

Buzz: Hunger | Paris | Evaluation

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Paris Declaration evaluation

Is aid becoming more effective? An independent [evaluation](#) of the Paris Declaration is currently evaluating the effects of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. [The Paris Declaration](#) provides a roadmap and specific targets, posing an important challenge to the world of development cooperation. Results are being synthesized to draw out broader conclusions. The evaluation will be a key input to the Busan High Level Forum in 2011. View the [final country reports and donor studies](#).

(Meanwhile, the [Tanzania Development Partners Group](#) on 'aid effectiveness' has created a bit of a buzz in the blogosphere. See the [Bottom-up Thinking blog](#) for further discussion.)

Economics can learn from medicine.

Tim Harford [writes](#) in the Financial Times suggesting that economists need to learn from the relationship that medical practice has with medical evidence; academic evidence and everyday practice are intertwined in medicine. No doubt, this symbiotic relationship is less than perfect in the real world. Nevertheless, Tim suggests it is something economists would do well to emulate. So far, only randomised controlled trials have caught on.

Aid for public financial management reforms, does it work?

An [ODI Working Paper](#) has been released, bringing together cross-country evidence on the quality of public financial management (PFM) systems and the impact of donor support to PFM reforms.

A number of findings relevant for the evaluation, and for policies on PFM reform include:

- Economic factors, rather than aid-related factors are most important in explaining differences in the quality of PFM systems.
- Countries with higher levels of per capita income and larger populations have better PFM systems.

Whilst state fragility has a negative effect.

- On average, countries that received more PFM-related technical assistance have better PFM systems.
- Aid modalities, not just direct support to PFM reforms, contribute to explaining differences in the quality of PFM systems.

Aid transparency: IATI standard support site launched

The [International Aid Transparency Initiative](#) (IATI) is becoming a practical reality. There's been a surge of [interest](#) in the recently launched support site, the [Knowledge Base](#), where news, queries, ideas and discussions relating to the standard can be searched.

IATI consists of a set of aid information standards; an [online registry](#) of published data; and a [governance and advocacy process](#) that builds the case for transparency across the aid sector.

Democratizing Development through Open Data

[Open data](#) combined with social media and new technologies have the potential to empower citizens to communicate directly with governments and service providers. World Bank Spring Meetings in April held a seminar on how open data can help increase social accountability, better target aid and public investments, and more effectively monitor service providers to deliver results. Watch the [event](#).

More than 1 billion people hungry in the world?

UN's FAO have announced that more than [1 billion people are suffering from hunger](#). Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo have written a challenging [piece](#) in Foreign Policy. Their research on this issue has taken them to rural villages and urban slums around the world, collecting data and speaking with poor people about what they eat and what else they buy.

They've found that the story of hunger and poverty is far more complex than any one statistic or grand theory. More money doesn't necessarily translate into more food, and making rice cheaper can sometimes lead people to buy less rice. They challenge the common sweeping ideological solutions and experts who argue over foreign aid, for example, while the facts on the ground bear little resemblance to the fierce policy battles they wage.

Esther Duflo listed in Time 100

Economist [Esther Duflo](#) has been recognised for her work, listed in the TIME's 100 most influential people in the world. She has broken out of the ivory tower to do something economists rarely do: gather real data to see what really works in alleviating poverty, questioning conventional wisdom. One of her biggest findings is that microfinance isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Anti-corruption initiative in India

[I paid a bride](#) is a website initiative that is harnessing collective action to fight corruption. The pattern of corrupt acts are reported on the website to provide a snapshot of bribes. The records will be used to advocate for improving governance systems and procedures, tightening law enforcement and regulation. [Read more here](#).

Education in Africa: Where does the money go?

Public spending on education in Africa has been increasing annually by more than 6 percent according to a new UNESCO [report](#). But how is the money distributed?

The report details government spending on education in each of the 45 sub-Saharan African countries,

tracking the trends over the last 10 years. The report also presents figures on the qualifications and salaries of teachers, the running costs of schools, and the provision of textbooks. The difficult decisions ahead are outlined. For more info and links to the data click [here](#).