



**Karin Alexander (AC95-97),
South Africa**

After completing her Masters Degree at Oxford University focusing on the Philosophy in Development Studies, Karin began working back home in Africa with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. She was responsible for coordinating the Institute's work on transitional justice issues in Zimbabwe, Rwanda and the DRC. "This involved teaching and training in conflict resolution and transitional justice, as well as quite a lot of election monitoring - I monitored both elections in 2006 - the first democratic election in the DRC in 40 years," said Karin.

Her time at Atlantic College instilled in her a desire to have an impact on her continent. Being Zimbabwean, she gained a huge feeling of satisfaction from her work in Zimbabwe, but also fell in love with Rwanda.

Karin's work in Rwanda was with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission where she formed part of a team evaluating the Commission's work and assisting with strategic planning for

the future. "I was also involved in the Commission's lobbying of Parliament for a national policy on reconciliation and also carried out work for the Garaca Commission - the traditional courts being used to try genocidaires." Karin is currently finishing off an educational documentary she made on the Garaca courts that will be used to introduce future Rwandan generations to this 'Rwandan' solution to the challenges of post-genocide justice and national reconstruction.

As well as her work for Truth Commissions and transitional justice and democratization, Karin is a founding member of the Feminist Political Education Project, a women's collective working to support Zimbabweans in their struggle for a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe. The group, founded in 2005, is made up of Zimbabwean female activists, academics and NGO workers and encourages women to take control of their lives. Karin has also kept her links to the UWC movement alive as part of the Western Cape and Gauteng National Selection Committee.

Now working for the Institute for Democracy (IDASA) in Pretoria, her focus is on many different countries. "I still help out a lot on Zimbabwe - with articles, donor relations etc. I also work with the Parliamentary Strengthening Unit (Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Uganda) to build bridges between civil society organisations and parliamentary committees in relation to advocacy and civic participation in governance."

Passionate about her field of work Karin explains: "The challenges and beauty of Africa make it an exciting place to work. I learn on a daily basis and that is all one can ask of life." She is due to travel to Angola, Chad, Gabon and Sao Tome in the next few months researching and investigating the impact of oil on governance in Africa.