



# Activate, at CERP



Summer 2025  
Jun 30 - Aug 1, 2025  
Lahore, Pakistan



**CERP**  
EVIDENCE MATTERS

[www.cerp.org.pk](http://www.cerp.org.pk)

**B**ased in Lahore, Pakistan, CERP is a leading independent social impact organisation focused on improving decision-making through rigorous research, advanced analytics, capacity building, data collection and advisory services.

There is a tremendous amount of data collected but often, little emphasis is put on properly analysing it to inform crucial decisions. **CERP brings a world-class skill set to clean, collate and make sense of the data to draw deeper insights and actionable intelligence – deploying data and evidence to drive better decisions, and eventually high-impact reforms across multiple sectors.** In more than a decade since its inception, CERP's past work has been supported by prominent funding organisations such as the World Bank, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMFG), Asian Development Bank, UK Aid, and UNDP, among others.



**D**eepening the culture of evidence across public and private sectors, inspiring innovation, and driving impact to improve lives.

- 300+** Team Members (Image of a man in a suit speaking)
- 40+** Active Projects (Image of a woman in a purple dress speaking into a microphone)
- 100+** Global & Local Partners (Image of a woman in a purple dress speaking into a microphone)
- 110+** Academic Research Fellows Globally (Image of a man in a suit pointing at a screen with a map of the US and text '1.7 TW wind & 1.5 TW solar x3')

## Verticals



### Analytics

Empowers organisations to effectively use data to make better decisions



### Survey

Collects data using cutting-edge practices to ensure quality accuracy and reliability



### Research

Generates rigorous evidence to help policymakers address real-world challenges



### Policy Advisory

Translates evidence and insights into actions



### Labs

Spearheads technological innovation for social impact



### Learning Hub

Develops quality education modules to improve communities

## Activate, at CERP

Activate, at CERP is a first-of-its-kind, highly selective **summer programme** in **Lahore, Pakistan**, that aims to equip the youth interested in the development sector with **experiential learning and on-ground field experience in Pakistan, tailored technical and professional development skills, and networking / engagement opportunities.**

## Who Can Apply?

Global community of **High School** students around the world, including overseas Pakistani-origin diaspora high school students.

 **Lahore, Pakistan**

 **5-week programme**

### Note:

- Top 10% of eligible and interested high performers from the programme will also gain first access to, and be considered for openings / full time opportunities at CERP.

# Why Activate, at CERP?

Applications are now open for Summer 2025.

It is a platform to immerse in Pakistan's cultural and development context, and benefit from an **enriching, global experience before entering college**. With the Pakistani diaspora and the global community of high school students spread across the US, UK, Middle East, Canada, Europe, Australia, and beyond, this program provides **students a unique opportunity to connect with their hereditary roots**. Participants can explore a developing country environment while **experiencing both personal and professional growth**.

*Activate, at CERP* is a unique and comprehensive opportunity for individuals with intellectual curiosity and interest in development economics, research and policy analysis to:

1. Gain **hands-on, real-world work experience with placement in rigorous development sector projects** undertaken by CERP ([Health](#), [Education](#), [Climate](#), [Agriculture](#), [Gender](#), others) through analytical and field work in Pakistan
2. Build **employable skills**, apply learnings in real-time, and advance growth to be able to successfully enter the development or



public sectors at international development organisations, government departments, nongovernmental organisations, and bilateral and multilateral development agencies in Pakistan or abroad

3. Network with **award-winning academics, globally recognised experts and international development economists**

The programme is enriched with:

### **Community Building:**

Participants will have a unique opportunity to connect with a myriad of individuals ranging from like-minded programme participants, undergraduate and graduate interns from local and international universities, current employees and senior leadership at CERP during the summer. Outside of CERP, participants will explore the city through a series of planned excursions, recreation activities and a unique lived experience in Lahore, the cultural capital of the country, during the programme to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Pakistan.

### **Weekly Mentor-Mentee Programme:**

All participants will be matched with highly

skilled, seasoned professionals in their fields at CERP for career exploration support, higher education guidance, informal training, motivation, direction and advice.

### **Bi-Weekly Seminar Series:**

Every other Friday, interactive sessions on a variety of relevant topics will be held for participants with guest speakers including but not limited to: CERP Board Members, Senior Executives, CERP Research Fellows, CERP Graduate Student Fellows and others. It provides participants exposure to movers, shakers, thinkers, and doers — practitioners and subject matter experts — who are driving positive change in Pakistan across various fields, including policy, research, advocacy, climate, gender, health, education, and social entrepreneurship.

### **Personalized Letter of Recommendation:**

Participants will receive a personalized letter of recommendation based on their research work at CERP.

### **Group Coaching Session with CERP Board Member(s)**



# Testimonials

## Maroof A. Syed

President & CEO, CERP

“We are really excited to launch a new program called Activate, at CERP. One of the **unstated missions of CERP is to do human development across the world**. While we have 114 research fellows and 350 people on the ground working, we wanted to **augment that with a much younger population committed and driven or even exploring development as a career opportunity, and to give them a lens into the developing world by engaging in Pakistan meaningfully**. Firstly, the program activates human development at a global scale, allowing us to bring younger people into Pakistan and giving them an opportunity to not only learn from the best but also **engage in real-life projects**. Examples of some of our projects are the LEAPS Program (the largest village-level education study in the world reaching one million children) and more recently, the Targeted Instruction Program (testing a quarter million children on learning losses due to COVID or any exogenous shock). It engages them in a meaningful way into what development really means, the challenges for unique communities in the developing world, and being a part of amazing knowledge production. Secondly, if we really want people to become **global citizens**, we have to engage broadly with the culture and context of the place, enhancing their ability to look at **development not only from a technical lens but from a contextual lens...pairing these things together to become better professionals eventually, but also better human beings.**”

## Atif Mian

Co-Founder & Board Member, CERP

“The purpose of this program is to bring in high school students from the diaspora and give them a **lived experience of research, and an understanding of issues that are related to the society and the economy in Pakistan**. CERP was founded many years ago with a goal to promote research and in particular, critical thinking in general among the **young minds of Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora abroad**. **Engaging with issues relating to education, health and other aspects of economic and social policy are the best ways to excite young minds...** In that process, they **enrich their own lives as well**, with a **bigger perspective of what life looks like in Pakistan** and the **challenges on social and policy levels to bring about change in Pakistan**. I hope people find this experience useful and **they not only learn from it, but they also use it to build their careers going forward.**”



## Jibreel Bhatti

Rising Senior, Lakeside High School

Age 17

Seattle, Washington

“My experience at CERP was absolutely transformative. The main thing you need to know is that **the work you will do at CERP is real and has a lasting impact** on a community that we are all a part of. I got to work on **projects ranging from agriculture and education, to the role of religious figures in public health**. You get to cover information and subjects across different fields, and you get to do it in a **community of people who are welcoming, curious, and will do everything that they can to give you the tools you need to succeed and grow as a person**. While I was at CERP, I picked up **skills ranging from coding to statistics to economics of all kinds**, including micro, macro, and **things you won't learn in any classroom**. In addition to **working with Nobel Prize winners and academic luminaries**, what I truly value about my CERP experience is the community that I was able to be part of. This community will be the best thing that ever happened to you, and I guarantee that you will find some great friends and mentors. I would also like to stress that it greatly helped me with my **college application** process. Everyone took so much time and effort to write me a **recommendation letter** that has helped me throughout this entire process, and I truly cannot say how grateful I am for them.”



## Hayah Mian

Rising Senior, Princeton High School

Age 16

Princeton, New Jersey

“I've learned so much from the Activate program, but some of the most important skills include **data analysis and data visualization**. Over the past few weeks, I've gained experience using **STATA** and I've become more comfortable with **coding**. On top of that, I've gained insights into how workplaces function, how to communicate effectively, and how to manage time. These are all **practical skills for both research-based work and professional settings**. Additionally, the data analysis skills I've developed will be **valuable for classes, future research projects and in my college coursework**. This program has also **helped me realize that I do want to pursue a career in research**. The program has **shaped my perspective** a lot, especially when it comes to **understanding the economy**. I had the chance to see how different communities across Pakistan operate. This program has taught me a lot, not just during the **training sessions but also through the work experience**. I've learned how to navigate a professional environment, how to handle meetings, and how to interact with colleagues. I've been able to immerse myself in Pakistani culture, while also comparing the work culture here with the one in the U.S. This program has given me a chance to **mix both American and Pakistani cultures in a very interesting setting.**”

# Testimonials



## Safa Ahmad

*Rising Senior, Ursuline Academy*

Age 17

Cincinnati, Ohio

“I think CERP is very different from any program I have ever experienced in the United States, whether it’s an internship, a summer program, or anything else. CERP is impact driven. The organization’s mission is focused on evidence-based research, analyzing data in a meaningful way, and **contributing to policy, which aligns perfectly with my interests**. I want to major in political science or public policy, so this program is very much in line with my goals. My most memorable experience here has been working with so many accomplished and professional individuals. I’ve been involved in a project with the Marketing and Communications team, and it’s been really interesting to see the different types of work they do—ranging from education policy to social media outreach. It’s refreshing to experience the diverse work happening in the field. Through the Activate program, I’ve not only gained skills in data, research, and policy but also had the opportunity to experience the culture of Lahore. This has been especially meaningful to me because I haven’t visited Pakistan since I was very young. Being here, exploring the city, and combining that experience with my work has been truly rewarding. **There’s no place I would rather be**. Activate has taught me a lot about **research, data, surveying, and analysis**. Before this program, I never really thought about the process behind the data I would see—where it came from, how long it took to collect, or the effort involved in analyzing it. I now realize that data collection and analysis are tough processes that require significant work. As I look ahead, particularly a career in public policy and political science, the **skills I’ve gained from the Activate program will help me with research techniques and data analysis**. I’ve always been interested in studying politics and political science, but I never fully understood the different branches within the field, particularly public policy. Thanks to this program and **CERP’s impact-driven approach, I’ve developed a stronger interest in public policy**. Being in Pakistan has also **offered me new perspectives** on the country. There are many different media portrayals of Pakistan, but actually being here for the program has allowed me to **see the country through a different lens**. Now that I’m here and working on projects related to the **country’s economy and policy**, my **understanding and worldview have expanded**.”



## Hamna Chowdhry

*Rising Junior, The Winsor School*

Age 16

Boston, Massachusetts

“I plan to study medicine in the future. I’ve gained a lot of valuable workplace culture experience, especially since I’m working alongside people who are actively **making an impact in the world**. Through this experience, I’ve gained a deeper understanding of Pakistani culture. Spending time here in Pakistan has really helped me connect with the people and see how things work on the ground. **Overall, I feel like I’ve grown a lot as a person**. I’ve learned to work with others more effectively, think **critically and creatively to solve bigger problems, and find a personal connection to what I’m doing**.”



## Afia Farooki

*Rising Senior, The Brooklyn Latin School*

Age 16

New York City, New York

“My experience in the program has been very welcoming. I’ve learned **how research can affect public policy**. I also had the opportunity to learn from individuals who have created non-profits and NGOs, addressing **issues ranging from food insecurity to employment for women**. One of the key takeaways from the program has been how to synthesize research. I gained valuable insights into **data collection, STATA, public advocacy, and how to create policies that tackle the root causes of problems**. I plan to apply the core concepts I’ve learned at CERP to whichever field I choose in the future, using these tools to enhance my work. This experience has shaped my perspective by allowing me to **see life in a new country, one I’d never seen before**. I also gained **practical experience through fieldwork**, which taught me that you can never fully know what someone needs, but the best way to understand is through research. Being in a real work setting and surrounded by individuals who have deeply invested themselves in this work has been incredibly enriching and has taught me a great deal.”

*Note: A few testimonials have been edited for clarity and readability*

# Programme Structure

## 1. Capacity Building

The programme will be inaugurated with a week-long series of ongoing skills development courses:



### Technical Skills: Data Science & Software

This course builds the participants' skill sets in relation to data science and data-driven decision-making to understand the importance and effective use of data and evidence, empowers them to conduct impactful work in the development sector domain in and outside Pakistan, and effectively link theory with real-world policy problems. It enables participants to learn new software and perform data-related tasks, alongside modules on:



### Power Skills: Professional & Personal Development

This course builds participants' power skills, essential for long-term success, in the following areas:

#### Development Sector Fundamentals & Problem Solving

Learn about the landscape and fundamentals of the development sector in Pakistan

Build key skill sets with modules on the introduction to: Data Collection Methods, M&E and Research Ethics

Learn how to employ critical thinking techniques specific to challenges commonly encountered for development, M&E & research sectors in order to assess problems accurately, evaluate alternative solutions and anticipate risks

#### Workplace Ethics, Etiquette & Career Management Essentials

Learn the art and rules of writing and structuring effective resumes & cover letters, and perfecting the 'elevator pitch'

Learn how to write powerful emails for professional needs, and email etiquette

Understand how to structure responses, perfect delivery, and ace interviews using frameworks, templates, and simulations

Learn how to practice leading without authority

Develop essential internship and job search strategies, and networking techniques and tools

Gain insight into best-in-class time management techniques, SMART goal setting, and frameworks for work planning



#### Effective Communication: Oral & Written – Presentation & Public Speaking Skills

Strengthen ability to lead and communicate powerfully in different settings with development, public and private sector stakeholders (including but not limited to: NGOs, INGOs, non-profits, government partners, and multilateral institutions)

Learn how to manage voice and pace to become a credible communicator / public speaker with vocal confidence & presence

Learn how to structure a compelling presentation / slide deck using global best practice templates to achieve desired results

#### Foundations of Negotiation

Prepare for negotiations using a research-based framework and techniques to improve negotiation outcomes – for personal and professional use, and tips on navigating difficult conversations within a negotiation

## 2. Placement to CERP Projects

As part of the multi-week experiential learning and work experience to learn on the job, participants will be matched to verticals / research projects at CERP based on their skills, interests, preferences and project requirements. As part of their work experience, they will gain hands-on field exposure and experience in the outskirts of Lahore (subject to relevant government approvals for conducting field research and qualitative interviews / surveys). Participants will be assigned a capstone project (including but not limited to: literature reviews, case studies, policy briefs, data collection and cleaning, statistical analysis) to deliver and present to a panel of experts, culminating the end of the programme, in order to allow participants to apply skills learned to a real-world project, under their ownership end-to-end.



# Application Process

To apply to the programme, applicants are required to submit the **online application** on the CERP website. Prospective candidates are encouraged to apply early as applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Upon selection, applicants will be required to submit the relevant fee to confirm their seat in the programme.

<b>Applications Open</b>	Oct 20, 2024
<b>Applications Close</b>	Jan 20, 2025
<b>Interview Notification</b>	Jan 22, 2025
<b>Final Decision Notification</b>	Jan 29, 2025
<b>Fee Submission Deadline</b>	Jan 31, 2025

## Programme Fee

CERP Pre-College Summer Programme	5 weeks	USD \$5,000
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## For More Information

29-P Gulberg II, Lahore, Pakistan, 54660  
exec.ed@cerp.org.pk  
+92(346)008-3007, +92(346)161-0422  
[cerp.org.pk](http://cerp.org.pk)



Scan to download the Application Form