

## We were @ AIDS2016 in Durban, South Africa

Mainline's international programme manager Machteld (Mac) Busz attended the International AIDS Conference 2016 that was held in July in Durban, South Africa. Check out these videos with some of the general highlights from the conference.

### Highlights

It was a full and exciting week with meetings with old and new colleagues from the harm reduction field. The absolute harm reduction-highlight of the conference was the Networking Zone for People who Use Drugs (PWUD) in the Global Village. Heated and informative debates were held between drug users, policy makers and organisations that implement harm reduction interventions.

The space was much needed, because despite the very elaborate conference programme, a very modest podium was offered for drug user issues.

A missed opportunity - especially because, in general, much attention was paid to the other key populations at higher risk of contracting HIV.

**The overall tone** at the conference was optimistic where it concerned new developments in the field and the major achievements already made by the HIV community. However, major concerns were expressed around decreasing levels of funding. 2016 is the first year that has seen the levels of HIV funding drop. No serious alternative is found where it concerns funding for future projects that focus on People who Use Drugs.

**A 'Dutch Booth'** in the Exhibition Room promoted the Dutch organisations that attended the conference. This made the Dutch - and their contributions to the HIV field - very visible.

See a short clip of the Dutch activities (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9UPbSM9jCA>) which shows the participation of Princess Mabel and Special Ambassador for HIV and SRHR Lambert Grijns.

The Netherlands vowed continued commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS and paid ample attention to the next International AIDS conference in 2018 - in Amsterdam.

The Bridging the Gaps photo-exhibition was present at AIDS2016 in Durban: sneak preview: <http://www.hivgaps.org/exhibition/>