

Agha Ali Akram

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Education

Ph.D. Environmental Economics, YALE UNIVERSITY, 2014

Masters in Environmental Management, YALE UNIVERSITY, 2008

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and History, LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, 2004

Work Experience

Assistant Professor, LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, 2018 –

Present Consultant (NIMH U19 Youth Forward), INNOVATIONS FOR POVERTY

ACTION, 2018 – *Present Visiting Fellow*, YALE UNIVERSITY, 2016 – 2017

Postdoctoral Fellow, EVIDENCE ACTION, 2014 – 2016

Consultant, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME,

2012 – 2014 *Consultant*, INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY

RESEARCH INSTITUTE, 2012 *Program Assistant*, WORLD

CONSERVATION UNION, 2005 – 2006

Team Leader, LAHORE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (Pakistan), 2004 – 2005

Research

Working Papers

“Effects of Emigration on Rural Labor Markets” (with Mushfiq Mobarak and Shyamal Chowdhury).

Rural to urban migration has been an integral part of the process of structural transformation and economic development, but there is little evidence on how out-migration affects the rural economy. We offer to subsidize transport costs for 5792 potential seasonal migrants in Bangladesh, randomly varying the proportion of landless agricultural workers across 133 villages induced to move, to generate labor supply shocks of different magnitudes in different villages. We use this variation to document general equilibrium changes in the village labor market. A larger number of simultaneous migration offers in the village increases the likelihood that each individual takes up the offer, which suggests some benefits of coordinated travel. Migration offers lead to large increases in income earned at the destination, and also income earned at the origin. The increase in home income is due to increases in both the agricultural wage rate for rural workers and in available work hours. For every 10% increase in emigration, male agricultural wage rate increases by 2.8%. There is not much intra-household substitution in labor supply. The primary worker earns more when he returns home from the city during weeks in which many of his village co-residents were induced to move. Although most of the migration income is consumed, there is no general equilibrium effect on food prices, suggesting that food markets are well integrated across villages.

“Reducing Early Childhood Diarrhea by Enhancing Own-learning” (with Robert Mendelsohn; funded by the National Science Foundation).

Globally, 1.1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water and 760,000 children die annually from diarrheal disease. Despite the availability of low-cost water decontaminating technologies like chlorine, uptake and use is puzzling low in the developing world. We test the hypothesis that participants are not able to see any real effects of chlorine tablets because they do not get a clear signal on efficacy. To this end, we conducted a small field experiment in a poor urban setting (Karachi, Pakistan). The experiment had a simple structure with a control and treatment arm, where both arms received freely delivered chlorine. The major difference between the two arms was that the treatment arm received a visual tool (Info-Tool) which allowed them to track their diarrhea levels in reference to a norm. They used this tool before receiving tablets and a few months into receiving tablets, which allowed them to better detect the efficacy of the tablets. We find that this treatment induces higher and more persistent usage (+32.5 percentage points on a base of 29.3 percent, 50 weeks after the treatment was concluded). We also find that children in the most sensitive age bracket (between 0 and 12 months of age) in the treated group weighed 1.6 kgs more on a base of 8.2 kgs. A cost-effectiveness analysis suggests that this intervention can improve health cheaply, costing an estimated \$158 to \$221 per DALY averted.

On-going Research

NIMH U19 Youth Forward YRI project to improve mental health and employment outcomes for vulnerable youth in a post-conflict setting (Sierra Leone). With Theresa Betancourt (Boston College), Nathan Hansen (University of Georgia) and Alethea Desrosiers (Boston College).

Reducing child stunting through better learning, in collaboration with Sukoon Water (Pakistan). With Parves Shonchoy (Florida International University), Akib Khan (Uppsala University), Takashi Kurosaki (Hitotsubashi University) and Hina Khalid (Information Technology University).

Increasing contraceptive uptake in Pakistan, in collaboration with Rehnuma Family Planning Association of Pakistan. With Faisal Bari (Lahore University of Management Sciences) and Mahrukh Khan (Center for Economic Research in Pakistan).

Improved learning and habit formation to increase uptake of health technologies (chlorine) in the developing world, in collaboration with Interactive Research and Development. With Jed Friedman (World Bank), Reshma Hussam (Harvard University) and Akib Khan (Uppsala University).

Development and deployment of third iteration of the Volunteer Internet-based Environment Watch air pollution monitoring network in Pakistan, with Jahangir Ikram (Lahore University of Management Sciences).

Published Papers

Akram, A. A., & Mendelsohn, R. (2017). Agricultural water allocation efficiency in a developing country canal irrigation system. *Environment and Development Economics*, 1-23.

Mobarak, Mushfiq and Agha Ali Akram (2016), "Seasonal Migration to Increase Incomes of Poor Households in Bangladesh", Bangladesh Priorities, Working Paper, Copenhagen Consensus.

Akram, Agha Ali (2013), "Is a surface-water market physically feasible in Pakistan's Indus Basin Irrigation System?" *Water International*, Vol. 38, Issue 5.

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

Akram, Agha Ali and Sheila Olmstead (2011), "The Value of Household Water Service Quality in Lahore, Pakistan", *Environmental and Resource Economics*, Volume 49, Number 2, 173-198.

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

Akram, Agha Ali and Muhammad Jahangir Ikram. "Air pollution monitoring through a volunteer internet-based network", *Environment and Urbanisation*, April 2007.

Akram, Agha Ali (2006). "The Conflict Between Russia and Chechnya: A Historical Analysis", *Islamabad Papers*, Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad.

Other Professional Activities

Associate and Director, WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene) Programs, IRD-Pakistan Research Fellow, Center for Economic Research in Pakistan
Research Affiliate, Institute for Development and Economic Alternatives
Research Affiliate, Consortium for Development Policy Research

Scholarships and Awards

World Bank Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund x 2
(2018) Shahid Hussain Foundation grant (2018)

LUMS Faculty Imitative Fund (2018)

National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant for Research in Economics (2012) Yale Institute of Biospheric Studies Grant (2012)

John F. Enders Fellowship (2012)

Tropical Resources Institute Fellowship

(2010) Fulbright Scholarship (2006 – 2008)

Leland Burt Scholarship (2006 – 2008)

Other Skills

Software

Proficient with statistical analysis and software (Stata)

Proficient with Geographical Information Systems

(ArcGIS)

Languages

English (native), Urdu (native)