



Eliane

Facts about HIV in the Netherlands

- 2017: 19.035 people with HIV in care, of whom 3.560 are women.
- 60% originally from the Netherlands,
- 40% with different background,
- 2.505 from Sub Sahara African descent.
- Estimated that 2.600 are living with HIV without knowing their status.
- Approx. 800 new diagnoses p/y.

An introduction

This is the first of twelve monthly columns on living with HIV in the Netherlands.

Over a year different subjects will be discussed, starting with an introduction.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Eliane Becks Nininahazwe. I am from Burundi. Before I came to the Netherlands I lived in Burundi like any other girl. I fell in love and accidentally got pregnant. My boyfriend did not want to be a father and left me. So, at the age of 24 I was a single mom. My luck was that I just finished my secondary education and I happened to be good at languages. I got a job at the African peace keeping mission, where I worked as a translator and secretary. In the weekends I performed in different events, as a singer and dancer. That was my other source of income as well as my passion.

When my daughter was five months old, I met Michel. He was working for an NGO in Burundi. We were in love and he accepted to be a father to my daughter. A year later we got married and went to live in Angola, where Michel was working for Oxfam. After a year and a half we moved to Pretoria, because he got a job at the head office.

In 2006 our first son was born. I continued working as translator with the Australian Embassy and UNAIDS. And in the weekends I was performing with my Indonongo, a Burundian cow horn instrument. In 2007 we moved to the Netherlands, again for work reasons.

I started my integration, building up my social network, performing my music and dance within the Burundian community. I even joined a choir to learn the Dutch language faster through music. In 2008 our second son was born. I was feeling good, being a mom of three children and doing my artistic performances!

It is now twelve years that I am here. I am a partner, a mother, a friend and an artist. And I am also HIV positive. I am not ashamed of it, I am loved by my family and friends. My choir accepted me as I am and loved my honesty from the moment I decided to disclose my status. I have a good relationship with my neighbours and the parents from school. I am a proud and beautiful African woman, an artist and an activist against stigma. Nice to meet you.

Hiv Vereniging

The Dutch Association of People Living with HIV (Hiv Vereniging) represents the interests of all people with HIV in the Netherlands, irrespective of background.

We provide information about living with HIV and organise all kinds of meet-ups.

Servicepunt

Our team of expert volunteers can be contacted for any question about living with HIV, by telephone on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 14:00 – 22:00 hrs, or by email: servicepunt@hivvereniging.nl.

See www.hivvereniging.nl