

Esmeralda Maya Casillas Garcia, Advocate for the Rights of Women in Migration

Esmeralda Maya Casillas Garcia is an emerging leader and advocate for the rights of women in migration. She is a native of the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Maya received her law degree in 2015 from the Universidad del Sureste, in Comitán de Domínguez, Chiapas. Over the past three years, she has facilitated extensive trainings and work around gender equity and reproductive rights, as well as the protection and care of migrant women and girls. Last year, Maya trained Central American consular staff in Mexico on Human Rights and Migration, and on the Protection and Care for Migrant Girls, Children and Adolescents focusing on the rights of migrant children and adolescents on the Mexico-Guatemala border.

As a lawyer, Maya has pursued successful asylum cases for several Central American families. Maya also serves as the Coordinator and legal advisor for the "Center for Care and Advocacy of Women's Rights in Migration, known as "La Casita" located in the city Comitán de Domínguez. This Center is a project of the Mesoamerican Network working on the intersection of health, women's rights and migration, in conjunction with a network of women organizers. Maya is very active with several networks in the region, among them the Human Rights Promoters Network in the Guatemala-Mexico Border as well as the "Migration with Rights" coalition. This coalition brings together several civil society organizations, along with government agencies such as the National Migration Institute (INM), with the aim of creating a coordinated response to the challenges of migration in the Mesoamerican corridor.