

# Raisa Sherif

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## Academic appointment

Senior Research Fellow (Post-Doc), since 2021  
Max Planck Institute for Tax Law and Public Finance, Munich  
Invited Researcher, J-PAL

## Education

Ph.D. Economics, 2021  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich  
  
Integrated Masters in Economics, 2009-2014  
Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras)

## Publications

[Sanctioning, selection, and pivotality in voting: theory and experimental results](#), with Kai A Konrad,  
*Constitutional Political Economy*, 2019, 30(3), 330-357

## Works in progress

1. [Are pro-environment behaviours substitutes or complements? Evidence from the field](#), 2023  
*Paper available at SSRN 3799970* (under review)
2. Efficiency versus Visibility Trade-off in Pro-environment Behaviours, with Sven Simon
3. Sustainability Starts at Home: The Role of Children in Shaping Environmental Practices, with Shubhro Bhattacharya, Sara Constantino, Nirajana Mishra, Nishith Prakash, Dighbijoy Samaddar
4. Sorting it out: Reshaping Waste Management in Urban India, with Ahana Basistha, Nishith Prakash
5. Empowering Entrepreneurs: Experimental Evidence from a Personal Initiative Intervention in India, with Sofia Amaral, Isis Gaddis, Alreena Pinto, Jayati Sethi
6. Information campaigns, environment norms, and behaviour: Evidence from the field, *Pre-registered trial available at American Economic Association Social Science Registry* 7439
7. Shaping Minds: The Transformative Effects of Theatre-Based Learning, with Ritam Chaurey, Sara Constantino, Shantanu Khanna, Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay, Nishith Prakash, Raghav Rakesh, Raisa Sherif

## Grants and awards

2023 JPAL Learning for All Initiative (USD 98,000, Co-PI)  
2023 World Bank (USD 350,000)  
2023 World Bank (USD 85,000, Co-PI)  
2023 Max Planck Society (EUR 20,000, PI)  
2022 Max Planck Society (EUR 30,000, PI)  
Invitee to the 7th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Economic Sciences, 2022

## Teaching

Behavioural Environmental Economics, Bachelor  
Winter Semester 2023-24, Summer Semester 2024  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich

International Public Economics, TA (Graduate class)  
Winter Semester 2017, Rating: 4.8/5  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich

## Conferences and Presentations

**2023** European Economic Association Annual Meeting, International Meeting on Experimental and Behavioural Social Sciences (IMEBESS), Econ Seminar Talk at Northeastern, Symposium on Economic Experiments in Developing Countries

**2022** Experimental Sciences Association World Meeting, Boston, Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Economics, 17th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development, Delhi

**2021** German Economic Association, Virtual Annual Meeting, Experimental Sciences Association Global Online Meetings, Center for Rationality and Competition Summer School 2021: Science-Based Policy Advice, 9th Mannheim Conference on Energy and the Environment

**2020** Micro Workshop, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, Behavioral Research in Economics Workshop, India

**2018** ESA World Meeting, Berlin, IIPF Annual Congress, Tampere, Public Economic Theory Conference, Hanoi, International Meeting on Experimental and Behavioral Social Sciences (IMEBESS), Florence, European Public Choice Society conference, Rome, Micro Workshop, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

**2017** Workshop - Public Finance and Political Economy V, Berlin, Development Economics Workshop, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, Summer School in Experimental Economics, Tinbergen Institute, Amsterdam

## Software

STATA, R,  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , zTree, OTree, Qualtrics

## Services

Co-founder at [Lindau Mentor Hub](#), a digital platform that connects mentors and mentees in science and academia. Developed in collaboration with the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings

Research Consultant, Green Kerala Mission, Govt of Kerala, India (2018-2020)

Equal Opportunities Officer, MPI for Tax Law and Public Finance (since Oct 2020)

Co-host of [Max Planck Economics Podcast](#), conversations with economists and political scientists

Analyst, Investment Banking, Barclays Bank PLC (2014-15)

Contributor, *Malayala Manorama* (daily newspaper in Malayalam language), *Financial Express*

## Abstracts

### **Are pro-environment behaviours substitutes or complements? Evidence from the field**

This paper uses a field experiment in India to study how interventions designed to increase one pro-environment activity, namely, recycling single-use plastic carry bags, spill over to other pro-environment activities. I show using lab and field experiments combined with survey data that (i) providing information on the need to recycle does not change recycling behaviour, whereas (ii) providing incentives along with the information leads to higher recycling. There is a positive spillover in the incentive treatment to other pro-environment activities. The positive spillover is observed among those in the treatment who responds to the incentives and change recycling behaviour as well as those who do not, indicating the presence of positive spillovers even if the target behaviour is unaffected. This evidence indicates complementarities among pro-environment behaviours and suggests that interventions may have unaccounted positive effects on non-target environment behaviours.

### **Efficiency versus Visibility Trade-off in Pro-environment Behaviours, with Sven Simon**

Today's environmental challenges prompt many individuals to take personal actions to address them. Those intrinsically concerned about the environment *should* focus on maximizing the impact of their actions. Yet, it is observed that individuals often engage in pro-environment behaviors (PEBs) that are relatively inefficient in terms of their cost-benefit ratio. We examine if this is because individuals trade off efficient PEBs for inefficient, but visible ones. We conduct a representative online experiment in Germany to investigate this trade-off between efficient and visible PEBs, using contributions to carbon-offset initiatives. Our findings reveal three key insights: First, when considered independently, individuals display a preference for efficient PEBs. Second, in scenarios where efficiency and visibility dimensions are in conflict, visible PEBs crowd out efficient alternatives, indicating a willingness among respondents to prioritize being seen as green over environmental impact. Finally, we disentangle two motivations driving this preference for visible actions: social image concerns (a self-oriented motive) and role model aspirations. Notably, the latter motivation exerts a stronger influence, leading individuals more frequently to choose visible PEBs over efficient ones.

### **Sustainability Starts at Home: The Role of Children in Shaping Environmental Practices, with Shubhro Bhattacharya, Sara Constantino, Nirajana Mishra, Nishith Prakash, Dighbijoy Samaddar**

This study examines the effect of educational interventions on improving pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours within family units in Patna, Bihar. We implement a Randomized Controlled Trial across 2,000 households to analyze the "spillover" effects between children and their parents. We employ four treatment arms: Student-Only, Parent-Only, Combined Student and Parent, and a Control Group, to evaluate the impact of a custom-designed pro-environmental curriculum on both direct recipients and their household counterparts.

### **Sorting it Out: Reshaping Waste Management in Urban India, with Ahana Basistha, Nishith Prakash**

Poor urban waste management has severe negative effects on health and economic outcomes. An effective approach to address this issue is the implementation of waste segregation at source, followed by adequate processing of the separated components. Co-opting households' participation in segregating waste is essential to the success of such systems. We conduct a randomized control trial among households in the Indian state of Bihar, to examine the effects of light-touch messaging interventions on household waste segregation. We find that while interventions change the self reported intentions to segregate and willingness to pay, they do not change actual segregation levels.

### **Information campaigns, environment norms, and behaviour: Evidence from the field**

Information campaigns that aim to encourage pro-environment activities are a widely popular policy instrument. In addition to closing the information gap related to target behaviours, such interventions can potentially change the beliefs that individuals hold about the appropriateness of these behaviours. This is particularly likely in the context of environmental behaviours because of the normative nature of interventions, where a 'correct' behaviour is often encouraged. We look at whether individuals respond to information campaigns in the environmental domain because of their informational value or because they expect the campaign to change the social norm around these behaviours, and want to adhere to these new norms. We aim to separately identify these two channels through a field experiment.

**Empowering Entrepreneurs: Experimental Evidence from a Personal Initiative Intervention in India** with Sofia Amaral, Isis Gaddis, Alreena Pinto, Jayati Sethi

This project examines the efficacy of Personal Initiative (PI) training, a soft-skills development program, among 2,000 entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, India, with a specific emphasis on women entrepreneurs operating within restrictive social norms and low female labor participation. The PI training is tailored to fit the social and cultural context of entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu, and aims to enhance entrepreneurial behaviors such as confidence, growth mindset, and self-efficacy, which are crucial for strategic decision-making and firm profitability.

**Shaping Minds: The Transformative Effects of Theatre-Based Learning**, with Ritam Chaurey, Sara Constantino, Shantanu Khanna, Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay, Nishith Prakash

Despite progress in addressing barriers to human capital in the last two decades, significant learning gaps persist. A new line of research suggests that holistic skills have been associated with positive impacts on later life outcomes. However, there is little evidence supporting the effectiveness of existing traditional classroom-based instructional strategies in improving non-cognitive and socio-emotional skills. In this study, we conduct a randomized control trial in 100 schools in Uttarakhand, India to estimate the causal impacts of an experiential learning pedagogy in secondary schools. The curriculum consists of a total of 36 hours of arts and theater-based instruction spread over 24 weekly sessions. We will measure the impacts on cognitive skills (critical thinking and learning), social skills (class participation, network formation, communication skills, pro-sociality), and emotional skills (stress, anxiety, self-care, self-esteem).

Last updated: February 22, 2024