

Women in the Zapatista Movement

Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Subjects: Social science, women's issues.

Objectives: This lesson is based on the Schools for Chiapas video "Women in the Zapatista Movement" and aims to examine and familiarize learners the role of women in the movement, and the significance of the movement in their lives. It will address:

- a) The situation of women in Chiapas and in the learners' own environments.
- b) Aspects of the daily lives of women in Zapatista communities.
- c) The Women's Revolutionary Laws.
- d) The aspirations of Zapatista women.

Learners will develop critical thinking skills by reflecting on the following:

- a) The content of the video.
- b) Their impressions of Zapatista women before and after watching the video.
- c) Comparing the situation of women in Zapatista communities to women in their own environments.

Learners will be able to answer the following questions:

- a) What types of problems did the women have before the Zapatistas?
- b) What did they realize with the Zapatistas?
- c) Why do they cover their faces?
- d) What do they grow?
- e) What rights do they demand?
- f) What rights do they have under the Women's Revolutionary Laws?
- g) What type of work do Zapatista women do?
- h) What type of world do they want?

Materials:

"Women in the Zapatista Movement" video:

<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/multimedia/video-women-zapatista-movement/>

"Women's Empowerment":

<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/advances/womens-empowerment/>

"Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Laws":

<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/library/zapatista-womens-revolutionary-laws-2/>

For further reading, see also the section of our Library dedicated to Zapatista women:

<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/category/women/>

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Introduction:

The video you are going to watch is a short introduction to the lives of women who live in Zapatista communities in Chiapas. There are some questions to discuss before and after watching the video, as well as some questions on specific information about what you hear and read while you are watching. After that, you can read the Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Laws and think about the rights of women in the Zapatista communities and where you live.

Before watching:

- Where is Chiapas?
- What do you imagine the situation of women to be like there? What's it like where you live?
- What do you know about the Zapatista movement?

While watching:

- What types of problems did the women have before the Zapatistas?
- What did they realize with the Zapatistas?
- Why do they cover their faces?
- What do they grow?
- What rights do they demand?
- What rights do they have under the Women's Revolutionary Laws?
- What type of work do Zapatista women do?
- When they talk about how they imagine a better world, what things do they mention? How do you imagine a better world?

After watching:

- What was your impression of the video?
- Did anything surprise you in the video?
- What do you think about the situation of Zapatista women now?
- How does it compare with the situation of women where you live?

WebQuest:

Find out more about women in the Zapatista movement here:

<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/category/women/>

Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Laws

In their just fight for the liberation of our people, the EZLN incorporates women in the revolutionary struggle regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, requiring only that they meet the demands of the exploited people and that they commit to the laws and regulations of the revolution. Furthermore, taking account of the situation of the woman worker in Mexico, the revolution incorporates their just demands of equality and justice in the following Women's Revolutionary Laws.

First--Women, regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, have the right to participate in the revolutionary struggle in any way that their desire and capacity determine.

Second--Women have the right to work and receive a just salary.

Third--Women have the right to decide the number of children they have and care for.

Fourth--Women have the right to participate in the matters of the community and have charge if they are free and democratically elected.

Fifth--Women and their children have the right to Primary Attention in their health and nutrition.

Sixth--Women have the right to education.

Seventh--Women have the right to choose their partner and are not obliged to enter into marriage.

Eighth--Women have the right to be free of violence from both relatives and strangers. Rape and attempted rape will be severely punished.

Ninth--Women will be able to occupy positions of leadership in the organization and hold military ranks in the revolutionary armed forces.

Tenth--Women will have all the rights and obligations which the revolutionary laws and regulations give.

Discussion:

- Are you surprised by any of these laws?
- Do women have these rights where you live? Are these universal rights?
- Using the Internet, try to find out more about the situation of women in general in Chiapas. How does it compare with the situation of Zapatista women?