

## Newsletter: Rethinking capacity building | Inequality and aid | Dialling up data | Anyone for a Coke?

Author : Development Policy Centre

Date : July 17, 2015



### Rethinking capacity building: a ten-point reform agenda

Former World Bank Vice President for Asia and the Pacific, Jim Adams, takes a hard look at capacity building (in two posts, [here](#) and [here](#)). Despite the lack of success by aid-funded efforts in this area, Jim argues that this is simply too important an endeavour to give up on, but calls for a major rethink in the way donors and partner governments view capacity building. To get the discussion going, and given “a vacuum of new approaches”, Jim sets out his own ten suggestions for reform, based on longer time-frames, more selectivity and coordination, an end to poaching of government staff, and much more use of twinning, going beyond commercial arrangements.

These posts are taken from Jim Adams’ keynote address at the June 2015 PNG Update. More posts to follow in the coming weeks. The full address is available to download [here](#) [pdf], and you can also listen to a podcast of it [here](#).

### Economic inequality: not an issue for aid

Devpolicy Research Fellow Terence Wood bucks the orthodoxy [to argue](#) that aid workers shouldn’t be particularly worried about economic inequality. Most aid goes to countries that are poor rather than unequal, and in any case there are more important types of inequality than disparities in income – gender inequality, for example.

### Dialling up data

In [this post](#), Amanda Watson, a consultant and Visiting Fellow at the ANU School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, shares with us some of the lessons of her extensive experience with remote data collection in PNG, and advocates for much greater use of mobile phones for both monitoring and research. One of Amanda’s mobile research projects was presented [at the PNG Update](#) last month, which looked at

the potential for using mobile phones to increase corruption reporting.

### **Anyone for a Coke?**

In other parts of the world, donors have used partners with Coke to deliver drugs. [Should this be tried in the Pacific?](#) Sam Byfield doesn't think so, noting the potential moral hazards of such a deal, given the burden of non-communicable diseases in the Pacific.

### **Staff news**

We will soon sadly be saying farewell to one of Devpolicy's originals – Jonathan Pryke is set to commence a new role at the Lowy Institute next month, as a Melanesia Research Fellow.

Jonathan has been involved in nearly all aspects of the centre's work in his four years with us as a Research Officer, from the aid conference, to the stakeholder survey, aid budget coverage, supervising interns, providing research support, and of course, editing the Devpolicy Blog. We all wish him the best in his well-deserved new role, and we hope he comes back to visit us regularly!

Research Officer Camilla Burkot has now taken on the editorship of the blog, with Stephen Howes remaining as co-editor. Thanks to Jonathan for his dedication to the blog since 2011, and a big welcome to Camilla in her new role.

In other staff news, we have recently welcomed our most recent [Greg Taylor Scholar](#), Serena Sumanop. Serena has just completed her final semester of her Masters of Business at the Queensland University of Technology. Serena is working on family and sexual violence in PNG with [Femili PNG](#).

### **Leveraging the benefits of Asia's integration and growth for Pacific economies**

How can Pacific island economies, including those of Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, tap into projected growth in Asia? Two authors of a recent Asian Development Bank (ADB) book on this topic, Christopher Edmonds and Matthias Helble, will explore these issues at an event on Tuesday 21 July. [Register here](#).

### **Upcoming events**

*Leveraging the benefits of Asia's integration and growth for Pacific economies*  
Tuesday 21 July, Seminar Room 3, Crawford School. 2pm—3pm. [Register here](#).

*The fish is the friend of matriliney: reef density and matrilineal inheritance in Melanesia*  
Friday 31 July, Acton Theatre. 12.30pm—1.30pm. [Register here](#).

*2016 Australasian Aid Conference*  
10-11 February 2016. Call for papers open. [Details here](#).

### **Blog highlights**

China's rise as an [aid superpower](#)

DFAT's [new health strategy](#)

Australians and aid: [more insights from the polls](#)

### **On the blog**

[Capacity building: important but unsuccessful](#) by Jim Adams

[Capacity building: how to do better](#) by Jim Adams

[A welcome new commission on the measurement of global poverty](#) by Scott Wisor

[Should Australia partner with coke in the Pacific?](#) By Sam Byfield

[Why Australian aid cuts are harmful for Afghanistan](#) by Nematullah Bizhan

[China's emergence as a development leader: a historical perspective](#) by Patrick Kilby

[DFAT's new health strategy: a new approach?](#) By Joel Negin

[A finger on the pulse: new polls of Australian public opinion on aid](#) by Camilla Burkot

[Remote data collection in Papua New Guinea: an aid to policy deliberations](#) by Amanda Watson

[Should aid practitioners worry about economic inequality?](#) By Terence Wood

#### **In brief**

[Weekend links: Iran deal, catalytic aid, Chinese well-being, solar power, health subsidies, and the value of celebrities](#)

[More details on the Australian Volunteers cuts](#)

[New US government website ups the ante on aid transparency](#)

[Weekend links: Tehran, the nature of the state, industrialisation, inequality in Mexico, indicators, and effective altruism debated](#)

[Phase 1 of the 2015 aid stakeholder survey now live](#)

*This is the fortnightly newsletter of the [Development Policy Centre](#) at Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University, published every second Friday.*