In July 2010 I attended the Vienna YouthForce Youth Pre-conference and the International AIDS Conference held in Vienna, Austria.

I was one of the organizing team of the pre-conference, and presented at this conference about the medical side of HIV/AIDS: virology, epidemiology, new treatment indications and new therapeutics and how they work. This was to an audience (50+) of youth peer educators, youth policy advisors and other young people engaged in the HIV/AIDS sector.

During my preparation for presenting this material, I learned a lot about the new research and drugs available for HIV patients, as well as some of the statistics on when treatment initiation is indicated.

During both conferences, I had the opportunity to engage and network with a wide variety of people. This included people living with HIV, physicians involved in their treatment, health workers in developing countries and many policymakers from around the world. This was a valuable way to learn about approaches to difficult diagnoses, implementing primary prevention and other educational programs that are in operation around the world.

I was even lucky enough to MC the 2010 International AIDS Conference Youth Reception, including meeting Michel Sidibe, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, and was able to discuss with him the youth agenda and how UNAIDS is addressing these core issues.

It was great to be able to share the youthforce message: Human Rights, Harm Reduction and Health Resources with the attendees of the International AIDS conference. I had a great time and learned a lot – it was a great experience.