

Easter links: inequality, cash on delivery, SDGs, cultural values, Micronesian migration and more

by Terence Wood and Camilla Burkot

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If inequality feels like the sort of thing you want to preoccupy yourself with over the long Easter weekend, the *Conversable Economist* blog features a comprehensive [round-up](#) of recent debate on Thomas Piketty's book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, while Suresh Naidu has an [excellent review](#), emphasising the interface of economic inequality and political inequality. And if that's not enough, you [can listen to Danny Dorling talk at LSE](#) about inequality in the United Kingdom.

And slightly less profound, but still important: Duncan Green discusses [early evidence of the pitfalls of cash on delivery aid](#), while Justin Sandefur and Amanda Glassman have an [interesting paper](#) on how aiming to incentivise based on results may lead to worse data.

As we move deeper into 2015, debate continues to intensify over the SDGs. Taking a literal perspective, *The Economist* this week offered a [scathing assessment](#) of how the SDGs are shaping up (in a nutshell: too many, too expensive, too narrow). However, an ODI [working paper](#) argues that development could still be well served by the goals if development actors are willing to regard them as a norm-generating statement of collective aspirations, rather than a literal 'scorecard' against which progress is to be measured.

Africa's most populous country elected a new president this week, [former army general-turned-'born-again democrat'](#) Muhammadu Buhari. *Foreign Policy* [cautions](#) against letting the celebrations overshadow the substantial security and economic challenges facing Nigeria.

The *New Yorker* has a poignant [story on endangered languages](#), including the (depressing) statistic that since 1960, on average a language has died every four months, erasing unique ecological, ethnobotanical and cultural knowledge as they go.

Also on the subject of cultural value, David Throsby [analyses](#) [pdf] the potential for harnessing the Pacific's rich and diverse cultural heritage to support sustainable development.

Giff Johnson [blogs](#) about increasing tension over the migration of Micronesians and

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Marshallese to the US under the Compact of Free Association. He asks what complaints from Hawai'i and Guam tell us about development progress, and what might be done to improve standards of living both for those who migrate and those who stay in the islands.

Last but not least: if watching academics squirm a bit sounds like your kind of fun, check out a short [video](#) [5 mins, with transcript] featuring the Head of the LSE Department of International Development, Tim Allen, getting 'grilled' on the complexity of fieldwork and speaking truth to power.

(Note: The Devpolicy Blog will be back in action on Tuesday, after the Easter break. Happy Easter!)

Author/s:

Terence Wood

Terence Wood is a Fellow at the Development Policy Centre. His research focuses on political governance in Western Melanesia, and Australian and New Zealand aid.

Camilla Burkot

Camilla Burkot was a Research Officer at the Development Policy Centre, and Editor of the Devpolicy Blog, from 2015 to 2017. She has a background in social anthropology and holds a Master of Public Health from Columbia University, and has field experience in Eastern and Southern Africa, and PNG. She now works for the Burnet Institute.

Link:

<https://devpolicy.org/easter-links-inequality-cash-on-delivery-the-sdgs-cultural-values-micronesian-migration-and-more-20150402/>