

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space for All: Decolonial Practices in Space (2)

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DECOLONIAL PRACTICES AND SCIENTIFIC DISSEMINATION IN VULNERABLE STATES OF
MEXICO, THE ASTROBIOLOGY CASE.

Abstract

The paradigms of colonial thought persist in Mexico and Latin America, they have nourished the image of the barbaric and uncultured indigenous, who must be civilized.

Unfortunately, science in Mexico has been affected by unpleasant colonial practices such as racial discrimination, gender discrimination, social stratification, and inequality, to mention a few. Some of these practices are more strongly observed in the southeast regions of the country, where the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero occupy the last places in the development of science, linked with their last places in economic development.

Currently, Mexico has developed several space research activities, providing a positive evolving area. Since the creation of the Mexican Space Agency (AEM for Agencia Espacial Mexicana) this got some boost in supporting this development. Professional societies like SOMA (Sociedad Mexicana de Astrobiología) have been continuously supporting the involvement of members from underdeveloped states like Chiapas.

In Chiapas, in the last two years, there has been a space science congress and at least we have one company that is developing space technology, and some professionals are working from here to support space activities in other parts of the world. This may seem puntual few efforts, but they have begun to produce a change in the local science environment.

This paper will describe the actual state of space cultural awareness in Chiapas and will discuss some of the limiting factors including the colonial mentality that persists in our society, detailing a national level perception. The work then will use the case of Astrobiology to sustain action plans to describe how this space science can be used to involve more young people in science, principally from disadvantaged communities in Chiapas, and then how this can be used to escalate to Mexico and Latin America. In these actions, a strong emphasis is given to women's participation.

Implementation of space dissemination and the creation of a working group at the national and Latin American level that involves more people is necessary. Young people, students, teachers and citizens need to learn to follow decolonial thinking to address the complex problems that Mexico presents in science, technology and innovation, to produce results in harmony with their communities and cultural heritage.