

Fortnightly links: strategic comms, UK aid, SDGs, menstrual hygiene management, and more

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Welcome to the first fortnightly links of 2017!

To start off, CharityComms, the UK's network for non-profit communications professionals, reviews the [key lessons in strategic communications](#) from 2016 and offers some tips for 2017.

New Statesman [reports](#) that foreign aid is looking increasingly to be the target of those on the right of politics, at least in the UK. Cash transfers are the first in the firing line, despite strong evidence of their effectiveness. On that, Georgina Sturge [debunks](#) a number of myths about cash transfers.

Along similar lines, an article in *The Economist* [notes](#) that the British are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Britain's generous aid budget, as DFID Secretary Priti Patel "has done little to live up to her ferocious reputation besides talking tough to international agencies".

On the other side of the pond, USAID chief Gayle Smith is [set to leave office](#) on January 20 (after just 18 months in the role following an [extended confirmation process](#)). The incoming Trump administration's approach to development and foreign aid remains ambiguous.

Elizabeth Stuart [touts](#) a number of development initiatives and achievements that have occurred since the SDGs commenced. We'll leave it up to you to decide whether they're significant and/or products of the SDGs, but the list makes an interesting read regardless.

Does handing out sanitary pads really help young women to stay in school? NPR's *Goats and Soda* blog [discusses](#) a recent RCT that sought to answer this question -- and the question of whether distributing sanitary pads and tools to support menstrual hygiene management is worth doing for its own sake.

A [interesting project in Kenya](#) is seeking to help reduce the cost barrier for women to give birth by setting up mobile money savings accounts and sending supportive text messages with reminders and health information to expectant mums.

Still looking for a new year's resolution? Perhaps you should consider [turning up to events on gender](#).