

BRIEF PROFILE OF YVETTE ABRAHAMS



"I was born in Cape Town in the early 1960s to struggle parents of slave and Khoekhoe descent. I grew up in exile (Zambia, England, Sweden), and returned home to study at the University of Cape Town in 1983. This was just in time to experience the last chapter of the liberation struggle, which I did within the Black Consciousness Movement. By 1986 I had dropped out of varsity and was learning Revolution 101 in Mitchell's Plain. In 1991, what with the release of political prisoners and a negotiated settlement on the horizon, I reluctantly ran out of reasons to neglect my studies, and graduated eventually with a Master's degree in History in 1994 and a Ph. D. in Economic History in 2002.

I have worked at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape. I have consulted for both government and various NGO's on issues relating to gender equality in policy and practice. I have published widely both locally and internationally on various topics related to gender equality, queer theory, as well as the history of First Nations South Africans. I worked for five years as Commissioner for Gender Equality, based in Cape Town. At the CGE, I was head of their programmes on poverty, energy and climate change.

My work at present, as Advisor to Project 90 by 2030, focuses on food security, energy, and climate finance in the context of climate change. My current research interests are in the field of indigenous economic plants (especially as they speak to economic development and climate resilience); and climate change economics. As part of that work I realized that you can write a hundred papers and attend a thousand conferences, but nothing has the impact of actually practicing what you preach. So I also run a small business making organic carbon neutral soaps, body butters and candles, based on my many years of research and growing indigenous plants. I reckon one bar of soap does more to convince people of the need to act to end climate change than all my words. "