



# OTHER Sociologist

Dr Zuleyka Zevallos

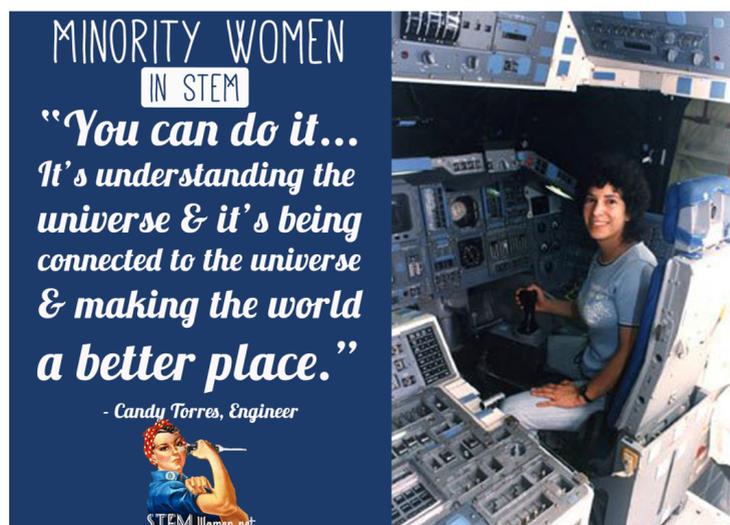


## STEM Women in Space Engineering: Candy Torres

Posted on [Sunday, 20 July, 2014](#) by [Dr Zuleyka Zevallos](#)

*I'm super excited to be talking with fellow Latina and STEM woman Candy Torres! I'm co-hosting this event at STEM Women to learn more about Candy's career and her advocacy for Latina youth in engineering and the space program!*

Candy was a STEM trailblazer from an early age. She had a firm dream to join the space program, but she encountered much push-back from her family and friends in the Bronx, where she was born. Latina women were simply not meant to have a career in STEM, or so she was told, let alone dream of contributing to the space race.



At age 14, Candy joined the Civil Air Patrol and she was flying a plane before she could drive. She encountered sexism early on, however, when she learned that girl cadets were not allowed to participate in some training sessions. She tells [CNN](#): “We were supposed to go find a businessman who was lost in the woods, but the girls were not allowed.”

This attitude continued. At university in the 1970s, her classmates were less than welcoming of women. She tells CNN: “They were definitely not happy about having women in the class... I didn't have any kind of support system. I didn't get to know any of the other women, and the guys basically ignored me.”

Overcoming exclusion based on her gender and ethnicity, Candy would go on to use her computer programming skills to organise files for **NASA**. She later went on to work at Johnson Space Center on software for the Space Shuttle as well as the **International Space Station**. She worked on various other space programs over the years, such as human factors.

Candy has been featured in various high-profile publications like [The Atlantic](#), where she noted: “People don't realize how many thousands of us worked on these programs... I

### ABOUT ME



I'm Dr Zuleyka Zevallos, a Peruvian-Australian applied sociologist, living on Gadigal land. Click on my picture to read my bio on my website!

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loved being part of something big, and I knew that I had worked hard to be there.”

Candy has continued her work in recent years by educating the public on space history, and supporting the inclusion of minority women in space programs. She is passionate about encouraging Latino youth to pursue engineering and science. She tells **Latino USA**: “When you’re first starting out you really have to know what you want and it’s not necessarily other people that are going to keep you from doing what you’re going to do, it’s yourself.” And to Latina and other minority women, Candy’s message is about being passionate, curious and tenacious. “You can do it, it’s exciting, it’s fun, it’s understanding the universe and it’s being connected to the universe and making the world a better place.”

Join us as we chat to Candy about her amazing journey through various space programs, and hear her advice for young girls and women who want to follow in her footsteps.

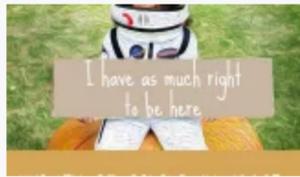
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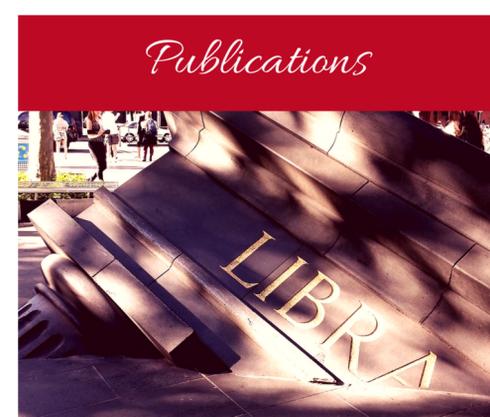
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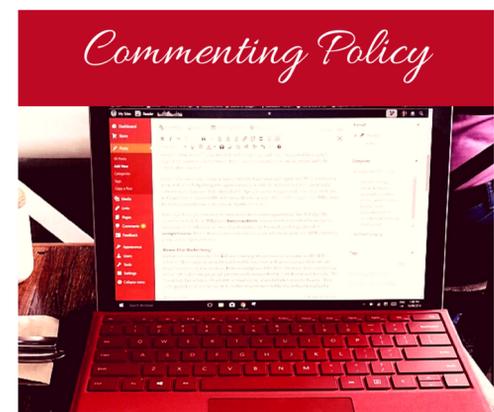
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