

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Space Culture –Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

Author: Ms. LOURDES GARCIA HERNANDEZ  
Mexican Space Agency, Mexico

Ms. BRENDA CORTES CASTELLANOS  
Mexican Space Agency, Mexico

HIGHLIGHTING WOMEN IN SPACE ACTIVITIES

**Abstract**

In Mexico's history there's been a long tradition in the observations of the skies, for example, the Mayas, the Aztecs and the Olmeca's use astronomy for agriculture, worshipping gods, counting years, the spatial arrangement and orientation of their buildings in mayor cities, the birth and rise of their rulers, even their funeral ceremonies came to have a calendarical-astronomical sense. But how did the women participate in this?

Now we are in the XXI century, we are beyond astronomy; we are using the space for telecommunication, observation, global position, space medicine, space exploration, among others uses. And how are women participating in all of these achievements?

Mexico had its first space activities back in the sixties with studies in rocketry, by 1962 the National Commission for Outer Space (CONEE) was created, this allowed the creation of specialized teams and physical infrastructure to enter the activities that were being developed in the world at that time; even though there were progress in the subject matter, CONEE was disbanded in 1977. In 1978 a second national effort was made to continue with space research and the Mexican Institute of Communication (IMC) was created to design and operate communications satellites, but by 1996 it was decided that it was no longer necessary, and ran the same fate as CONEE. How did women participate in the constructions of Mexican history in space?

The participation of the Mexican Space Agency is crucial to make the participation of women in space activities more visible, since its purpose is to promote the development and use of space science and technology to contribute to the attention of social needs, also to exploit opportunities in the aerospace industry and to generate scientific knowledge and human capital, all of these activities have participation of women who need to be acknowledge.

Highlighting the participation of women in the different space areas, and proving that women had been there since the beginning of the space activities, will be an important milestone for the recognition of women, specially women in Mexico where girls lack of role models that will make them aspired to become engineers, astronauts, satellite constructors, etc.