

# Child resilience in Afghanistan study

<b>Submission date</b>	<b>Recruitment status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
22/11/2024	No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b>	<b>Overall study status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
27/11/2024	Completed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b>	<b>Condition category</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
29/01/2026	Mental and Behavioural Disorders	

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Growing evidence indicates that school-based psychosocial interventions may help address the mental health gap in low- and middle-income countries, including conflict and crisis contexts. This study aims to compare a psychosocial intervention with usual teaching in Afghanistan. A two-arm cluster-randomised trial was implemented in 83 rural primary schools within three provinces of Afghanistan. This study will assess whether school-based interventions delivered by trained field education officers can effectively promote child mental health in conflict and crisis settings and have great potential for scalability.

### Who can participate?

All children in grades 3 to 5, their teacher and one adult family member (mother or father, older sibling) at enrolment.

### What does the study involve?

Schools were randomly assigned (1:1) to one of two groups: a psychosocial intervention group composed of whole classes with a one-week classroom-based teacher and children component and a one-day family engagement component; and, a control group. Children, teachers and parents were surveyed at baseline and four months postintervention.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

There was the possible benefits to improve learning skills both academic and non academic (lifeskills) learning skills. There was no risk in participating in this research.

### Where is the study run from?

Washington University in St. Louis, USA

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2021 to December 2023

### Who is funding the study?

1. Economic Social Research Council (ESRC)
2. Norwegian Development Agency

Who is the main contact?  
Dr Jean-Francois Trani, jtrani@wustl.edu

## Contact information

**Type(s)**  
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

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## Additional identifiers

**Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)**  
Nil known

**ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)**  
Nil known

**Protocol serial number**  
CRAS01092021

## Study information

**Scientific Title**  
Classroom-based psychosocial randomised trial in primary schools of Afghanistan

**Acronym**  
CRAS

**Study objectives**  
School based psycho-social intervention to improve child mental well-being and resilience in Afghanistan

**Ethics approval required**  
Ethics approval required

## **Ethics approval(s)**

1. approved 30/08/2021, Human Research Protection Office Washington University in St Louis (One Brookings drive, St Louis, 63130, United States of America; +1 314-747-6800; ehiggs@wustl.edu), ref: 201712020

2. approved 17/09/2022, Norwegian Afghanistan Committee Board (Kolstadgata 1, Oslo, 0652, Norway; +47 994 09 159; t.watterdal@nacaf.org), ref: -

## **Study design**

Two-arm cluster-randomized trial

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Study type(s)**

Quality of life

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Anxiety and depression

## **Interventions**

This study is a two-arm cluster-randomised trial implemented in 83 rural primary schools within three provinces of Afghanistan. Eligible participants were all children in grades 3 to 5, their teacher and one adult family member (mother or father, older sibling) at enrolment.

All primary schools in each province were first enumerated, either governmental or community-based schools, receiving some support from the two NGOs and having at least one classroom of grades 3 through 5. Among 292 schools across these three provinces, a random number generator was used to select schools within each province (83 schools). To avoid the risk of contamination, sampling without replacement was used to ensure that only one school was selected per village. Schools within each province were randomly assigned in a 1:1 ratio to one of two groups (40 to the intervention group, and the remaining to the control group). Within each school, whole grades 3 through 5 classes were selected when the total number was below 20 children per class. In classes with more than 20 children, 20 children were randomly selected as participants. From a total cohort of 3254 children, 1522 children were enrolled in the intervention group and 1732 in the control group. Children, their teacher (one per class), and their parents formed this study's participants.

Schools were randomly assigned (1:1) to one of two groups, with the intervention group consisting of (1) a week-long classroom-based training with teachers and children together, and (2) a one-day training with parents using a culturally adapted version of the "A hopeful, healthy, and happy living and learning toolkit" developed by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a control group. The final program for teachers and children was delivered in Dari and Pashto, composed of 42 activities consisting of a week of training including reflective exercises, didactic short lectures on lessons learned, drama, games, mindfulness, and breathing exercises. The parent component of the intervention was delivered in Dari and Pashto and consisted of one day spent on a series of activities aiming at promoting psycho-social well-being at home after cultural adaptation of the parent-caregiver toolkit by the same team.

## **Intervention Type**

## Behavioural

### Primary outcome(s)

The following primary outcome measures were assessed at baseline and endline after 4 months:

1. Child anxiety and depression measured using the simplified revised child anxiety and depression scale
2. Life skills core domains measured using the multidimensional scale of life skills in late childhood
3. Self-efficacy measured using the self-efficacy questionnaire for children
4. Resilience measured using the child and youth resilience measure
5. School-based discrimination measured using the discrimination scale developed for the Maryland adolescent development in context study
6. Stigma measured using the discrimination and stigma scale

### Key secondary outcome(s)

Proficiency in reading and mathematical literacy measured using the Monitoring Education Development in Afghanistan (MED-A) framework developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER 2013) that includes comprehensive and context-appropriate definitions of "literacy score" to evaluate reading and writing in Dari/Pashto, as well as mathematics at baseline and endline after 4 months

### Completion date

30/12/2023

## Eligibility

### Key inclusion criteria

Enrolled in grade 3 or 5 in participating schools

### Participant type(s)

Learner/student

### Healthy volunteers allowed

No

### Age group

Child

### Lower age limit

8 years

### Upper age limit

14 years

### Sex

All

### Total final enrolment

2592

**Key exclusion criteria**

Children in 1, 2, 4 or 6 grade

**Date of first enrolment**

01/05/2022

**Date of final enrolment**

30/03/2023

## Locations

**Countries of recruitment**

Afghanistan

France

**Study participating centre**

**Aanj Girls' High School**

-

Afghanistan

-

**Study participating centre**

**Dasht E Badara Primary School**

-

Afghanistan

-

**Study participating centre**

**Etarchi Mixed High School**

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Afghanistan

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**Study participating centre**

**Gulaki primary school**

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Afghanistan

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**Study participating centre**  
**Mardara Primary School**

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**Afghanistan**

**Study participating centre**  
**Mashhad Primary School**

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**Afghanistan**

**Study participating centre**  
**Nayeb Saray Gharbi Primary School**

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**Afghanistan**

**Study participating centre**  
**Said Abdul Karim Boys High School**

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**Afghanistan**

**Study participating centre**  
**Sayed Mohammad Dehqan Primary School**

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**Afghanistan**

**Study participating centre**  
**Shatak Primary School**

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Afghanistan

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**Study participating centre**  
**Wakhshi Primary School**

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Afghanistan

-  
**Study participating centre**  
**Abdul Qadir Hanif mixed school**

-  
France

## Sponsor information

**Organisation**  
Washington University in St. Louis

**ROR**  
<https://ror.org/01yc7t268>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**  
Research council

**Funder Name**  
Economic and Social Research Council

**Alternative Name(s)**  
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), ESRC

**Funding Body Type**  
Government organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

National government

**Location**

United Kingdom

**Funder Name**

Norwegian Development Agency

## Results and Publications

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The datasets generated and analysed during the current study will be stored in a public available repository at the UK Data Service: <http://reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/>

- The type of data stored: .csv data
- Timing for availability: end of 2024
- Whether consent from participants was required and obtained: All participants provided written (or witnessed, if they were unable to read and write) informed consent.
- Comments on data anonymization: The data is stored encrypted in the database without any name or other possibility of individual identification. The database is protected by a password. All unique identifiers have been deleted once the database is complete. The database is totally anonymous. The only copies of the database is stored on the encrypted cloud of the Brown School at Washington University in St Louis
- Any ethical or legal restrictions: none
- Any additional comments: none

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Stored in publicly available repository

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>		25/01/2026	29/01/2026	Yes	No
<a href="#">Study website</a>	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes