

Agha Ali Akram

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I am an applied economist with over 15 years of experience conducting mixed methods impact evaluation, cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis in climate change, agriculture, water, and public health. Most recently, I was a Senior Researcher at Mathematica, where I led quantitative and mixed-methods evaluations, along with cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness modeling, across the agriculture, nutrition, and water sectors. Before Mathematica, I was an assistant professor of economics at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, teaching quantitative methods for impact evaluation, development economics, and climate change economics. I also served as an economist with the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, where he oversaw a portfolio of climate change adaptation impact evaluations and conducted cost-benefit analyses on a portfolio of climate change adaptation projects worth over \$100 million.

Education

Ph.D. Environmental Economics , YALE UNIVERSITY	2015
Masters Environmental Management (Fulbright Scholar), YALE UNIVERSITY	2008
B.Sc. Computer Science and History , LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES	2004

Work Experience

Senior Researcher, MATHEMATICA INC 2022 – 2025

- **Project leadership:** Served as project director specializing in mixed-methods impact evaluations, cost-benefit analyses, and feasibility studies, leveraging my expertise in RCT design, market testing, and technical writing.
- **Led projects and proposal writing** for USAID, MCC, US DOL, Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and TIP Global Health across **health, water, agriculture, and energy** sectors.

Consultant, DIME – WORLD BANK GROUP 2021 – 2022

Co-led the design and testing of a globally harmonized survey to capture key performance indicators and management practices of water utility.

Economist, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017 – 2022

- **Project management:** Managed a team of data analysts to provide design input and quality control for a portfolio of impact evaluations of climate-change adaptation across 11 countries; led dialogue with academic partners to provide technical guidance to develop UNDP's global electricity access map.
- **Cost-benefit analysis:** Developed and analyzed economic cost-benefit analysis models for climate change adaptation and risk management projects valued at over \$100 million. Led the development of reporting guidelines to be used across the UNDP impact evaluations portfolio.
- **Conducting technical training:** Developed content for and led sessions on cost benefit analysis and impact evaluation for workshops with UNDP and government personnel across multiple countries.

Assistant Professor, LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES 2018 – 2022

- **Research:** Grew and managed an active research portfolio across public health, education, climate change and water.
- **Teaching:** Taught courses on quantitative methods for impact evaluation, climate change economics, development economics, environmental and resource economics, health economics.

Agricultural Economist, UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION 2016 – 2020

- **Leading impact evaluation and cost-benefit analysis:** Designed, tested and deployed a large-scale (600 farmers) quasi-experimental impact evaluation of climate change adaptation in Thailand (Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans – NAP-Ag). Developed a cost-benefit analysis model and user-manual that enabled policymakers to run their own analyses for Thailand climate change adaptation integrating results from impact evaluation.
- **Interfacing with government:** Led dialogue with government (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives), private sector researchers (Thailand Development Research Institute) and FAO to develop impact evaluation and survey design.

- **Conducting training and producing technical guidance:** Designed and delivered three multi-day training events to over 50 FAO and government personnel (Thailand, Uruguay) on impact evaluation. Authored technical guidance materials on impact evaluation, including a manual and a case study.

Visiting Fellow, YALE UNIVERSITY

2016 – 2017

I raised funds for and expanded my research portfolio while working to get dissertation essays into the publication pipeline, namely Akram & Mendelsohn (2017) and Akram and Mendelsohn (2021) (see **Research Publications** below).

Postdoctoral Fellow, EVIDENCE ACTION

2016 – 2017

- **Developing and managing large-scale research and analysis:** Along with being a co-principal investigator on a major study of seasonal migration, I managed academic and research implementation partners; conducted statistical and econometric analysis; co-authored academic paper and briefs.
- **Program development:** Initiated and managed Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative in Pakistan, including liaison with the government and local implementing partners.

Research Consultant, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2012 – 2014

- **Conducting training and producing technical guidance:** Produced and conducted five multi-day training sessions (Thailand, Bangladesh) on cost-benefit analysis, statistical analysis and GIS for government officers on the Economics of Climate Change Adaptation. Co-authored the *Economics of Adaptation Toolkit* and created impact evaluation guidance notes.
- **Design and analysis:** Designed and tested a harmonized multi-country survey (Asia-Pacific) to understand the impact of climate change on agriculture and trained government staff to analyze its results.

Consultant, INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

2012

- **Conducting qualitative research:** Conducted institutional mapping exercise across multiple government and non-governmental stakeholders and co-authored a report on the policy landscape of agricultural water management in Pakistan.
- **Development of technical survey modules:** Designed and developed survey instruments to collect water use data in irrigated agriculture in Pakistan.

Program Assistant, WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

2005 – 2006

Conducted research and wrote short reports on the Clean Development Mechanism and its potential in Pakistan.

Research Assistant, LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

2004 – 2005

Project leadership: Designed and led the development of an innovative approach to urban air pollution monitoring, the Volunteer Internet-based Environment Watch (finalist at the Stockholm Challenge 2006).

Research publications

Climate change

Akram, A. A., Abidoye, B., Kannan, S. & Omotoso, K. (2025). The impact of climate change on African agriculture: A Ricardian Analysis of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. Accepted. *Climatic Change*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-025-03878-8>

Akram, A. A. & Thampanishvong, K. (2025). Balancing Climate Change Adaptation and Profitability in Agriculture: The potential of a diversification-based climate adaption from Thailand. Under review.

Akram, A. A., Abidoye, B. & Banda, A. (2025). Do effective weather information-based climate change adaptations for farmers exist? Evidence from Malawi. Working paper (available upon request).

Public health (WASH, nutrition, vaccination, mental health)

Keshaviah, A., Akram, A. A., Rizmie, D., Raxter, I., Hasan, R., Rahman, Z., Suchana, A., Jahan, F., Rahman, A., Rahman, M., Rahman, M., Diamond, M. & D'Agostino, A. (2024). A cost-benefit analysis of using wastewater monitoring to guide typhoid vaccine campaigns. Revise and resubmit. *Tropical Diseases, Travel Medicine and Vaccines*.

Khalid, H., Akram, A. A., Fox, A. M. & (2025). Lotteries are an effective strategy for increasing COVID-19 vaccine acceptance: Experimental evidence from Pakistan. Under review.

Akram, A. A., Alex, L., Farrar, J., Dal Santo, L., Placencio-Castro, M. & Betancourt T. S. (2025). Labor market impacts of an integrated entrepreneurship and mental health intervention in a post-conflict setting Evidence from a cluster randomized controlled trial in Sierra Leone. Working paper (available upon request).

Khalid, H., Firdous, U., Jadoon, A., Stecher, C., **Akram, A. A.**, & Fox, A. M. (2024). Can high-profile endorsements improve COVID-19 vaccine uptake and reduce hesitancy in Pakistan?. *SSM-Health Systems*, 3, 100020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmhs.2024.100020>

Akram, A. A., Khan, M., Bari, F. & Khanum, A. (2025). Could young women hold the key to increasing contraceptive demand? Evidence from a randomized controlled trial in Lahore, Pakistan. Under review.

Shonchoy, A. S., **Akram, A. A.**, Khan, M., Khalid, H., Mazhar, S., Khan, A., & Kurosaki, T. (2023). A Community Health Worker–Based Intervention on Anthropometric Outcomes of Children Aged 3 to 21 Months in Urban Pakistan, 2019–2021. *American Journal of Public Health*, 113(1), 105-114. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2022.307111>

Akram, A. A., & Mendelsohn, R. (2021). Diaries to Increase the Adoption of Chlorine Tablets for Water Purification by Poor Households. *Water Economics and Policy (WEP)*, 7(02), 1-34. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S2382624X21500090>

Water sector (utilities, agriculture, irrigation)

Hasan, S. M., **Akram, A. A.**, & Jeuland, M. (2021). Awareness of coping costs and willingness to pay for urban drinking water service: Evidence from Lahore, Pakistan. *Utilities Policy*, 71, 101246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iup.2021.101246>

Akram, A. A., Nasim, S. & Hasan, S. (2019). Do Conservation Messages Save Water in Unmetered Settings? Results from an Experimental Study in Islamabad. Working paper (available upon request).

Akram, A. A., & Mendelsohn, R. (2017). Agricultural water allocation efficiency in a developing country canal irrigation system. *Environment and Development Economics*, 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355770X17000171>

Akram, A. A. (2013). Is a surface-water market physically feasible in Pakistan’s Indus Basin Irrigation System?. *Water International*, 38(5), 552-570. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2013.832099>

Aberman, Noora-Lisa, Wielgosz, Benjamin, Zaidi, Fatima, Ringler, Claudia, **Akram, A. A.**, Bell, Andrew Reid & Issermann, Maikel, (2013), "The policy landscape of agricultural water management in Pakistan", No. 1265, *IFPRI Discussion Papers*, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

Akram, A. A. & Olmstead, S. M. (2011), "The Value of Household Water Service Quality in Lahore, Pakistan", *Environmental and Resource Economics*, Volume 49, Number 2, 173-198. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-010-9429-7>

Akram, A. A. (2009). "Indus Basin Water Resources", *Tiempo*, No. 70.

Education, migration, air pollution

Akram, A. A., & Majid, H. (2024). Inclusivity, Gender, and Learning Gains: Are Online Education Platforms the Answer? *Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41996-024-00159-x>

Akram, A. A., Chowdhury, S., & Mobarak, A. M. (2017). *Effects of emigration on rural labor markets* (No. w23929). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w23929>

Akram, A. A. & Ikram, M. J. (2007). "Air pollution monitoring through a volunteer internet-based network", *Environment and Urbanisation*, April 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247807076924>

Akram, A. A. (2006). "The Conflict Between Russia and Chechnya: A Historical Analysis", *Islamabad Papers*, Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad. <https://issi.org.pk/the-conflict-between-russia-and-chechnya-a-historical-analysis/>

Scientific Peer Review Service

- **Peer reviewed journals:** *Environment and Development Economics*, *Climate Change Economics*, *Climate Policy*, *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, *Journal of Environmental*

- Management, Water Economics and Policy, The Unjournal, BRAC, Biological Conservation.*
- **Institutions (proposal and report reviews):** National Science Foundation, BRAC.

Professional References

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Executive Secretary

United Nations Capital Development Fund

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