

Weekend links: post-conflict cash grants, Iran weapons, analysing ISIS, development podcasts, and Tongan kava clubs

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Some fascinating new experimental research (albeit quasi-experimental in parts) from Northern Uganda suggests giving small cash grants (US\$150) to the vulnerable in post-conflict situations generally delivers significant and potentially sustainable material benefits; interventions to foster social networks amongst recipients help add to these benefits in instances; and that supervision designed to improve grant spending has more ambiguous effects (gated link [here](#); ungated link [here](#)).

In different ways [Robin Wright](#) and [Scott Ritter's](#) recent articles show how recent history (in Wright's case the history of conflict; in Ritter's case the history of how weapons inspection campaigns are conducted) is playing a crucial role in shaping any potential weapons inspection agreement with Iran. Wright also has a good recent(ish) update on the state of negotiations [here](#) and if you're interested in the state of Iran more generally the website [the Iran Primer](#) is very helpful.

Also on the Middle East Patrick Cockburn offers a [nuanced, depressing take](#) of the conflicts ISIS is waging, and the state of its opponents. And Robert Wright ([in a video debate](#)) contests aspects of Graeme Wood's now famous [article](#) (which we've linked to before) on the nature of ISIS.

Meanwhile, on more happy matters, Owen Barder argues [development podcasts are back](#) (whoever said they went away?) and provides a list of excellent looking podcasts to convince development types they should get listening again. On the list is an interesting looking [podcast series](#) from the Australian Red Cross. (And don't forget that Devpolicy [podcasts its events](#).)

And finally, for a read to put you in a relaxing mood, check out Scott Hamilton's [essay](#) in *Overland* on Tonga's *Fofolangas* clubs, designed to serve as 'modern' venues for enjoying kava and conversation modeled after the Sydney Push and ancient Greek symposia. Like any great cultural institution, though, they aren't without their fair share of critique.