic, it is impossible to prevent drug production in the United States, let alone production in Afghanistan. According to the US State Department, Afghanistan has "developed a comprehensive counter narcotics strategy widely supported by the international community, and the U.S Government has a similarly balanced supporting strategy" (US State Department, 2011). This program includes education on the dangers of drugs, reformation of legal approaches to drug producers and consumers, and improvements in law enforcement. Additionally, it includes agricultural development, and governor-led opium

eradication. The State Department claims, “the United States has eliminated support for the Ministry of Interior’s Poppy Eradication Force (PEF). The USG continues to support governor-led eradication on a case-by-case basis where licit alternatives exist.” According to UNODC, “The Governor-led poppy eradication campaign commenced in March 2012 in most regions, while eradication activities in 2011 began in February in Hilmand and Kandahar provinces in the Southern region.” Eradication started later in 2012 because of a delay in the growth stages of opium poppy due to cold weather. The poppy plants are most recognizable in their cabbage stage, therefore, this is the best time to eradicate them. In the three-month period from March 2012 to May 2012, 79% of eradication was carried out.”

If the UNODC’s statistics are accurate, this portion of the Afghan government’s plan has been quite successful; 79% eradication is a staggering statistic. However, the plan is unenforceable in other areas, namely the reformation of their legal and law enforcement systems. It is important to show that opium is no longer a legitimate crop in Afghanistan, because there is such a long history of it in the region. In order to encourage common farmers to report illicit activity, the punishment for such activity must not only be enforced, but must be strong enough to discourage future participation. A common myth is that the majority of farmers are often dependent on opium as a means of earning a living. The same State Department study dispelled this myth by concluding that only 6.4% of the Afghans grow opium on only 2% of Afghanistan’s farmable land. (U.S. State Department, 2008) Therefore, a strong crackdown would not affect the majority of Pashtuns, simply the small percentage helping the Taliban. As specified under Pashtunwali, to be a true Pashtun, one must have faith in the teachings of Allah. Islam strictly forbids drug use, but clearly many have rationalized this does not extend to production of narcotics. As stated earlier, one of the proposed initiatives of the Afghan Government’s plan to eradicate opium is to educate the population about the consequences of the crop. It is vital that the government works to equate drug production with drug consumption in the minds of

Pashtuns in order to discourage opium farming in the Hindu Kush range.

The issue of education brings up a second proposal, which deals with the improvement of the Afghan system. It has to do with who the Afghans teach and not what they teach. In an essay for the annual Women of the Mountains Essay Contest on the struggle Afghan women face in their fight to gain an education, the issue of Sharia Law is presented. The Taliban imposed Sharia Law, the strictest form of Islam, upon the citizens of Afghanistan. Women are denied the right to an education along with many other gender restrictions under Sharia. It is the belief of many U.S. officials that the nation cannot move forward before educational opportunities are afforded to both genders. Illiteracy is a problem amongst both men and women in the more remote areas of the Hindu Kush range. However, there are far fewer women with the ability to read and write than men. It would be incredibly unrealistic to expect overnight change in this area; however, there are a few smaller steps that the government could take to begin the process of opening up the Afghan education system.

One possible initiative would be to begin with a limited curriculum that would be more appealing to the more fundamentalist Muslims in the government. This could focus on reading and writing specifically, and would not have to extend to areas such as science and history, subjects that would be more upsetting to fundamentalist policymakers. Unfortunately, this would not provide the women of the region with a well-rounded education., Change and community building takes time. Afghan activists must make careful pragmatic decisions at this time.

The third and final proposal is perhaps the most unlikely. It is for the Afghan Government to make no concessions to the Taliban whatsoever. The possibility of an agreement between the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was a possible solution in 2018. Many believe that a deal must be struck between the Taliban and the Afghan govern-

ment to ensure lasting stability after U.S. troop withdrawal. This stems from the belief that the U.S. is the only power capable of keeping the Taliban at bay. This is not necessarily true. The U.S. left the Afghan forces with the equipment and training necessary to fight their own battles. Therefore, what is needed is Afghan leadership that can rally the troops to action. All nations face the need for strong leadership. Nations cannot survive without it and, in the case of Afghanistan; it must come from a secular source. It is widely understood that the kind of leadership that is necessary to defeat the Taliban must come from a progressive Muslim—who would not sympathize with the Taliban in any way. It is essential that the Afghan Government feel that it does not have to make concessions to a terrorist organization that seeks to undermine it. The Taliban would benefit from these concessions, if they are made.

Due to the Afghan government, the implementation of these steps would be difficult. However, these changes are essential to the protection of the Pashtun people and their culture. The eradication of opium, the extension of educational services to women, and the refusal to concede to the Taliban, would strengthen the Hindu Kush community, and brighten the future for this culturally rich land. The Pashtun people have strong values, as demonstrated by the ideals of Pashtunwali, and they need to be strong if they truly desire a peaceful society. They need to be a society that never finds itself victim to the kind of oppression it faced under Taliban rule. As expressed by four-star Marine General John R. Allen: “we don’t want the Taliban to put down roots or the al-Qaeda to put down roots in Afghanistan that can facilitate Afghanistan becoming—once again—a launching pad for international terrorism.” That is what the United States is trying to avoid. The conflict in Afghanistan may have international ramifications, as the United States saw during 9/11, but in the final analysis, it is still an issue internal to Afghanistan. The U.S. can help and aid the Afghans, but it is their conflict to solve.

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## **Section 3**

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# **Student Reflective Essays**

# Economics of Higher Education

**By: Robert Smith**

*Rob was born and raised in Orem, Utah. He attended Mountain View High School where he played on the basketball team and was on Student Government. Rob is currently a senior at Utah Valley University and has found ways to get involved at UVU on the LDS Institute Council and most recently as a Presidential Intern. He served as the lead intern in the program having the opportunity to work with UVU's Cabinet and specifically with the Chief of Staff. Rob currently has the opportunity to serve as the Student Body President at UVU. He has found a great love for this institution and plans to serve in helping it continue on to new heights. He intends to focus on UVU's core theme of Student Success. Rob is currently studying Political Science with a History Minor. He intends to go on and get a Master's in Public Administration with hopes of pursuing a career in Higher Education. Rob is happily married to his wonderful wife, Kati, and they are the proud parents of their son, Thomas.*

## Introduction

Higher education is a critical cog in the machine of our economy today. Higher institutions of learning provide a way for an aspiring individual to advance their socioeconomic status while creating a workforce that will drive the economy forward and upward. With the continually shifting globally workplace of today, companies are requiring more creativity, education, and energy from their employees. These skills are gained by attaining a higher education. There has also been an influx of international students who see the value of higher education for their future and are willing to make the sacrifices to come to America or other prestigious educational countries in order to gain this higher education. The complexity behind gaining a college degree is immense due to issues like the public vs. private markets and the differences in lifestyles and socioeconomic status of students who are now attending higher education classes. While college and university degrees are



becoming increasingly important in the United States' economy, federal funding and student debt are a growing and ever-changing concern to the American people. This report includes the topics of college enrollment, tuition cost, current policies, and how they translate to the worth of a college degree to both American and international students. It also analyzes current research and my own experience as an intern in the president's office of a public university.

## Enrollment

As more students enroll in US universities, the more prospective graduates can contribute to the economy. According to a report, *The Economics of Higher Education*, prepared by the US Department of the Treasury along with the Department of Education, total college enrollment has increased since the mid 1980s. "The total number of students enrolled at institutions of higher education increased from under 13 million in 1987 to over 21 million in 2010." (*The Economics of Higher Education*, 2012) This includes an influx of international students as well. This same article states that the Latinos make up the largest minority population in Utah County. However, the percentage of Latinos has not been affected by recent immigration laws, but continues to grow in the county. Another article stated that, "International student enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities increased 10 percent between school year 2013-14 and 2014-15, the highest growth rate in 35 years, reaching a record high of 975,000 students." (Zong and Batalova, 2016) This statistic showed that international students are recognizing the impact that higher education could make on their future career.

This rise in enrollment will cause an increase in graduates, which would indicate there will be an increase in qualified employees. This is no different for Utah Valley University. As I have been a part of an internship in the Office of the President, I have been able to attend countless lectures where President Matthew Holland testified to the drastic growth of this institution. In UVU's strategic

plan for managing growth from 2016-2025, it illustrates that “UVU will increase by 13,100 students between 2015 and 2025, to a total of approximately 46,500 students, and will reach 50,000 by 2030.” (Utah Valley University Strategic Plan for Managing Growth Update 2016) This is an incredible influx of students, which means a higher number of graduates from Utah Valley University.

International students are increasingly choosing to graduate from American colleges and universities due to the amount of higher educational opportunities we have here. In an interview, IIE president Allan Goodman explained that the U.S. is seeing more international students because it has more colleges and universities. The U.S. has 4,000 schools, more than any other nation. “Capacity matters,” Goodman said. “Other countries can’t accommodate all their students. India and China have trouble finding seats for all their qualified students.” American colleges can absorb this overflow. (Mckenna, 2015) This increase in students influences the amount of enrollment UVU has, though it does not directly affect our job market. However, it helps to encourage students to gain an education and go on to contribute to their home countries.

When there is an increase in student enrollment, it often results in an increase in job openings within higher education for qualified individuals. These individuals can be employed by teaching, counseling, advising, staff positions, or administrative roles. This increase may eventually create the need for more institutions to arise throughout the country continuing to push the economy forward. To use UVU as an example, the drastic growth of this university has created more jobs and is currently the biggest employer in Utah Valley. This is a great outcome, unless the market becomes saturated with college graduates who cannot find work and the value of a college degree begins to decrease. Though the details of the degree would most likely continue to play a part in the worth of the degree.

There are three different types of institutions in America. There are public schools, a broad category of two and four-year in-

stitutions, private non-profit schools that include research, liberal arts, or religious institutions and private for-profit schools that are considered proprietary institutions and are the most prestigious of the three. Most universities or institutions have a different experience or area of expertise. This helps to aid the prestige associated with a college degree as the level of difficulty or the skills acquired differ at every school. This means that if the college student were to choose a “more difficult” school their degree would hold more value. Though and education is important, the more people earn a bachelor’s degree, the less value the degree has. Due to this issue, it will be more difficult to attain employment.

Utah Valley University is a public institution, but it has a unique makeup. Often, when universities continue to increase in enrollment they discontinue two year degrees and certificates. They narrow classes offered to cater to more “research based” goals. When asked about this common pathway, President Holland replied that UVU is planning to continue to carry their on their tradition as a ‘trade school’ and does not plan to discontinue certificates and two year degrees. He believes this is necessary to continue producing a well-balanced society and will help the valley in which the college resides and the wide variety of students they cater towards, including international students.

### Tuition

In a report about rising tuition costs, it claims that tuition costs at public schools have risen forty-five percent since 1991. (The Economics of Higher Education, 2012) The cost of higher education has also spiked fifty-seven percent at private non-profit schools and fifty-eight percent at private for-profit institutions. (The Economics of Higher Education, 2012) With the tuition rates rising, it has become more of a challenge for students to an institution of higher learning. This creates more worth for the degree itself.

There has been an increase in cost of living, which must

be taken into account when looking at the value of a college degree. In the book *The Shaping of American Higher Education* by Arthur M. Cohen and Carrie B. Kisker they indicate this by saying, “From World War II until the mid-1970s, real wages reflected advances in productivity. But despite 150 percent growth in productivity between 1978 and 2008, inflation-adjusted earnings of the median worker fell by 5 percent and in constant dollars the minimum wage was lower.” (Cohen & Kisker, 1998)

The value of the dollar fell dramatically from 1978 until present day, which would be reflected in the ability of a student to pay for college education. Though there are more students enrolled, one could argue that if the cost is higher to get the degree, it is therefore worth more to employers and companies across the nation.

For international students, tuition and fees can be a big concern. Yet, the British council published a report called *The Shape of Global Higher Education: National Policies Framework for International Engagement*. This report noted the openness of countries to student mobility. One of the subsections in a country’s overall openness rating is international tuition and fees. Many countries are trying to portray a more open and friendly policy toward international student mobility. Universities will try to keep international tuition as reasonable as possible in order to draw international students. (*The Shape of Global Higher Education: National Policies Framework for International Engagement*, 2016) This report also gives the example of Colombia, which has an organization who will pay half of student’s fees if they return to Colombia after finishing their degree. (*The Shape of Global Higher Education: National Policies Framework for International Engagement*, 2016) By motivating students to keep their overall costs low, Columbia is getting a return on their investment and it keeps overall expenses reasonable for the student.

At Utah Valley University, they are determined to continue to keep tuition low. They have a wide variety of two-year degrees and certificates and they want to keep education affordable for both traditional and non-traditional students who want to attain

these degrees. UVU is trying to add more prestige to the university by creating a wide variety of degrees offerings and research opportunities for their students. This will eventually help the university gain recognition by the public. UVU does not want to increase the price of tuition and drive away the trade-oriented portion of their student population. The university is trying to uphold this balance and is creating a unique atmosphere for a wide variety of students.

## Policy

One indication of the worth of a degree for the college student is the return on their investment. This is difficult to track because much of the return on investment depends on the students themselves. This is even more difficult to observe after international students return home to their native countries. In the publication, *The “Business” of Reforming American Schools*, Denise Gelberg gave the example of the classic student who fell asleep in class. She claimed that it is impossible to engage this type of student, though one cannot blame him because it may be stress of outside pressures that are manifesting themselves at school. (Gelberg, 1997) She considered these situations “impossible”, although the community and the participating nation still wanted results or good outcomes from every single student. This is similar to higher education outcomes. (Gelberg, 1997)

Barack Obama’s current educational policies addresses the issue of a student who does not see a return on their investment. “As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the maximum Pell grant increased from \$4,731 in 2008 to \$5,550 in 2010.” (The Economics of Higher Education, 2012) Along with more Pell grant money, the Obama administration has replaced the HOPE act with the more generous, American Opportunity Tax Credit, which allows students to receive \$2,500 for higher education versus the \$1,800 involved with the HOPE Act. (The Economics of Higher Education, 2012) These policies help relieve families and students, and make a college degree more realistic for young or struggling students. The UVU strategic plan for managing

growth illustrates the amount that UVU relies on these policies. Statistics show that, “UVU now enrolls more than 10,000 students over the age of 25” with many of these students married and supporting children. (Utah Valley University Strategic Plan for Managing Growth Update 2016) These policies have aided students in gaining an education and creating less of an initial investment and more return on investment for individual students.

For International students, it is becoming easier to gain international higher education. The British council’s report of National Policies Framework for International Engagement says, This will create easier accessibility to international college students who want to further their education to help their current economies. Education has also been linked to more successful individuals and economies. “The education and training of a country’s workers is a major factor in determining just how well the country’s economy will do (Radcliffe).” This could be the solution to many third-world or struggling countries as international policies allow for easier accessibility to higher education abroad.

Other institutions implement extracurricular outlets such as internships, music groups or sports teams to help provide a return on investment and great chance of employment upon graduation. In the book, *Crisis in Higher Education*, the president of a small liberal arts college discussed how he, his faculty, and staff worked to create the best possible experience for their students and their graduates. He claimed that admissions growth is very expensive but if one focused on return on investment, students saw the value of the school. (Docking & Curton, 2015) For example, Adrian College has implemented a multi-faceted sporting program that brought students from all over the nation to play in their marching band, perform on their ice-skating rink, or play on their baseball field. (Docking & Curton, 2015) This was a way to lower cost for the students by creating community involvement, but also let the graduates feel as if they got an experience out of their college degree.

One may consider the internship program of Adrian College as one of the most impressive tools when determining return on tuition investment. Jeffrey R. Docking explains that they give their students real life experience in their fields and real-life networking experiences before they even reach their final tests. (Docking & Curton, 2015) They have students who are working with local doctors, micro-researchers, and biologists. Through these internships, students gain work experience, which could lead to permanent employment in the future. (Docking & Curton, 2015) The students took their internships seriously and have seen great results. In fall of 2014, Adrien College promised their incoming freshman that upon graduation they would be guaranteed a job of at least \$37,000 per year or their student loans would be paid for them. (Docking & Curton, 2015) This guarantee would greatly increase the value of a college degree to the students enrolled within this school.

UVU tries to give all students the best chance to succeed in careers by having a wide variety of internships. During my internship with Chief of Staff, Justin Jones, I have found a passion for university administration and have changed my career path accordingly. This hands-on approach by UVU gives students the chance to 'test the waters' and will create more successful individuals in the workplace because they have a passion for their chosen fields. This is especially true for UVU's international students who will be leaders within their chosen fields. It is important that they gain real life experience while studying at the university so they can replicate or improve on it when they go back to their country. This hands on experience was extremely appealing to me and international students when weighing options against other universities. It has added a great amount of worth to my degree. This is because along with my education, I now come with first-hand experience, which is extremely important in career fields today.

## Conclusion

It is difficult to determine the worth of a degree from a

higher educational institution, as we have not taken into account the influence of specialized skills or knowledge needed for some occupations. The value of the degree differs depending upon the different economies and conditions that international students will be returning to or industries that reward those individuals who have been employed for longer lengths of time. After looking at tuition costs and the policies of current higher educational institutions, for both domestic and international students, the value of a college degree is still worthwhile. It will provide a reward in the workplace in the United States or abroad and allow students to gain experiences, knowledge, and networking that they would not have had otherwise.

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# Contributing to the Sustainable Mountain Development Agenda through Internships at the United Nations

**By: Yanko Dzhukev**

*Yanko graduated with a degree in International Relations from Utah Valley University, and a Master's Degree in Finance from University of Bordeaux. He joined UIMF in 2015 as a Vice President of Global Affairs and Outreach. While working towards achieving the Sustainable Mountain Development agenda of the United Nations, he has contributed to initiatives organized by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and ECOSOC for the inclusion of mountain targets in the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN in 2015. In 2016, Yanko joined as advocacy and communications intern, and later as a voluntary consultant FAO. In May, he was offered an internship with the Office of Legal Affairs at the UN Secretariat. Currently, while representing UIMF at global forums, and exploring opportunities for UVU students to be involved with UN activities, Yanko works as a Senior Sales Operations Analyst at VMWare.*

The future is in the hands of young people. Without their engagement and actions, focused on implementing the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN), there is a little chance for a better future. In the Synthesis Report, “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet,” the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon strongly emphasized that “Young people will be the torch bearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030.” As the former UN Secretary-General Man-Ki-moon states in his message addressing young people on the 2015 International Youth Day: “No one knows better than them the issues at stake or the best way to respond.” When young people are empowered with a clear task by the United Nations and engaged with a particular agenda as real partners and contribu-

tors, they will be able to acquire valuable professional knowledge, leadership skills, and networking. These skills will help to make a change in their own lives, in local communities, and globally. As a former graduate of Utah Valley University (UVU), located in the mountainous state of Utah, within the United States and currently serving as a Vice President of Global Affairs and Outreach of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF). This is a coalition of student clubs at UVU. Over the last two years and half, I have been fully dedicated to promoting the Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) agenda.

UVU is the largest public undergraduate school in Utah. In 2007, UVU developed a co-curricular problem-based learning model for student engagement in hands-on implementation of the mountain targets. Traditional students as well as non-traditional students gained professional experiences by advocating for the implementation of Goal #5 through UIMF through interaction with mountain targets. UVU has contributed to the promotion of the United Nations SMD agenda and for gender advocacy in particular since it became a member of the Mountain Partnership (MP) in 2006. The MP, a sub-unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) is also a UN alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the world. The main focus of the MP is to highlight the global importance of mountain development and to raise awareness and recognition from policy making institution about the challenges the mountain communities face. It serves as a networking point for members, connecting institutions and coordinating various SMD activities to ensure greater participation, understanding, and impact.

At the beginning of January 2016, I became the first UVU student to join a UN based entity as an intern. Specifically, I served as the MP Secretariat (MPS) in Rome, Italy. Prior joining the MPS, I had a limited knowledge about the FAO division or my role as member of the UIMF student organizing committee. Part of our role was to co-host the Fourth International Women of the Moun-

tains Conference in Utah, which was held under the auspices of the MPSS.

During the four months I spent as an intern, I was able to gain a diverse and deeper knowledge and understanding of how MP functions on a daily basis and how it facilitates the UN agenda on SMD. As a student and intern, it was very important for me to acquire not only knowledge, but also substantial experience about the range and depth of the issues with which the alliance deals.

The MP was established through a UN mandate following the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The governments of Italy and Switzerland, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized a new partnership to strengthen cooperation and more effectively address the needs of mountain peoples and environments around the world. Italy and Switzerland, as founding parties and major donors, have special programs focusing on local and global mountain communities. The MP Secretariat is a small unit, with a handful of employees. Its leader, Dr. Thomas Hofer, serves as MPS Coordinator. He dedicates half of his time to the Secretariat and the other half as a team leader of the water management in FAO, which is not fair to the mountain cause and communities.

The MPS coordinates more than 280 members in more than 80 countries. As of the end of October 2016, the Partnership consists of fifty-seven governments, fourteen intergovernmental agencies and 210 civil society NGOs. The MP has focal point centers on all continents. I contacted many of them to discuss a variety of issues related to my assignments. Along with the advocacy and communications, the Secretariat organizes courses, different seminars and workshops on SMD.

As an intern, I worked with MP members and focal points globally. For example, I communicated with a representative of the MP Central Asia Hub to discuss the outcomes and results of moun-

tain product workshop called Mountain High! Festival of Peoples and Products held in India at the end of December 2015. I was also tasked with processing submissions for the 2015 MP annual report by members from North and South America such as Aspen International Mountain Foundation (AIMF), The Mountain Institute (TMI), REDAR Peru, the Centre for Environment Education (CEE Himalaya), among many others. It was a part of my duty to serve as a liaison to MP members in addition to preparing news article for the MP website and conducting research for reports and social media campaigns.

As one of my main assignments, I was responsible for organizing, preparing and disseminating the MP's monthly newsletter, "Peak to Peak", in addition to conducting research for photos and illustrations for publications and assisting in drafting and editing the 2015 Annual Report. I was also involved on a daily basis with communications, advocacy, capacity building, and joint action of the MPS. I also contributed to the efforts of the MPS toward developing collaborative partnerships and relationships between MP members.

In addition, it was also important and interesting for me to learn how the Steering Committee oversaw the Secretariat's work. The committee supervised the MPS's activities and provided guidance for the programs. They synchronized the Secretariat's every action with a previously implemented work plan. The Steering Committee consisted of 16 members, elected to four-year terms.

## Why We Need to Contribute to Sustainable Mountain Development

915 million people live in mountainous areas, which represent thirteen percent of the global population. In addition, 60 – 80 percent of the freshwater comes from mountains globally; 60 percent of all biosphere reserves are located in the mountains and 20 percent of the global tourism is based in the mountains. This information highlights the contribution from the mountain regions

and communities to global life and development.

From the beginning of the internship, I witnessed how the MPS raised awareness on global level about the importance of providing sustainable development for mountain people. For example, its new study, Mapping the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity, reports that one in three people in the mountains is vulnerable to food insecurity, and one in two people in rural mountains is food insecure. In the lowlands, the picture is different, one in eight people is exposed to food scarcity. In other words, the people who live in the mountains often experience food insecurity. The study, launched on the International Mountain Day 2015 aimed to provide the most accurate possible estimate of the vulnerability to food insecurity in mountain areas based on the best technologies and data available. The study revealed an alarming trend: while food insecurity decreased at a global level, in rural mountainous areas of developing countries, vulnerability to food insecurity increased to one in every two people between 2000 and 2012. As the 2030 Development Agenda of the United Nations pledged to leave no one behind and stresses the importance of reaching those furthest behind first, the people of the mountains should be first among the groups that require special attention.

Additionally, the mountain communities have extreme poverty rates. As I learned from my time of working at the MPS, poverty is rampant among the communities living in the developing mountain countries. Many of these countries lack effective policies to solve the high poverty rates in the highland communities. Hunger, poverty, harsh living conditions, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and migration are just the few issues that the people from such areas face on a daily basis. Mountain communities are severely affected by climate and global changes as well. Desertification and uncontrolled mining also became a big issue. There is a lack of investments in business in these areas. The migration crisis in Europe is also a contributing problem; refugees moving to Western Europe often hide in the mountain areas, risking their

lives and sometimes freezing to death.

For example, my home country of Bulgaria, a member of the European Union, is among the poorest countries in Europe. Bulgarian mountain communities experience numerous challenges caused by nature such as high altitude, remoteness, lack of infrastructure and services, etc. People live below the poverty line in very harsh conditions and struggle to make an important transition to a market economy. In Bulgaria and other mountainous nations, people starve and live without electricity or access to any kind of basic human amenities.

While I was serving as an intern at the MPS, I understood how important it was for my country to join the Mountain Partnership. It is now one of my very important tasks, which will help not only people from Bulgaria, but also other mountain communities, and contribute towards a globally sustainable mountain development. It was vital for me also to see how the MPS was developing and sustaining the initiative to provide a base for the establishment of a global mountain label. It is a project aimed at boosting sustainable development in the mountain regions. I believe that labeling mountain products and helping small farmers to sell their products could be a great strategy for ensuring sustainability in the mountains. I recently visited the Rodopi Mountains, located in southern Bulgaria. The mountain products I have tried there had a great taste. People from these communities rely entirely on the sales of these high quality goods. These small mountain farmers cannot compete with the prices and volumes from lowland products. This is why efforts of the MPS to provide very high quality products with a global mountain label will help to stimulate local economies and make a big difference in living conditions of the mountain communities.

Every three years the Mountain Partnership Secretariat prepares a draft of the UN Secretary-General's (UNSG) Report on SMD for the approval of the United Nations General Assembly. This report describes the status of SMD at national and interna-

tional levels, including an analysis of future challenges. During my internship at the MPS, my Utah peers and I contributed to the discussion regarding the draft submission of the 2016 UNSG report on SMD. This submission contained information about the contribution from UVU and UIMF to the gender and SMD agendas for 2013-2016. Later, during my summer internship at the UN Secretariat, I learned how the draft of the document submitted by FAO-UN to the UN Secretariat goes through the entire UN system before being adopted as the 2016 UNSG Report on SMD. Most recently, the MPS announced the launch of a Mountain Facility a funding mechanism that addresses the rising threat of hunger in the mountain areas of developing countries. The new funding mechanism has the goal of helping to empower vulnerable mountain communities, increase their food security, and eradicate poverty.

Global alliances such as the Mountain Partnership allows for the creation of an effective global platform that alleviates poverty and food insecurity in support of national efforts. However, MP and FAO-UN need more support from the international community and mountain communities in North America, in particular, to accomplish their goals of sustaining lives in global mountain communities. I am also convinced that universities did not say their last word in that area yet; currently there are thirty-one academic institutions among MP members and only two of them are from North America, UVU and University of Colorado in Denver. Surely other students from UVU or Utah who join the MPS team as an intern will gain good experience in networking, knowledge sharing, and interacting with many great individuals from all around the world. They might become as passionate and dedicated to the promotion of the mountain cause globally as I am. In addition, students have a chance to be exposed to various UN and FAO events and gain experience through discussions, conferences, panels, etc.

How UVU Prepared Me for the Internship at MPS



Utah Valley University has engaged students in the SMD agenda of the UN since 2008 in order to provide students access to global activities, and the United Nations in particular. Its approach is based on extra-curricular student problem-based learning (PBL) model, and represent a form of experiential education. According to the model, students are organized in cooperative groups to address concrete problems with an instructor playing the role of a guide. Through participation in major activities and responsibility for the promotion of the gender and SMD agendas in Utah and in North America. The Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) was created as a coalition of student clubs at UVU in 2011. The UIMF raises awareness of the importance of the United Nations' SMD agenda, brings the public into contact with international guests, and brings communities together to recognize their shared mountainous heritage.

As a UVU student, I became acquainted with UIMF and joined it in January 2015. As one of its priorities, UIMF members promote the model of sustainable development in Utah, one of the most successful mountain communities in the United States. Utah is the best performing state in the area of economic growth for the second year in a row and currently among the leading states in the US in economic development with GDP growth during the last ten years of fifty-five percent. The Mountain Partnership pays close attention to such developed mountain areas like Utah and hopes that MP members from North America, like Utah Valley University can become more involved in assisting mountain communities globally.

Thanks to the cooperation with the MP, my colleagues from UIMF and I contributed substantially to the efforts of the MPS towards the sustainable mountain agenda on multiple occasions. Before joining UIMF, my peers at UVU actively advocated for the inclusion of mountain targets proposed by the MP among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, during the Eleventh session of the UN Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs in December 2013, my colleague Jesler Molina, made an

official statement. Then, during the 12th session of the OWG on SDGs in June 2014 UIMF members jointly with the MPS, the Permanent Missions of Romania, Greece, Nepal and Kyrgyzstan to the UN, and advocated for the mountain indicators.

From the time period between June 2015 and September 15th, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 adopted the new SDGs. Students at UVU, including myself, reached out to UN representatives, many government officials of mountain nations, NGOs, individuals, and well-known mountain climbers to support activities of the MPS. By establishing a social media outlet, “Keep Mountains in the SDGs,” our team and I kept on pushing this very important agenda and urged our targeted audience for support. We continued to spread this message because we wanted to make a significant impact. We had fulfilled our obligation before the MPS and helped to make a difference in lives of the mountain communities worldwide.

As students at UVU, we also contributed to another important initiative of the MPS. We helped gain signatures for a petition about the inclusion of the mountain issues in the agenda of the 2015 Paris United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP21). The MP deserved special recognition for bringing attention to the impact climate change has on mountainous communities to the COP21. Through the support of partners from Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Colombia, and Nepal among others, our student team was able to gather more than 1,500 signatures from 6,283 gathered in total as a result of this campaign. This ensured that the impact of climate change on Mountain Peoples and Ecosystems is fully addressed in COP21. As a result, the MPS was able to host two side events highlighting the impact of climate change across the mountains. The 2015 MP Annual Report on SMD featured UIMF among the major contributors to the campaign.

At the beginning of October 2015, I was part of a student team that successfully hosted the Fourth International Women of

the Mountains Conference (WOMC) in Orem, Utah. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness of mountain development issues, to mobilize support from institutions in Utah and the Rocky Mountain region, and to assist in the gender and SMD advocacy globally. The event was held entirely by students. The conference gathered a majority of MP members from North America in addition to representatives of the UN, U.S. State Department, envoys from mountain nations accredited to the UN and to the U.S., experts and scholars on gender issues from the Rocky Mountain region and abroad.

Following the conference, as an intern at the MPS, I contributed to the efforts of MPS members in preparing the 2015 Mountain Partnership and FAO-UN Annual Report on SMD for publication. I saw how it recognized UVU and UIMF for the successful hosting of the WOMC and for the contribution to the climate change petition. The fact that UVU and the WOMC have been included to the UN annual report underlines the high professional level of UVU in contributing to the gender issues and SMD. UVU was highlighted among just two universities from North America. By hosting WOMC in 2015, UIMF members were able to encourage the North American mountain communities to contribute to the advancement of mountain communities globally, and to the gender agenda in particular. The 2015 WOMC has been featured in the Report on SMD by the UN Secretary General A/71/256 on July 29, 2016. All of us were proud that UVU was featured again as a contributor to gender and SMD advocacy and UIMF recognized for the first time as a host of the gathering.

### Working towards SMD

My previous activities at UVU and contribution to the SMD advocacy during 2015 provided me with experiences and a professional background on a high level. This allowed me to be accepted for an internship at the MPS as well as at the United Nations in New York. Immediately after the end of my internship at the MPS and FAO-UN on April 30, 2016, I became the first UVU student to se-

cure an internship at the United Nations Secretariat, joining the Treaty Section Department of the Office of Legal Affairs.

The internship at the UN Secretariat started on May 1st and ended on September 2nd, 2016. It provided me with a unique opportunity to fulfil my direct responsibilities in my department, to look for ways to further advocate the SMD agenda, and make a name for UVU at the UN headquarters in New York. Understandably, it had to be done by balancing the time between executing direct duties and responsibilities at the Office of Legal Affairs, and promoting the SMD cause at the UN. During that time, I continued to assist the MP Secretariat on as a volunteer consultant on various projects. For example, I continued to produce the monthly Mountain Partnership newsletter “Peak to Peak,” among other activities.

As a UN intern, I gained access to major conferences and events, and was able to attend and report upon important meetings. For example, I observed the election process of the H.E. Ambassador, Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative (PR) of Fiji to the UN as the President of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on June 13, 2016. The new president noted that “the Assembly’s 71st session would bring momentum to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and serve to achieve progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” My peers, members of the UIMF, hosted Ambassador Thomson at UVU on December 7, 2015 as part of the commemoration of the UN International Mountain Day. Ambassador Thomson was very interested to learn about UVU students’ engagement with SMD advocacy in the State of Utah and North America.

Continuing my cooperation with the MPS, I was able to participate at a presentation at the UN headquarters on May 6, 2016 organized by the Permanent Missions of Italy, Kyrgyz Republic, Malawi and Peru to the UN, the FAO Liaison Office in New York and the MPS. I was a representative of the only educational institution to attend the event. The high-level meeting was ded-

icated to the findings of Mapping the Vulnerability of Mountain Peoples to Food Insecurity study prepared by MPS and the lessons learned as a result of that study.

In another example of engaged learning experience, I assisted Dr Rusty Butler. He was the former Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Diplomacy at UVU (1992-2016) and now serves as the main representative of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RANS) at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). He was preparing for the 2016 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, held under the auspices of ECOSOC. RANS is an NGO with consultative status under the ECOSOC.

In preparation for the HLPF, I contacted representatives of ECOSOC and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). This was in order to secure a submission of statement from RANS for an oral presentation to be included in the agenda of the gathering and to resolve many other procedural details. Dr Butler asked me to clarify this information. During the visit, Dr Butler asked me also to arrange a meeting for him with the newly appointed PR of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN, H.E. Mirgul Moldoisaeva. Dr Butler has extensive connections with many officials in the Kyrgyz Republic and he wanted to discuss some UN agenda items with the Kyrgyz envoy. This included such items as SMD and the further implementations of the mountain targets among the SDGs at the UN level. This was a great experience for me to learn protocol and to be able to arrange such a high-level meeting on such short notice.

In order to develop opportunities for UVU students to be involved with the UN and to join UN initiatives and activities related to SMD, I met with Elizabeth Niland, a representative from the UN Programme on Youth, which is also under the auspices of UNDESA. She recommended that I contact the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY), which is the main mechanism for young people to be actively involved in the

decision-making processes of the UN. Another institution Ms. Niland recommended was a network of youth organizations called International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (IC-MYO). It is a platform of international, regional, national organizations and structures, which aims to unite and represent the diverse voices of youth-led organizations globally by providing a platform for coordination and cooperation in order to overcome individual limitations.

In addition, on July 29, 2016, I attended a youth forum hosted at the UN General Assembly called Many Languages, One World. It was an international essay-contest award ceremony and global youth forum organized by the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), ELS Educational Services, Inc. and Hofstra University. My particular interest was in UNAI, as a UN program uniting more than 1,000 universities globally. UNAI, as an initiative under the UN Outreach Division of Department of Public Information (DPI), brings higher education institutions into contact with the UN in order to raise awareness about the mission and the purpose of the organization, and to provide a mechanism for institutions to commit themselves to a realization of the SDGs. As I found out, UNAI and its members are not involved with any substantive concrete actions or advocacy initiatives on a specific issue, but only on academic research.

One of the highlights of my engaged learning experiences at the UN Secretariat was my participation at the 2016 HLPF at the ECOSOC on July 18-20, 2016. This was the first time that a Utah delegation under the leadership of Dr. Butler explored the possibilities of promoting and advocating the SMD agenda, coordinated by the MPS at ECOSOC, as a responsible body for the implementation of the SDGs. The theme for the 2016 session was “Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results.” Before the session of HLPF, the United Nations released the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016 to provide an accounting of where global communities are on the global goals, a set of seventeen interconnected, universal,

and transformative goals adopted by world leaders at the UN last year. The session included voluntary reviews of twenty-two countries and thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs, including cross-cutting issues, supported by reviews from the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums. NGOs and civil society groups could give a voice to specific issues and agendas they would have liked to influence by making oral statements or by submitting written statements for ECOSOC to consider.

Unfortunately, Dr Butler was unable to attend the ECOSOC event due to family-related issues. In his absence, the most important task for me was to work with ECOSOC representatives to make sure that his statement as the main representative of RANS would be posted online and included in the agenda of the HPLF. In addition, it was necessary for me to represent UVU as a Mountain Partnership member during the sessions and as part of the UVU model of engaged learning, and to attend the HPLF discussions. My intention was to learn how to further advocate for the implementations of the mountain targets among SDGs at the UN level. It was a very important initiative of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, and as a facilitator of the SMD agenda, I encouraged MP members to address the ECOSOC forum in order to highlight the importance of the mountain cause. I advocated for efforts to be made to reach all the Sustainable Development Goals in mountains, rather than just the three targets that specifically mention them in Goal 6 and Goal 15.

Attending the 2016 UN High-Level Political Forum, as part of the UVU model of engaged learning, allowed me to learn how to work with ECOSOC, to apply the knowledge that I have gained at UVU, and to contribute to the mountain cause on a professional level. Such direct exposure does not only provide practical skills and experience, but also networking opportunities on the highest level. I hope that more of my peers will attend sessions of SDGs in the future and will have the chance to experience the United Nations.

The highlight of my experience of contributing to the SMD agenda of the UN through my internship was the opportunity for me to learn the official procedure the UN Secretariat used to adopt the 2016 the United Nations Secretary-General's Report on SMD. Since the submission of the draft by the MP Secretariat to the Office of the UN Secretary-General, I visited officials who were responsible for that program. I also monitored the official UN document system in order to obtain a copy before the report has been disseminated among the UN member states and other interested parties. I was thrilled to discover that on July 29, 2016, it was published. The UNSG Report on SMD A A/71/256 is the official document, which featured the UIMF for the first time as contributor to the gender and SMD agendas of the UN and implementations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally.

### Conclusion

This paper briefly highlights the experiences and the benefits that I, as a UVU student, was able to gain through my work at the UN Secretariat and the MP-FAO in particular. This was made possible in large part due to the UVU model of student engaged learning through SMD advocacy. The university offers unique opportunities for students to be responsible for the implementation of specific aspects of UN agenda. The approach allowed me to gain substantial professional skills, networking opportunities, and international recognition through taking of responsibility for the implementation of the SMD agenda. I hope that my peers would have similar opportunities to study experiences and the challenges in SMD in the area of global development, using the State of Utah for an example, and share their findings with mountain communities globally.

UVU and the MP strengthen students' desire to advocate for the mountain agenda and to assist in bringing the "mountain" issues to the attention of policy makers. As a part of this process, I have worked towards improving the conditions for the mountain communities and making sure that mountain development receives the necessary recognition. I am honoured to be a part of UIMF



and UVU, as the only university from North America highlighted in the 2007, 2009, 2013 and 2016 UNSG's Reports on SMD, as a contributor to gender and SMD advocacy. UVU has been fully dedicated to continuing the tradition of advocating for sustainable mountain development. It is ready to fully incorporate the mountain indicators among the SDGs and lay the foundation for 2030 Agenda for sustainable development of the United Nations.

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## Section 4

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## In Memoriam

## In Memoriam: Josman Sanchez Cereceres

June 25, 1994 – November 17, 2017



Josman was born and raised in the sunny valley of the Phoenix Metro area where he was involved in a local internet-broadcasting group called The Studio. He moved to Utah at the age of 20 to pursue his education at Utah Valley University (UVU) and soon found himself involved in politics as well as international relations. Josman has been involved in receiving and hosting diplomatic dignitaries from all around the world and enjoyed connecting with these individuals in order to bring the relationship between the diplomatic world and UVU closer. Besides international relations, Josman worked as an intern at the office of United States congressional representative from Utah, Jason Chaffetz where he was involved in community relations and national agency issues.

During 2017, he worked at the UVU Center for Constitutional Studies by doing research as well as community outreach. Josman has also been involved in UVU as a representative at student body for political science and history students. He worked closely with the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU in order to collaborate and allow students to participate in high-level events with focus on the advocacy of the sustainable mountain development agenda of the United Nations. In his spare time, Josman enjoyed traveling and exploring the outdoors, which was one of the reasons he came to Utah. He is survived by his parents Lorenzo Cereceres and Maria E. Cereceres of Midland, Texas, sister Jennifer Cereceres of Midland, Texas, grandparent Merced Loya of Midland, Texas and niece Ellie Reyes of Midland Texas.

## Follow the Framers of the Constitution and vote no on term limits

By Rodney K. Smith and Josman Cereceres

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Albert Einstein said, “The only source of knowledge is experience.” We would hire someone with experience to drain a swamp on our land. If we had a major case in the Supreme Court and our lives depended on the result, we would hire someone like former Solicitor General Rex E. Lee, one of two most successful lawyers to appear before the Supreme Court in the 20th century.

There is an accelerating push to limit the terms of senators and members of the House. In a recent Rasmussen poll, 75 percent of Americans support term limits, while a mere 13 percent oppose them.

The hue and cry calling for term limits reached a crescendo when Sen. Ted Cruz and Rep. Ron DeSantis introduced a bill calling for a constitutional amendment limiting the term of service of members of the Senate to 12 years and representatives to six years. Cruz supported the effort as a means of ending cronyism and fulfilling the president’s promise to “drain the swamp.” Sen. Mike Lee, in turn, offered an amendment calling for limiting the terms of both senators and representatives to 12 years.

Are term limits a good idea? Some of the wisest among us — the Framers of the Constitution — did not think so. The national government under the Articles of Confederation, the predecessor to government under the Constitution, included term limits for representatives in the Continental Congress. Many state constitutions also limited terms for state legislators. The Framers lived with and understood term limits well. They debated the term limits issue on seven occasions and repeatedly declined to include term limits, in any form, in the Constitution.

We are not bound by decisions of the Framers. We may amend the Constitution. Before we rush to support such an effort, however, we should count the cost.

Lee asserts that the right to vote is diluted when a candidate with seniority tells “his or her constituents, ‘Look, I know we’re all citizens in a free republic and that means you can vote for whomever you want, but given the amount of seniority and authority that I’ve accrued during my time in this or that body of Congress, you should know that if you don’t vote for me you will lose money and power and influence.’”

Lee’s assertion turns the “right to vote” argument on its head. Term limits take away the right to vote for the candidate of one’s choice simply because that member of Congress has served well for 12 or more years. No voter is forced to vote for an incumbent due to seniority, and many do not. Seniority is often used as an argument for change on the part of a challenger, as it was by Lee at his party’s convention when he defeated Sen. Jim Bennett, who had served for 18 years.

The best argument supporting term limits is that incumbents have too much power and are owned by special interests. That argument is unpersuasive. In Utah, Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee won their seats in the Senate against senators who had served for 18 years.

Money often lines up against incumbents, particularly if they have offended their highly partisan base. Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, for example, served for six terms in the House and is seeking a second term in the Senate in 2018. He has written a book about draining the swamp by restoring true conservative principles to his party, and he has a reputation of working with those he disagrees with. President Donald Trump is urging his populist base to raise \$10 million to defeat Flake in the Republican primary.

The real builders of the swamp — the failure to get things done in Washington — are the far-left base in the Democratic Party and the far-right or populist base in the Republican Party. In his book “The Price of Politics,” Bob Woodward, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, revealed that government ceased to operate in the Obama years because President Barack Obama could not get support from his party’s progressive base and Speaker John Boehner could not get support from his far-right, populist base to craft a compromise.

The extreme Democratic and Republican bases refused to work with the other side to reach the kinds of compromises that the Framers understood were at the heart of good government. The Constitution was itself based on the Great Compromise. The uncompromising bases in both parties eschew moderate candidates, often replacing them in party conventions and caucuses. Yet, it is those experienced moderates who reach across the aisle and get things done – they drain the swamp.

James Madison, the father of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, said, “Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” As Einstein said, knowledge comes from experience. Follow in the footsteps of the Framers and vote no on term limits.

Rodney K. Smith is the director of the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University, and Josman Cereceres is a student and fellow associated with the center.

