

The psychology of environmental protection and public health: Individual decision-making, individual behaviour change, and cooperation in social dilemma situations

Many of today's most pressing societal challenges are environmental-related, such as water scarcity or overfishing, or public health-related, such as the spread of communicable diseases through contaminated drinking water, open defecation or neglected hand hygiene. Not only can research in the fields of individual decision-making, individual behaviour, and social dilemmas and cooperation help to better understand these challenges, it can also contribute to tackle these challenges. My talk first gives a short overview on my previous research that focused on individual behaviour change in the water, sanitation, and hygiene sector. I present results from two studies. The first study investigated the underlying change processes of handwashing interventions in Ethiopia. The second study examined the psychological mechanisms of collective ownership related to safe water kiosks in Kenya. The main part of my talk focuses on my future research plans which include further studies in the field of individual behaviour change in the water, sanitation, and hygiene sector in developing countries as well as studies on environmental protection in developed countries. Another key topic are social dilemmas and cooperation in environmental protection and public health. My aim is to investigate *changeable* determinants of cooperation, such as collective identity, which is of high relevance for the development of campaigns in environmental protection and public health. Finally, I point out potential research projects in individual decision-making with regard to new technologies and regulations in environmental protection and public health.