# Same World, Different Planet

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One of the most striking things about the International AIDS Conference, being held right now in Mexico City, is the stark difference between the feel of the Global Village and the conference itself.

The Global Village is vibrant, diverse, young and permeated by the humanity of the pandemic. As I worked my way through the maze of booths and displays, I couldn?t help but feel my personal connection with people living with, and fighting against the virus world wide. The photo exhibits have been particularly powerful- peering momentarily into the lives of people around the world lays bare the human cost of the virus.

In contrast, the conference center itself is sure busy, but hardly as energetic and not nearly as young. The tones are more muted, the conversations less personal. The language used is far more elite and less human. The talk is dominated by the less human aspects of the pandemic, whether it is the confidence intervals of studies or the jargon of NGO work.

The contrast helps illustrate the two very different faces of HIV/AIDS. This pandemic is both human and scientific. It is equally about people and programs, studies and students, organizations and organisms.

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