

Teacher's Notes

Slide 1: Optional. This slide can be used as an introductory discussion for learners who are already familiar with some of the ideas contained in the questions. The slideshow can then be used to build on their knowledge.

Slide 2: The illustration is from a mural by the Mexican muralist Gustavo Chavez, who has worked on various Schools For Chiapas projects with university students from the US (click here for more information <http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/teach-chiapas/travel/>). It is painted on the wall of the first autonomous primary school at Oventic. It shows a girl whose face is covered by a book, replacing the distinctive *paliacate* worn by the Zapatistas (see our lesson plan '[What's Behind the Mask?](#)'). The inscription reads "Autonomous education builds different worlds where many true worlds with truths fit."

Slide 3: The photo gives learners an idea of the remoteness of Chiapas. It is taken in *Los Altos* or Highlands. It is in areas like this that the Zapatistas are building their alternative education system.

Slide 4: This quote is taken from a Zapatista in 1994, describing the plight of the indigenous peoples in Chiapas. For many, the situation has changed little since then and in some respects has worsened.

Slide 5: These statistics are taken from the 2010 federal census (see our lesson plan '[Welcome to Mexico.](#)')

Slide 6: This map shows the main indigenous language groups of Chiapas.

Slide 7: Again, the statistics are from the 2010 census. The official school system has failed for a variety of reasons. Initial attempts to 'integrate' the indigenous peoples by forcing them to wear school uniforms and speak Spanish, thereby abandoning their traditional dress and language, failed. The bilingual schools often failed too as, although teachers who spoke an indigenous language were sent to the communities, they often did not speak the language of the community, such that instruction was given in Spanish anyway. The teachers often fled these remote communities and became known as 'flying teachers'. Overall, the experience of education for the indigenous peoples was poor and alienating as they were obliged to learn about an essentially foreign culture in a foreign language.

The United Nations recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to decide the content, direction, and language of their own education systems, giving a legal basis to the autonomous schools of the Zapatistas.

Slide 8: This shows the entrance to a Zapatista classroom. The inscriptions translate "In the autonomous Zapatista schools children are educated in the collective spirit and concept of the world", and "Our philosophy sees the human being as part of nature."

Slide 9: What makes autonomous education different from official schools.

Slide 10: This shows the location of the five *caracoles* or civil centers, the self-governing bodies of the Zapatistas.

Slide 11: Photo of Zapatista boys wearing ski masks.

Slide 12: Explanation of the system education promoters, the term used by Zapatistas instead of 'teacher'. Photo of education promoters on a training course or 'cultural development' as they call it.

Slide 13: Photo of Zapatista girls wearing ski masks and *paliacates*.

Slide 14: Some of the subjects taught in Zapatista schools.

Slide 15: The following slides show the main areas of specialization of secondary education. Here, preparation to work in the education.

Slide 16: Preparation to work in the health system. The photos show health promoters, the clinic at Oventic, and natural medicines developed by the Zapatistas.

Slide 17: Preparation to develop agroecology. The photos show a *milpa* or cornfield, natural, GMO-free corn, and natural composting methods.

Slide 18: Preparation for self-governance. The photos show the Zapatista slogan of "Everything for everyone, nothing for us", an office for women's issues, and the entrance to the Council of Good Government at the Roberto Barrios *caracol*.

Slide 19: A quote from Subcomandante Marcos.

Slide 20: Another mural from Gustavo Chavez, depicting a woman reading. Her *paliacate* takes the shape of the map of Mexico.