

Fortnightly links: Brexit, RCTs, Afghanistan, global finance, effective aid, and more...

By Camilla Burkot and Terence Wood

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Leading figures in aid and development are [taking sides](#) in the Brexit debate, arguing that Britain's withdrawal from the EU would significantly diminish the country's efforts to combat global poverty.

Chris Blattman [stakes out](#) the (very sensible) middle ground in the great RCT debate.

Robert Wright [interrogates](#) effective altruist William MacAskill (you don't have to watch the video-cast; you can download the MP3 from the link to the bottom right of the screen).

[This](#) *New Yorker* article provides eye popping statistics (just how much money the US has spent in Afghanistan), reveals institutional failures (those of the military-industrial-contractor complex), and tells the ambiguous rags-to-riches tale of an Afghan man caught up in it all.

Meanwhile, [another](#) *New Yorker* article explains how two hedge funds may finally be getting the Argentinian government to pay back loans it defaulted on more than a decade ago. We'll leave it to you to decide whether this is a case of Argentina getting its just deserts or an example of the problematic nature of global finance. Regardless of your take, the details and intrigue are eye-opening.

Lastly, in this Radio National Big Ideas [podcast](#), a panel of NGO representatives, campaigners, and diplomats talk about what constitutes effective aid and development, including great discussion around the advancement of women's rights, public opinion and knowledge about Australian aid, and the controversial Paga Hill project in Port Moresby.

About the author/s

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.

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.

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