

Fortnightly links: Chinese aid, Ebola, development indices, and more...

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On the Monkey Cage blog, Roudabeh Kishi and Clionadh Raleigh [draw out](#) some key distinctions between Chinese and Western aid. Among other findings, they report that governments that receive Chinese aid tend to become more violent towards their citizens.

It's been nearly two years since Ebola broke out in West Africa, and while the epidemic appears to be approaching its end (the whole region will be declared Ebola free if no new cases are reported by [Jan 14](#)), its effects will be felt for many years to come. In Liberia, young men who worked to cremate the bodies of Ebola victims [continue to be shunned](#) by much of society. Australia's contribution to addressing the epidemic was also [put under the microscope](#) last week.

This *New York Times* [feature](#) about the Marshall Islands is worth checking out for the stunning visuals alone.

The Center for Global Development recently updated its [Commitment to Development Index](#), which ranks wealthy countries based on how their policies affect the developing world. Most readers will probably be unsurprised to learn that Scandinavian countries claim the top spots; Australia comes in at number 10 alongside Canada and Germany.

Britain (which ranks 6th in the Commitment to Development Index) recently adopted a new aid strategy. On his blog, Owen Barder [summarises](#) what the strategy includes, and how it differs in both tone and substance from the previous approach, pointing out that reaching a target like 0.7% of GNI cannot be the sole objective of aid advocates.

This month ODI published a [helpful primer](#) on multilateral development banks, for those who feel they could use a quick refresher over the holidays.

The UN's [Human Development Report](#) was also updated and released this week, with a focus on 'work for human development'. This quick [chart](#) from *The Economist* uses HDR data to show which countries have progressed the most — and the least — over the last 25 years.

[Last festive season](#) people were arguing about Thomas Piketty, and the good news for those of you who like to spend your festive seasons immersed in debates amongst economists and political scientists is that people are still arguing about Thomas Piketty. In particular, the academic blog Crooked Timber has a great, ongoing [blog seminar](#) on Piketty's book *Capital*.

And if you're still searching for a stocking stuffer for the global development aficionado in your life, this charming new [Christmas album](#) just might fit the bill. (Or you could take our colleague Ashlee's advice, and buy a 2016 Australasian Aid Conference [registration](#) instead).

Have a restful and enjoyable holiday — see you in 2016!