

Please find a selection of articles and reports pulled from the last two/three weeks. Shankar's picks are the top two reports from Brookings and Gates, which contain both historic and cautionary development statistics.

Happy reading,
Tamara

Rethinking Global Poverty Reduction 2019, Homi Kharas et al, Brookings Institute

2018 could be a landmark moment in understanding global poverty dynamics, because **more than half the world is now middle class or richer**, fueled by a rising Asian middle class. As **Steven Pinker** and others observed, the rise of the global middle class—and the implications on policies, industry, and political economy—might have been one of the most important “ignored” stories of 2018. Looking at poverty trends worldwide, World Data Lab now estimates that on New Year’s Day 2019, just under 600 million people across the world (excluding Syria) will live in extreme poverty.

2018 Goalkeepers Report, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Since 2000, more than a billion people have lifted themselves out of the extreme poverty. However, as Mr. and Mrs. Gates warn: “decades of stunning progress in the fight against poverty and disease may be on the verge of stalling. This is because the poorest parts of the world are growing faster than everywhere else; more babies are being born in the places where it’s hardest to lead a healthy and productive life. If current trends continue, the number of poor people in the world will stop falling—and could even start to rise.”

India’s Railroads Had 63,000 job Openings. 19 Million People Applied, Washington Post

India has one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world, but it is not generating enough jobs — let alone good jobs — for the increasingly educated young people entering the labor force. By 2021, the number of people in India between the ages of 15 and 34 **is expected to reach 480 million**. They have higher levels of literacy and are staying in school longer than any previous generation of Indians. The youth surge represents an opportunity for this country of 1.3 billion, economists say, but only if such young people can find productive work.

The Ghost Statistic that Haunts Women’s Empowerment, Kathryn Moeller, New Yorker

According to recent UC Berkeley PhD grad Moeller, the oft-cited development statistic--“When an

educated girl earns income she reinvests ninety percent in her family, compared to thirty-five percent for a boy”—cannot be sourced. It is, however, one of the bases for Nike’s Girls Effect campaign and other corporate- and philanthropy-funded female empowerment programs. This piece is also a plug for Moeller’s new UC Press book, “*The Gender Effect: Capitalism, Feminism, and the Corporate Politics of Development.*”

Tech Giants, Gorging on AI Professor Is Bad for You, Ariel Procaccia, Bloomberg Opinion

The tragedy of the commons is playing out in the field of artificial intelligence, with companies as the herders and professors as the grass. As AI frenzy engulfs the technology and financial sectors, attempts to hire AI experts from the nation’s top universities have skyrocketed. Universities cannot begin to compete with the seven-figure salaries that are routinely offered by major companies. Procaccia of Carnegie Mellon (unpoached) calls for a sustainable model that lies between the extremes.

Pentagon Seeks a List of Ethical Principles for Using AI in War, Defense One

U.S. defense officials have asked the [Defense Innovation Board](#) for a set of ethical principles in the use of artificial intelligence in warfare. The principles are intended to guide a military whose interest in AI is accelerating — witness the new [Joint Artificial Intelligence Center](#) — and to reassure potential partners in Silicon Valley about how their AI products will be used.

Facing Harsh Realities, the Global Development Community Confronts Another Fraught Year, Raj

Kumar, Devex - The outlines of an established global politics on aid are beginning to come into focus, and it’s a fraught landscape. Aid is now [openly and directly discussed](#) as a tool to stem migration, achieve foreign policy objectives, and derive domestic economic benefits, particularly for major donors including the U.S., China, Germany, and the U.K.

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