Fortnightly links: smart thinking about aid, global inequality, inequality and unhappiness, and more

By Terence Wood and Camilla Burkot

First up for the year, an excellent post on Quartz on how to think sensibly about aid and NGOs.

Owen Barder offers two staggering, and depressing, facts about global inequality.

New research (short summary; full paper) shows that inequality within countries doesn’t make people less happy, but it does increase unhappiness and negative life evaluations. (Such distinctions matter a lot if you’re a philosopher; if you’re not, the takeaway point is simple enough: avoid unnecessary inequality.)

The New Yorker has a fascinating piece on the lives and (limited) legal rights of Saudi women.

Aid nerds, rejoice: the most recent OECD aid data (detail for 2014) is now available.

The Economist reports on some depressing research:

David Guenther of the University of Oregon’s Lundquist College of Business and his co-authors compared the effective tax rates paid by a sample of American firms between 2002 and 2011 with a measure of those companies’ [Corporate Social Responsibility] CSR programmes … It found that the
companies which do the most CSR also make the most strenuous efforts to avoid paying tax—and that those with a high CSR score also spend more lobbying on tax.

An interesting new paper [gated, ungated] based on an experiment designed to test if aid undermines state legitimacy. The main finding (at least within the conditions of the experiment): it doesn’t.

And finally, some belated holiday season satire. Would Jesus have received asylum in today’s over-bordered world?

About the author/s

Terence Wood
Terence Wood is a Research 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.