



# Why Does Global Health Matter to Idaho?

Probably for more reasons than you think. Even though the term “global health” refers to diseases and health issues that disproportionately affect developing countries, global health matters to Idaho. It matters to Idaho’s economy and to Idahoans’ health.

## Idaho has global ties . . .

- . . . through trade and commerce.

Idaho exports more than 25 percent of the goods it produces. In 2007, Idaho exported more than \$4.7 billion worth of merchandise to 157 foreign destinations, with high-tech goods accounting for 70 percent of these exports. Idaho’s exports have grown at one of the fastest rates of all the 50 states, up 124 percent over the last five years. Some of Idaho’s trade partners include developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.

- . . . through foreign investment.

Idaho benefits from foreign investment and the creation of “in-sourced” jobs – employment by companies that are based outside the United States. About 12,200 Idahoans work for foreign-owned companies, which invest in Idaho’s economy as they expand their operations in the Gem State.

- . . . through its colleges and universities.

In the 2006-2007 academic year, 2,000 foreign students studied at Idaho universities. International students and their families contributed \$32 million to the state’s economy.



## Global Ties Benefit Idaho

Idaho's global ties benefit the state's economy, providing billions of dollars in revenue and thousands of jobs. For example, nearly one in five manufacturing workers in Idaho depends on international exports for his or her job.

## These Ties Can Be Jeopardized by Global Health Crises

Idaho's global ties link the state's economic health to the health and economic growth of other countries and regions. When health care crises in other countries threaten economic and political stability, they can end up affecting Idaho as well.

## What's the Link between Health and Wealth?

Epidemics and other health crises affect the ability of entire communities to work and limit the potential for economies to develop. The following examples illustrate the link between global health and economic development:

- Malaria costs Africa \$12 billion in lost economic output every year. It is estimated that without malaria, the economic output of many African countries, some of which are important trade partners for Idaho businesses, would be 30 percent greater than it is today. Idaho exported \$12 million worth of goods to Africa in 2007.
- UNAIDS estimates that the HIV rate in China is rising by 20-30 percent every year. China is a valuable trading partner for Idaho, purchasing nearly \$723 million worth of Idaho exports in 2007 alone.

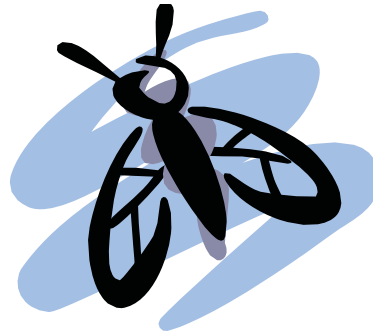
## Research to Improve Global Health Benefits Idaho

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a world leader in biomedical research that improves health in the United States and around the world. Most of the research that is funded by NIH is conducted on university campuses across the country. NIH awards many grants to Idaho universities, which in turn bring money and jobs to the state. In 2007, Idaho received approximately \$10 million in research grants and contracts from NIH. Some of these grants are used to spur medical innovation and improve domestic and global health. Grants from NIH bring jobs and higher wages to Idaho at the same time that they help make progress in global health.

## From Idaho to Sudan: Idaho's Own "Hero of Medicine"

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, an epidemic swept silently through Duar, Sudan in the Upper Nile Region. In one town in Sudan, visceral leishmaniasis, a tropical disease that is transmitted by the bite of a sand fly, swept through the town of 1,000 inhabitants, leaving only four people alive. While the government and international agencies debated whether to risk becoming involved, the disease continued to spread unabated.

Meanwhile, halfway around the world, Jill Seaman was studying tropical medicine at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She would soon enroll as a physician with Doctors without Borders, and she eventually traveled to the heart of the epidemic in Duar. Dr. Jill Seaman was born and raised in Moscow, Idaho, located along the Idaho-Washington border. Prior to working in Sudan, she spent eight years treating visceral leishmaniasis among Yup'ik Eskimos in Alaska, becoming the world's foremost expert on the disease.



Although others in the medical community doubted that the epidemic could be contained in an area without hospitals, Dr. Seaman was determined to travel to Sudan, where she soon set up a makeshift hospital in Duar. She did this despite the famine and civil war raging in Sudan.

Led by Dr. Seaman, the staff at the hospital treated thousands of patients and eventually eliminated the epidemic. Her earlier experience with treating the same disease in Alaska equipped her with the skills she needed to tackle the epidemic in Sudan, preventing what could have become a modern-day version of the Black Death (bubonic plague). A chief in Sudan told Dr. Seaman, "If you did not come here, Jill, everyone would have died. We have named many of our daughters Jill."

Dr. Seaman was named a "Hero of Medicine" by *Time* magazine. As *Time* put it, her life-saving work to treat visceral leishmaniasis is "no small achievement for an unassuming American girl from Moscow, Idaho."

## Conclusion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are taking the lead in the research and development of drugs and vaccines aimed at improving global health and lessening the impact of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria.

To find out how we can accelerate the search for better medical technologies, please visit [www.familiesusa.org/global-health](http://www.familiesusa.org/global-health).

Sources available upon request from Families USA.



1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20005

202-628-3030

[www.familiesusa.org/issues/global-health/](http://www.familiesusa.org/issues/global-health/)