

Buzz: Gender | Pacific views | Development 2020

Author : Development Policy Centre

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Aid Transparency

Civil society organisations have [congratulated](#) donors for agreeing a common standard for aid information. [The Hewlett Foundation](#) became the second signatory to publish to [the IATI standard](#) last Thursday, releasing data on grants made by their global development and international population programs. The Swedish government on Monday launched a new online service - [Openaid.se](#) - in a bid to increase transparency within development aid and enable interested parties to follow the entire aid chain.

Gender: why we should put women at the heart of our aid strategy

Is gender equality important for effective aid? [SMH's Cynthia Banham](#) claims the world has started to realise that aid is more effective when directed squarely at women. Why? Women are the economic backbones of their families; they reinvest 90% of their incomes into their families. World Bank studies show that societies that discriminate by gender pay a high price in terms of their ability to develop and to reduce poverty.

South Asia's development paradox

The Indian economy, along with others in South Asia, is among the fastest growing in the world. But what about social progress? [Ejaz Ghani](#) reviews World Bank data suggesting that while income growth is helping to reduce poverty, the number of poor people is actually rising.

What do Pacific islanders think about regionalism?

Pacific Institute of Public Policy (PIPP) has [released its findings](#) from the first ever telephone poll conducted across Melanesia about regionalism.

- A majority said the relationship between their country and Australia was positive
- A majority opted for increased engagement with Fiji
- A clear majority supported West Papua independence

Elections in PNG

Papua New Guineans are discussing [how the 2012 elections will be different](#). Issues that have been raised are: gender and women in politics; youth perceptions of politics; the role of technology; and PNG's voting culture.

Aid, politics and development: the 21st century challenges

How do people understand and think about development? A ['Poverty Matters' blogpost](#) provides a few examples from recent months:

- The notion of resource constraints is back. If resources are limited, distribution becomes much more important.
- Obliteration of the north-south distinction; 'northern policy issues' are becoming urgent in poor countries: ageing populations, rapid urbanisation, and the role of domestic taxation rather than just aid in confronting poverty and inequality.

- A multipolar world is just as prevalent in development circles as everywhere else.
- The new world order will consist of networks and variable groupings rather than fixed hierarchies, such as the G8.
- Development notions constantly evolve, take theories of change.
- A focus on novelty runs the risk of ignoring the basic issues of development.

Questions for development 2020

[Alex Evans summarises](#) his new report for ActionAid:

Eight critical uncertainties for development in 2020

1. What will be the global balance of power?
2. Will job creation keep pace with demographic change?
3. Is there serious global monetary reform by 2020?
4. Who will benefit from the projected 'avalanche of technology'?
5. Will the world face up to the equity questions that come with a world of limits?
6. Will global trade decline?
7. How will the nature of political influence change?
8. What will the major global shocks be between now and 2020?

Ten recommendations for the next ten years

1. Be ready (because shocks will be the key drivers of change)
2. Talk about resilience (because the poor are in the firing line)
3. Put your members in charge (because they can bypass you)
4. Talk about fair shares (because limits change everything)
5. Specialise in coalitions (and not just of civil society organisations)
6. Take on the emerging economies (including from within)
7. Brings news from elsewhere (because innovation will come from the edges)
8. Expect failure (and look for the silver lining)
9. Work for poor people, not poor countries (as most of the former are outside the latter)
10. Be a storyteller (because stories create worldviews)

Getting with the program: AusAID and Innovation

Michael Hutak, Director of One Laptop per Child Foundation Oceania, [argues](#) AusAID needs to start catching up in social media and technology innovation and incorporate [Goal 8](#) of the MDGs – develop a global partnership for development – which has been ignored. In particular Target F:

'In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.'

Behavioral Economics at Work in Poor Countries

An excellent Boston Review forum discusses the role of [behavioral economics in development work](#). Economists now recognise human beings don't always make the best decisions as assumed in the simple 'rational agent' model. If policies based on behavioral economics can help Americans save more, could they also help Indian children get vaccinated or Kenyan children get cleaner water? Evidence from randomized evaluations in the developing world suggests they might.