

Reporting Summary

Nature Research wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Research policies, see [Authors & Referees](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- ☐ ☒ The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
- ☐ ☒ A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
- ☐ ☒ The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided
Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.
- ☐ ☒ A description of all covariates tested
- ☐ ☒ A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
- ☐ ☒ A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
- ☐ ☒ For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.
- ☒ ☐ For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
- ☐ ☒ For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
- ☐ ☒ Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection

N/A

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed in R (version 3.4.4) using the standard base R packages and the following packages: lme4, mediate.

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors/reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Research [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A list of figures that have associated raw data
- A description of any restrictions on data availability

All data and code used for the analyses included in this paper are available from the corresponding author (KPA) upon reasonable request.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

- ☐ Life sciences ☒ Behavioural & social sciences ☐ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see [nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf](https://www.nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf)

Behavioural & social sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Study description	This is a quantitative study analyzing the results of a lab-in-the-field experiment related to forest use decisions.
Research sample	The research sample includes 224 rural villagers in Indonesia, Tanzania, and Peru. Participants were 55% female with an average age of 39 years. The sampled villages were selected to resemble typical villages that would receive payments for ecosystem services (PES) interventions.
Sampling strategy	We recruited our sample from study sites associated with the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia, Peru, and Tanzania. By choosing our study sites from these samples of villages, we were also able to utilize existing relationships with local partner organizations through CIFOR in order to ensure good working relationships between our local partners and research subjects. We purposively sampled villages from these sites to achieve reasonable variation with respect to two community-level variables: poverty and distance to markets. We enlisted the help of community leaders to announce our research activity ahead of time, and encouraged our local research partners to ensure as broad participation as was possible with respect to gender and ethnicity. On the day of the activity in each village, participants self-selected into the experiment by arriving at our pre-arranged research location. We subsequently randomly assigned these participants into treatment and control groups.
Data collection	All data used in the paper were collected on paper. Forest user decisions were first recorded on decision cards by the participants themselves. The field staff checked the cards to make sure they were filled out correctly in each round of the experiment. Our field staff then entered all decision data into an excel spreadsheet. In addition, two independent observers documented participant behavior in each round of the experiment. Field staff also interviewed each participant individually before and after the experiment. The interview responses were entered on a paper questionnaire and later entered into an excel spreadsheet.
Timing	All field data used in the paper were collected between January 2014 and November 2014.
Data exclusions	One group of eight participants was excluded from this analysis because, due to errors in data entry, treatment assignment cannot be determined for this group.
Non-participation	Participation in the experiment was voluntary. None of the participants who enrolled in the experiment decided to drop out.
Randomization	We divided volunteers from each village into two groups, and randomly assigned one of two conditions to each of the groups involved in our experiment. Under the treatment condition, the group had a gender quota ensuring that at least 50% of the final list of participants were women.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ Antibodies
☒	☐ Eukaryotic cell lines
☒	☐ Palaeontology
☒	☐ Animals and other organisms
☐	☒ Human research participants
☒	☐ Clinical data

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study
☒	☐ ChIP-seq
☒	☐ Flow cytometry
☒	☐ MRI-based neuroimaging

Human research participants

Policy information about [studies involving human research participants](#)

Population characteristics	We recruited our sample from study sites associated with the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia, Peru, and Tanzania. By choosing our study sites from these samples of villages, we were also able to utilize existing relationships with local partner organizations through CIFOR in order to ensure good working relationships between our local partners and research subjects. We purposively sampled villages from these sites to achieve reasonable variation with respect to two community-level variables: poverty and distance to markets. We enlisted the help of community leaders to announce our research activity ahead of time, and encouraged our local research partners to ensure as broad participation as was possible with respect to gender and ethnicity. On the day of the activity in each village, participants self-selected into the experiment by arriving at our pre-arranged research location. We subsequently randomly assigned these participants into treatment and control groups.
Recruitment	We enlisted the help of community leaders to announce our research activity ahead of time, and encouraged our local research

Recruitment

partners to ensure as broad participation as was possible with respect to gender and ethnicity. On the day of the activity in each village, participants self-selected into the experiment by arriving at our pre-arranged research location. Participants were organized into groups of eight individuals based on the time of their arrival at the research location and family membership (we made sure individuals from the same family did not participate in the same group).

Ethics oversight

The field-based data collection activities for this study followed a research protocol for human subjects that was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Colorado at Boulder (Study# 13-0198).

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.