

Weekend reading and listening: Peruvian miners, Yemen, working with friends, development careers, and SDGs response

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If your day job feels like a challenge you might want to reflect upon [this](#) *New Yorker* piece on the labours of the miners of La Rinconada, a Peruvian town which is the highest settlement on earth. It's a tale of toil, pollution, superstition, luck and an almost absent state. (Remember, you have free access to only a limited number of *New Yorker* articles each month - although this article alone may well prompt you to subscribe).

The escalation of conflict in Yemen has drawn significant media coverage over the last few weeks, particularly as evidence of a severe [humanitarian crisis](#) is becoming clearer. For those of us who are still trying to get up to speed with the intricacies of the conflict, here are a few links that might help:

- UN Dispatch featured a [podcast](#) [15 mins] with April Longley Alley of the International Crisis Group. Of particular note was her comment that while there has been much emphasis on the involvement of Saudi Arabia, the US, Iran and Pakistan (among others), what is happening in Yemen should not be misconstrued as a proxy war.
- PBS Frontline has a handy ['who's who'](#) which spells out how all the different parties involved relate to one another. Also worth checking out are a series of six short [clips](#) [all under 2 mins] from an interview with journalist and filmmaker Safa Al-Ahmad, who has been reporting from Yemen since 2010. (US-based readers may be able to access Al-Ahmad's recently released documentary, *The Fight for Yemen*, [here](#)).
- For those craving more in-depth analysis, Helen Lackner has a number of [detailed posts](#) on the political and humanitarian intricacies of Yemen. Her most recent [piece](#) discusses the implications of Saudi air strikes and the likely protracted effects of the conflict.

On a related note, the Chinese navy's role in evacuating foreign nationals from Yemen -- the first time Chinese warships have engaged in such an operation -- was discussed on *The New York Times* Sinosphere [blog](#). The evacuations have been interpreted as further evidence that China is seeking to boost its humanitarian credentials both internationally and at home.

Meanwhile, Eli Berman and Aila M. Matanock [have a summary](#) of what econometricians have learnt about insurgencies (ungated link [here](#)).

On a much more happy subject matter, a new paper by Erica Field, Seema Jayachandran, Rohini Pande and Natalia Rigol provides evidence suggesting that business training for women in India is more effective when women train accompanied by a friend. Key finding:

Four months later, those trained with a friend were more likely to have taken out business loans, were less likely to be housewives, and reported increased business activity and higher household income. The positive impacts of training with a friend were stronger among women from religious or caste groups with social norms that restrict female mobility.

You can find the gated paper [here](#), and an ungated version [here](#).

As many Devpolicy readers will no doubt recognise, pathways to a career in development are varied - perhaps more so than any other profession. While this certainly brings diversity to our field, the absence of a straightforward entry point presents challenges to those hoping to break in; a new [career guide](#) by Maia

Gedde (with a forward by Duncan Green), [excerpted](#) in the Guardian, should help prospective development workers to effectively navigate these challenges.

[Two weekends ago](#), we included a link to *The Economist's* [critical appraisal](#) of the SDGs. The article generated a number of strong responses, several of which were printed as [Letters to the Editor](#) this week. Also of note is something that didn't get printed: the fact that Marianne Haslegrave's letter was co-signed by 85 organisations and groups working on gender equality and women's empowerment around the world. Considering what's at stake in the SDGs for such organisations, it is important that their voices are recognised.