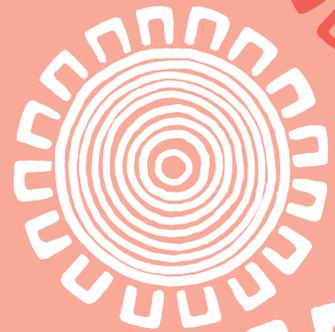


**The Struggles for Women's Rights in Chiapas:
A Directory of Social Organisations Supporting
Women in Chiapas**

A PUBLICATION OF THE LILLA: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK



The Struggles for Women's Rights in Chiapas: A Directory of Social Organisations Supporting Women in Chiapas is a publication of the Lilla: International Women's Network, which is an initiative of the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education (Sydney, Australia). It is also available in the original Spanish version, *Las Luchas por los Derechos de las Mujeres en Chiapas: Un Directorio de Organizaciones Sociales que Trabajan a Favor de las Chiapanecas*.

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We are particularly appreciative of the openness and trust shown by all the organisations and individuals who shared their experiences, knowledge and contacts during the research stage of this directory.



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Prologue

THE DIRECTORY

This publication, *The Struggles for Women's Rights in Chiapas: A Directory of Social Organisations Supporting Women in Chiapas*, is designed to provide a list of civil society organisations working to better the situation of women living in the state of Chiapas. Its primary purpose is to be an information resource for the women of Chiapas, allowing them to strengthen or create networks with other groups so they can share workplace and political strategies, campaigns and security techniques. A secondary aim is to give Mexican and international organisations an overview of the social and political situation experienced by women in Chiapas, the many and varied responses of civil society organisations to those issues, and the day-to-day working situation of the organisations themselves. It also offers an entry point to help understand the problems faced by women and civil society throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The Lilla Network sees this publication as part of our long-term goal of creating a dynamic network of grass-roots women's groups, a network that transcends national boundaries and is able to respond effectively to a range of emerging international challenges to women's rights.

We are grateful for the collaboration of the individuals and organisations who saw the benefit of a directory of organisations working to support women in Chiapas, and had the generosity and faith to share their experiences and personal contacts. This publication has been a collaborative work between the participants in the research and the Lilla: International Women's Network.

This directory gives information on the work and contact details of 62 organisations. We do not claim that this a complete list, but rather provides an overview of the issues which affect women's lives in Chiapas and an introduction to civil-society responses. We wish that all of the organisations we had contact with during the research process could have appeared here; the directory would be richer with their participation.

LILLA: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK AT THE EDMUND RICE CENTRE

In early 2007, the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education launched a new International Women's Network. Former Deputy Director of the Edmund Rice Centre and Coordinator of the Network, Zeena Elton, saw the aim of this new network as 'connecting women's movements at the grass roots level'.

As Ms Elton stated, 'Although there are many women's networks operating at the global level, particularly connected to UN structures, there is a need to develop partnerships with women's organisations that focus on building stronger links in the struggle for tackling issues such as trafficking, violence against women, and other violations of women's human rights'.

LILLA WATSON

In Australia, the 1967 Referendum, the anti-Apartheid protests of 1971, and the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Parliament House raised an awareness of racism, colonialism, and their impact on the lives of Aboriginal people. Many Australians came to the emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations asking 'How can I help? What do Aboriginal people want?'

Lilla Watson and other members of her family became involved with such organisations after moving from their Gangulu country, on the Dawson River in Queensland, in 1965. They, like others, felt frustrated by those questions. They could not, and would not, tell white people what to do, and saw reflections of persisting colonial perceptions and attitudes in their offers of help. They needed help to liberate themselves from these tendencies, and so the challenge:

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

These words were used by Lilla, Aboriginal elder and activist, to set out a challenge for people working towards social justice. Since then these words that have inspired and guided many people pursuing social justice. In 2007, the Edmund Rice Centre approached Lilla Watson to be a patron of the new International Women's Network. Lilla Watson not only agreed, but expressed great delight in being involved in the development of a much-needed network that would connect women working at the grass roots.





Hints and tips

The following is a list of logistical tips to assist in using this directory and making contact with Chiapas organisations.

OFFICE HOURS

Different parts of Chiapas work according to different office hours. As a general rule, organisations in the lowlands work in the *horario corrido* (full-day schedule), from 8am to 4pm. In the highlands, a standard schedule is from 10am to 2pm, then 4pm to 8pm. However, working hours can vary even within the same town, so it is worth checking with the relevant organisation.

Officially, Chiapas operates in the same time zone as Mexico City (GMT minus six hours). Daylight-saving time (GMT minus five hours) is in effect between the beginning of April and the end of October (the exact dates vary each year). Indigenous and peasant communities in Chiapas, together with the organisations and transport companies who work with them, choose not to use daylight saving, but instead operate according to *la hora de Dios* (God's time) all year round (GMT minus six hours).

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

The international dialling code for Mexico is '0052'. The prefix '01 XXX', seen on Mexican telephone numbers, is known as *la clave LADA* (the LADA code) or *la LADA* (the LADA), and is used for long-distance calls. In the telephone numbers below, the LADA code '967' is used (for the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas).

LANDLINE NUMBERS

In this directory, landline numbers appear in the following form: '01 967 678 6015'.

- To dial a landline number from another landline with the same LADA code, remove the LADA (here '01 967'): dial '678 6015'.
- To dial a landline number from a mobile phone with the same LADA code, do the same: remove the LADA (here '01 967') and dial '678 6015'.
- To dial a landline number from a landline with a different LADA code, dial the number exactly as it appears: '01 967 678 6015'.
- To dial a landline number from a mobile phone with a different LADA code, dial the number exactly as it appears: '01 967 678 6015'.
- To dial a landline number from overseas, add '0052' to the beginning of the number and remove the '0' from '01': dial '0052 1 967 678 6015'.

MOBILE PHONE NUMBERS

In this directory, mobile phone numbers appear in the following form: '967 125 7012'.

- To dial a mobile number from a Mexican mobile phone, dial the number exactly as it appears: '967 125 7012'.
- To dial a mobile number from a landline with the same LADA code, add '044' to the beginning: dial '044 967 125 7012'.
- To dial a mobile number from a landline with a different LADA code, add '045' to the beginning: dial '045 967 125 7012'.
- To dial a mobile number from overseas, add '00521' to the beginning: dial '0052 1 967 125 7012'.

ADDRESSES

Addresses of organisations have been kept in Spanish to make them easier to share with taxi drivers, etc. Some helpful translations for terms in office addresses are: *SIN* (for *sin número*, or 'without number'); *departamento* (apartment); *piso* (floor); *calle* (street); *carretera* (highway); *esq.* (for *esquina*, or 'corner'); *barrio* (neighbourhood); *colonia* (for 'colony', an area larger than a suburb); *fraccionamiento* (for 'fraction', also larger than a suburb). In postal addresses, the term *Apartado Postal* means 'P.O. Box', and *C.P.* is short for *código postal* or 'post code'. Another useful term is *D.F.*, the abbreviation for *Distrito Federal*, or the 'Federal District', implying the greater Mexico City area. It has generally been translated as 'Mexico City'.

- Forum for Sustainable Development (Foro para el Desarrollo Sustentable)
- 'Fray Pedro de la Nada' Human Rights Committee (Comité de Derechos Humanos 'Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada')
- 'Fray Matías de Córdoba' Human Rights Centre (CDHFMC)
- Gender Observatory (Observatorio de Género)
- Gender Studies Department of the UNACH (Departamento de Género de la Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, UNACH)
- Good Government Council 'Central Heart of the Zapatistas Before the World', Zapatista Caracol II 'Resistance and Rebellion for Humanity' (Oventik) (Junta de Buen Gobierno 'Corazón Céntrico de los Zapatistas delante del Mundo', Caracol Zapatista II 'Resistencia y Rebeldía por la Humanidad')
- Good Government Council 'New Seed that Will Produce', Zapatista Caracol V 'The Caracol that Speaks for All' (Roberto Barrios) (Junta de Buen Gobierno 'Nueva Semilla que Va a Producir', Caracol Zapatista V 'El Caracol que Habla para Todos')
- Women's Group of San Cristóbal (Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal, COLEM)
- Independent Women's Movement (Movimiento Independiente de Mujeres, MIM)
- Jlumaltik
- Jolom Mayaetik Cooperative (Cooperativa Jolom Mayaetik)
- LAJA Collective (Colectivo LAJA)
- Latin American Women's Centre for Research and Action (CIAM)
- Mexican Association of Women Organised in Network (Asociación Mexicana de Mujeres Organizadas en Red, AMMOR)
- 'Mouth of Pollen' Communicators' Network (Red de Comunicadores 'Boca de Polen')
- National Network of Young Catholics for the Right to Choose (Red Nacional Católica de Jóvenes por el Derecho a Decidir, RNCJDD)
- Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Mexico–Chiapas (DDESER)
- New Codices Compathy (Nuevos Códices Compatía)
- Scientific Institute for Research and Development on the Southern Border (Instituto Científico de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Frontera Sur, Infrosur)
- Serapaz–Ocosingo
- Traditional Small Farmers (Milperos Tradicionales)
- United Women of the Jungle (Mujeres Unidas de la Selva, MUSA)
- Women's Equality Network (Red de Mujeres por la Igualdad)
- Women's Network for You (Red de Mujeres por Ti)
- Women United Towards Development (Mujeres Unidas Rumbo al Desarrollo)
- Young Constructors–Tapachula (Jóvenes Constructores–Tapachula)

We make a special mention of the security procedures implemented in this research. Each organisation that chose to participate was asked for explicit authorisation to publish the data they provided. In the case of other organisations, their information primarily comes from their own web pages. We are aware, because of the unresolved internal armed conflict in Chiapas, and the risks that poses for the state's social organisations, that it is likely that some organisations chose not to publish their institutional information in this directory. We also note that while we have published the information provided by each organisation, we cannot answer for its accuracy.

The third stage of the project was the compilation, editing, layout and printing of the publication you are now reading.

DIRECTORY PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

Our aim is that this directory be a useful resource for Chiapas social organisations. Therefore, its reproduction and distribution is permitted, and in fact recommended. The organisations which completed our questionnaire have received a printed copy of the directory in Spanish, and electronic versions are available in both Spanish and English on our web page (www.lilla.org.au).

The directory was designed so as to present the information in an accessible format, easy to read, understand and photocopy (for those without access to the electronic version or the internet). Two maps of Chiapas are included, together with an index listing the areas of operation of the organisations registered. A second index is included which lists the names and acronyms of all social organisations mentioned, in addition to the key issues they work on and the communities they work with.

FOR OTHER RESEARCHERS

For those interested in women's struggle in Chiapas, this section provides other useful notes on local organisations.

- One of the state's strongest institutions is the Catholic Church, as are the other smaller churches that are present here. While only the Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas has an area specifically for women (Diocesan Coordination of Women, CODIMUJ), the local parish or social teachings offices of the various churches are often those most informed of the groups working in their area. Most churches also have a women's group that provides social services to the local community.
- Other organisations with a long history in Chiapas are the 'social organisations' which represent the needs of peasant, rural and indigenous groups. These organisations normally have a women's area. Examples are the various splinter groups of the Rural Association for Collective Interest (Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo, ARIC) and of the Peasant Organisation 'Emiliano Zapata' (Organización Campesina 'Emiliano Zapata', OCEZ).
- Statewide, a large number of women's cooperatives have been founded to produce and sell craftwork, or to work on productive projects. Many mixed cooperatives also that support productive projects for their women members.
- Various academic institutions in Chiapas have a gender department or field of study, as well as individual academics who focus on issues affecting women.
- We also note the strong presence of community and indigenous radio stations throughout Chiapas, which often have women's radio programs or a different perspective on women's struggles.
- Many local, regional, national and international networks, focused on women or issues that affect them, are present in Chiapas through the work of their local member organisations.
- Although it was not the focus of this publication, both the state and federal government have institutions that seek to address women's needs. The Chiapas government works with women's groups through its microcredit program, Banmujer. The Mexican government provides welfare assistance, distributed to individual women, called Opportunities (Oportunidades). In addition, at least one of the major political parties (the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI) has a women's area operating at a state level.