Weekend reading and listening: the art of development, election biometrics, expats, data quality and new addresses

Author: Camilla Burkot
Date: March 20, 2015

This week’s weekend reading and listening links, coming to you direct from our office located at since.coin.monks (more on that below):

The role of the arts and culture in development is a topic of growing interest; last week, Prof Mari Pangestu delivered a rousing lecture on the ‘creative economy’ at the Development Policy Centre. In the same vein, the LSE Review of Books reviews John Clammer’s Art, Culture and International Development: Humanizing social transformation, which examines both the social and economic development benefits of a flourishing artistic and cultural life.

As Nigeria prepares to go to the polls at the end of March, Giulia Piccolino argues that the growing use of biometrics in African elections is an expensive ‘fix’ that will likely fail to address more fundamental challenges to electoral integrity.

For our readers based in ‘the field’: what do you call yourself? What do others call you? SiliconAfrica.com’s Mawuna Remarque Koutonin picks up on implicit biases in who are considered ‘expats’ vs ‘immigrants’.

Over at UN Dispatch, Mark Leon Goldberg presents, in his own words, an “exceedingly interesting and wonky” podcast exploring the quality of development data, framing it as one of the key challenges in preparing the Sustainable Development Goals. (I agree with his characterisation!)

Finally, what3words is a tech start-up purporting to improve the delivery of humanitarian aid (among other purposes) by dividing the world into 3m x 3m squares, each of which is granted a unique, 3 word code name. What do you think? Is the ‘under-addressed’ nature of the world actually a major barrier to development? Has anyone in humanitarian aid trialled this platform yet?