FEBRUARY UPDATE

February's short. As is this month’s newsletter. But read on to learn more about problems in Greece, dreams in Somalia, and why you might want to reconsider your exercise routine.

New This Month

An Uncertain Future for EU’s Flagship Refugee Program in Greece

The EU’s 209 million euro emergency support package to refugees in Greece has provided temporary cash assistance to more than 36,000 households and provided accommodations for nearly 19,000 households. But Devex reports that a lack of long-term political strategy for refugee assistance in Greece may hamper one of the program’s core objectives: to help asylum seekers and refugees secure a stable future in the country. This becomes even more important with the planned transition of program responsibility to public authorities - not humanitarian organizations - in 2019.

Have Cash Transfers Paved the Way for a Social Safety Net in Somalia?

The current crisis has displaced more than 1.4 million people, and around 3 million - one-quarter of Somalia’s population - are receiving cash assistance. As Devex highlights, some in the humanitarian sector would like to see this new coordinated response evolve into a national social safety net. While full government ownership in the short-term is “too ambitious,” the logic is that donors could still see savings in humanitarian spending (and the potential to fund more development-related interventions) by investing in a social safety net structure now.

New “Smart Communities” Program Aims to Transform Refugee Communities

Launched last month at Davos, a public-private coalition of more than 20 companies and agencies led by Mastercard and USAID will bring together technology, solutions, and experience from multiple sectors to “transform refugee settlements into digitally-connected communities.” Insights from Mastercard-funded research in the
Kakuma and Kalobeyei camps in Kenya helped identify the three key areas of focus: connectivity, digital tools, and energy access.

**CGAP: It’s Still FinTech, but It’s Not “Flashy”**
In their recent CGAP blog, Gayatri Murthy and Ruben Barreto underline that innovation by African FinTech companies may not look like Silicon Valley - but it’s just as impactful. After partnering with FinTech companies last summer to learn from their experiences with piloting and scaling digital solutions for low-income customers, two observations stood out: 1) digital solutions rely on USSD phones, and 2) in-person engagement is still vital even if solutions are digital.

**NYT Op-ed: The Latest Data Privacy Debacle**
In the New York Times, Zeynep Tyufekci, associate professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina, likens data privacy to, "a public good that cannot be effectively regulated by trusting in the wisdom of millions of individual choices." Read her opinion piece to understand how data from an innocuous exercise app might have located a CIA annex in Mogadishu.

A perfect teaser to next month’s interview with the folks at Digitally Responsible Aid!

**Get Involved!**

**Blockchain Partnership Opportunities with Save the Children**
Save the Children (SC) is exploring how the use of distributed ledger technology (DLT) can improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and long-term impact of humanitarian response by empowering beneficiaries, increasing transparency, and facilitating collaboration across humanitarian actors and sectors. Given the potential to transform collaboration in humanitarian program, SC is interested in exploring partnerships with academic and research institutions, implementers, and technology providers, to identify, test, and develop the opportunities and challenges of utilizing the technology in such a challenging environment. Please contact Nick Anderson (nmanderson@savechildren.org) if you’d like to discuss further.