Eufrosina Cruz Mendoza



Eufrosina Cruz Mendoza, born (1 January 1979) and raised in the tiny indigenous town of Santa María Quiegolani, Oaxaca, is a Zapotec woman from the state from Mexico. She is an activist for **gender** equality and the rights of indigenous women and communities.

She moved in with relatives in Salinas Cruz at 12 years of age in order to learn Spanish, much to the assumed displeasure of a father who **allegedly** told her that women "were only good for making tortillas and having children," according to Mexico News Daily. In Salinas Cruz she studied, selling fruit and gum to fund her classes, and ultimately graduating as an accountant in the state capital of Oaxaca City before returning to her hometown of Santa María Quiegolani in 2007 to start a life in politics.

The path to political success was anything but easy for Cruz Mendoza, however. After winning the 2007 municipal elections in Santa María Quiegolani, she was swiftly told by male Zapotec **lawmakers** that as a woman, she shouldn't have been allowed to run and all her votes were therefore to be nullified. Some claim they only allowed her to participate in the first place as they wrongly assumed nobody would either want to or dare vote for her, especially in a town where (at the time) women were not allowed to vote unless accompanied by their husband or another male family member.

As a result of their decision, based on ancient and oral Zapotec customs, Cruz Mendoza contacted human rights organizations and state authorities to **appeal** their decision and push for a change in the state constitution. The following year, she succeeded in her **quest**, and women finally won the right to vote unaccompanied, run for candidacy and even hold public office in Oaxaca.

In November 2010 she became the first indigenous woman in Oaxacan politics, assuming the position of deputy of the PAN (Partido Acción Nacional or National Action Party (Mexico) and president of the board of the local congress. In December of the same year Eufrosina was appointed as coordinator of indigenous **affairs** of the National Executive Committee of the PAN. She is also the founder and director of the QUIEGO, AC association, which promotes gender equality in Oaxaca.The starting-point for her fight for gender equality was that she was not permitted to participate in the municipal elections of her hometown Santa María Quiegolani, for the single reason that she is a woman. This was a

LIVEWORKSHEETS

valid reason according to the usos y costumbres (local traditional laws). Because of Eufrosina Cruz's fight, the constitution was later reformed to give women equal voting rights.

In October 3, 2008 Cruz received the National Youth Award for her contribution to political culture, which was presented by President Felipe Calderón.

Choose True or False

1) Eufrosina is from Salinas, Mexico
2) She moved out from her house to learn a language
3) She became a lawyer
4) In 2007 she won an election.
5) She was excluded from the political sector for being a woman.

Answer

1) What was the other reason for Eufrosina to leave her hometown?
2) Why did the lawmaker let her run for the elections in 2007?
3) What did Eufrosina do as a result of their decision?
4) What did Eufrosina accomplished with her fight?

VOCABULARY

Complete with the words in **bold**

1- A long or arduous search for something:

2- An application to a higher court for a decision to be reversed:

3- Either of the two sexes, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones:

4- Something is claimed to be the case or have taken place, no proof:

5- A legislator:

6- Matters of commercial or public interest or concern:

LIVEWORKSHEETS

LIVEWORKSHEETS