



## **Working Title: Studying Community-Based Schools in Afghanistan**

### **Dana Burde**

This study assesses the impact of community-based education services delivered to civilian populations affected by war. Our research, based in Afghanistan, examines the impact of educational services on children's welfare, especially protection from violence and life chances. We have formed a partnership with the US-based nongovernmental organization Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to implement random assignment of community-based schools and program interventions to eligible villages. Although all children in the study will eventually gain access to a CRS school, we have established "treatment" and "control" groups by randomizing the timing of this provision. The study investigates whether community-based education programs improve child welfare by comparing villages that receive schools to villages that have not yet received them, and by comparing children across these villages. The study examines attendance/enrollment, academic achievement, child labor, and social benefits (protection, social networks). In addition, we have collected descriptive information from children enrolled in government and mosque schools.

To carry out this research, we conducted three rounds of quantitative data collection in 31 remote villages in Ghor Province, surveying every household in each village. We supplemented the quantitative data with two rounds of qualitative data collection. This paper describes these research methods and field procedures, focusing on how we retained the integrity of a randomized trial design as security continued to deteriorate in Afghanistan. It describes the challenges we faced working in this environment (e.g., suspicion toward outsiders, unpredictable weather, rapid deterioration of security, social restrictions for women) and the ways we revised our research design and methods to accommodate the conditions under which we were working.