

1. What made you choose this career path

It wasn't so much that I chose this but more that it chose me. My family, community and I have long faced struggles around our own immigration "issues." After awhile, it made sense to dedicate this part of my life in helping bring about change to the system. And as an internationalist at heart, working to help build movements and alliances across the globe, and for international advocacy, just sort of came naturally.

2. What is your favourite moment of your professional life?

The 2009 PGA and GFMD in Athens had many challenges. But being able to witness firsthand the migrant communities in Athens stand up against so many challenging odds, join together, and welcome the global movement into their communities and homes, was deeply moving and inspiring. I'll always hold that experience close to my heart.

3. The GFMD 2016 Civil Society Days fall at a very important time; just three months after the UNGA Summit, and as the process to develop a Global Compact on migration is launched. What is your message for the CSD participants before they begin this three days of discussion and strategizing?

We are at a pivotal moment in our history. After more than a decade of immense transformations in our movement, we are a time when we need to reinvent ourselves again to face the new challenges ahead of us, as well as seize the opportunities before us. We must be vigilant and innovative in order to be most effective in this new era, but also remain steadfast and strongly rooted in the principles and values that unite us and keep bringing us back here.

4. What do you see as the most important task for you as co-chair during the Civil Society Days?

As co-chairs, we have to facilitate all of the rich discussions and deliberations that we will experience during the CSD. And we must be conduits for the collective voices of the CSD delegates, as well as all our other fellow civil society members around the world who can't be at the CSD. It is an honor to be entrusted to play these important roles.

5. In the context of migration and development, in what way do you hope that 2017 will be different to 2016?

Not only are we kicking off the process to develop a global compact, but the world is also witnessing a dramatic shift in our political climate. And so much of that is focused on migration and migrants. While it is already a given that 2017 will indeed be different than anytime before it, I hope that we are up to this new challenge in ensuring that it is actually going to be a step in the right direction for us.

6. And what do you hope will remain the same?

Our spirit. We struggled and wrestled so long to have our own collective space with these CSDs. More than ever, we will need to dig deep to recapture even more of that spirit of unity and collaboration, built on our shared principles and values, so that we can face the new challenges in this coming year together.

7. With International Migrants Day taking place only days after this year's GFMD, and with the [#MigrantsRights Campaign](#) around it, do you have a message for migrants themselves?

To borrow a powerful quote from the domestic workers' movement, "nothing about us, without us." As migrants, we need to be the leaders and voices of our own movement. Whether its IMD, a global antiracism campaign, or a local initiative to integrate new immigrants, we have to step up to the challenge to be the actors for the change that we want.

8. Any shout-out to all the youth participants at the CSDs this year, and to the next generations who will be shaping the migration and development debate in the years to come?

I don't really think of youth as our leaders "in years to come." I think youth are our leaders NOW. The youth movement has been a cornerstone of every major movement for social and political change in our generation and before. We need to be an intergenerational

force, with young leaders in the forefront. I look forward to working alongside more vibrant young leaders here at this GFMD, and in the years to come.