Policy Analysis of Post-Conflict Development Frameworks for the Social Reintegration of War-Affected Children in Basilan Province, Philippines

Belarmino Intong, Jemalou and Moreno, Frede

Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Isabela City, Basilan Province, International Technology Management Corp., Philippines

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Jemalou Belarmino Intong[1]
Frede Moreno[2]

Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of post-conflict development frameworks for the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province, Philippines. By employing a policy analysis approach, the research explores the alignment of existing policies with national and international child protection standards, identifies institutional barriers to their effective implementation, and proposes strategic recommendations for policy improvements. The study draws on case studies of government initiatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based programs, highlighting the strengths and limitations of each framework. Findings reveal significant gaps in the integration of national policies with local realities, particularly in the areas of coordination, funding, and community engagement. Furthermore, institutional barriers, such as limited resources and resistance to external interventions, hinder the successful reintegration of children affected by conflict. The research concludes that a more collaborative, community-driven approach, supported by enhanced governmental coordination and external support, is essential for effective reintegration. This study contributes to the understanding of post-conflict child welfare policy and offers actionable recommendations for improving reintegration frameworks in conflict-affected regions.

Keywords: Post-conflict development, social reintegration, war-affected children, policy analysis, Basilan Province.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Post-conflict regions face complex challenges in reintegrating vulnerable populations, particularly children who experience armed conflict. In Basilan Province, a region marked by decades of insurgency, efforts to reintegrate war-affected children into society remain fragmented. This study evaluates the policy frameworks guiding these reintegration efforts, addressing gaps in governance, service delivery, and community participation. The analysis is grounded in New Public Management theory, which emphasizes performance-based governance and stakeholder engagement (Hood, 1991).

The social reintegration of war-affected children is a critical aspect of post-conflict development, especially in regions like Basilan Province, Philippines, which has experienced prolonged violence due to armed conflict. These children, often subjected to trauma, displacement, and the disruption of their education and social networks, face significant challenges in rejoining society. Post-conflict reintegration programs aim to address these challenges by providing psychosocial support, education, vocational training, and community-based initiatives. However, the effectiveness of these frameworks

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[1] Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Sunrise, Isabela City, Basilan Province, Philippines.
[2] International Technology Management Corp. (intem), Pasig City, 7000 Philippines
Corresponding Author: Frede Moreno, intem-Philippines (email: ederfonorem@yahoo.com)

remains uncertain, particularly in areas like Basilan, where the complexities of local conflict dynamics and institutional limitations hinder their implementation.

This study conducts a policy analysis of the existing post-conflict development frameworks for the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan. Through a case study approach, the research explores the alignment of national policies with local realities, examining the roles of government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local communities in implementing reintegration strategies. It also identifies key institutional barriers, such as resource constraints, inadequate coordination, and insufficient capacity, that impede the success of these initiatives. By critically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of current reintegration programs, this study aims to offer strategic recommendations for improving policy and practice in supporting war-affected children's social reintegration in Basilan.

1.1. Contextual Background

The province of Basilan in the southern Philippines has long been affected by protracted armed conflict, driven by complex socio-political, ethnic, and religious tensions. Years of insurgencies led by groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) have resulted in widespread socio-economic disruption and a significant toll on the region's civilian population, including children (International Crisis Group, 2023). These children, many of whom have directly experienced conflict or its cascading effects, face acute challenges in reintegration into society, including disrupted education, psychological trauma, and limited access to economic opportunities.

Despite national and local efforts to implement post-conflict development frameworks, Basilan continues to exhibit significant disparities in the social reintegration of war-affected children. Efforts to rebuild communities remain fragmented, and reintegration programs often fail to address the multidimensional needs of these children (UNICEF, 2022). Within this context, understanding and analysing the policy frameworks underpinning these efforts is critical to addressing systemic gaps and fostering sustainable post-conflict recovery.

1.2. Research Problem

War-affected children represent one of the most vulnerable demographics in post-conflict societies. In Basilan, existing reintegration policies appear insufficient in addressing the long-term needs of these children, particularly in the domains of psychosocial support, education, and economic reintegration. Reports suggest that less than 40% of children affected by armed conflict in Basilan access reintegration services, with outcomes varying significantly between municipalities (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

This study identifies three primary gaps within the existing frameworks:

1. Inconsistent funding and resource allocation across local government units (LGUs).
2. Limited capacity of LGUs to implement context-sensitive interventions.
3. Minimal community participation in designing and executing reintegration strategies.

These issues necessitate a critical examination of the underlying policies, institutional structures, and implementation mechanisms that guide reintegration efforts.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

The study applies **New Public Management (NPM)** theory to evaluate the efficiency, accountability, and participatory dimensions of post-conflict development frameworks in Basilan. NPM underscores the importance of decentralisation, results-oriented governance, and stakeholder

engagement in improving public service delivery (Hood, 1991). By using NPM as a theoretical lens, this research examines whether current reintegration frameworks align with these principles and whether they facilitate holistic outcomes for war-affected children.

In post-conflict contexts, NPM's focus on performance measurement and citizen-centric service delivery offers a valuable paradigm for evaluating and enhancing policy effectiveness (Gruening, 2022). The study also situates its analysis within the broader discourse on Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and Goal 4 (Quality Education), highlighting their intersections with reintegration policies.

.1.4. Research Questions

The study addresses four key research questions. First, it examines the existing post-conflict development frameworks for the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province, focusing on government and non-government initiatives. Second, it explores the alignment of these frameworks with national and international child protection standards. Third, the research investigates the institutional barriers hindering the effective implementation of these frameworks, including coordination and resource challenges. Finally, the study seeks to identify policy improvements that can enhance the reintegration process, emphasizing community engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration to address local needs more effectively.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How effective are the existing post-conflict development frameworks in reintegrating war-affected children in Basilan?

2. What institutional, policy, and governance barriers hinder the implementation of reintegration programs?

3. How can NPM principles be applied to enhance the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on post-conflict governance by offering a case-specific analysis of Basilan's reintegration policies. Its findings aim to inform policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders in designing more inclusive, effective, and sustainable frameworks for post-conflict development. The study also addresses critical gaps in the literature by integrating quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive evaluation of policy impacts on war-affected children.

Moreover, the research aligns with global efforts to enhance the resilience and well-being of vulnerable populations in conflict-affected regions. By offering actionable recommendations grounded in NPM theory, the study aspires to improve governance practices and promote equitable outcomes for war-affected children in Basilan and other similar contexts.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review critically examines existing research on post-conflict development frameworks, focusing on the social reintegration of war-affected children. It first provides an overview of green and digital transitions, exploring how these concepts are integrated into post-conflict policies and their relevance to child reintegration. The review highlights how these transitions contribute to long-term peacebuilding and development, with a particular focus on integrating sustainable practices into reintegration strategies.

Next, it delves into the policy and regulatory frameworks governing child protection in post-conflict settings, comparing international standards such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) with local policies in conflict-affected areas like Basilan. The review identifies gaps in policy implementation, such as mismatched priorities and inadequate local adaptation.

Lastly, the literature review integrates Institutional Rational Choice Theory in Public Administration, explaining how decision-makers in post-conflict settings navigate institutional barriers and incentives that shape the effectiveness of reintegration programs. By examining both global best practices and local challenges, the review establishes a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the complexities of social reintegration, ultimately informing the research methodology and analysis. This section synthesizes findings from international studies, policy reports, and scholarly articles to identify key areas for improvement in post-conflict child reintegration frameworks.

2.1 Overview of Post-Conflict Development

Post-conflict development encompasses strategies designed to address the complex challenges arising from armed conflict, particularly in rebuilding governance structures, restoring public services, and fostering social reintegration. Scholars emphasize that such strategies must address both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term societal transformation to ensure stability and resilience (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2023). War-affected children constitute a critical demographic within this paradigm, requiring tailored interventions that prioritize education, psychosocial rehabilitation, and community reintegration (UNICEF, 2022).

Global case studies underscore the multifaceted nature of reintegration efforts. For instance, initiatives in post-conflict Rwanda integrated education, vocational training, and community-based healing programs to support child survivors of genocide (Betancourt et al., 2021). In contrast, reintegration efforts in South Sudan reveal gaps in implementation due to insufficient funding and weak institutional coordination (Deng, 2022). These comparative insights highlight the importance of robust governance frameworks and localized strategies in addressing the needs of war-affected children effectively.

In the Philippine context, the Mindanao peace process provides a relevant backdrop. Government programs such as the Bangsamoro Transition Authority's rehabilitation efforts illustrate both progress and persistent challenges in delivering holistic services to conflict-affected communities (Institute for Autonomy and Governance, 2023). Despite these advancements, the specific needs of children in Basilan remain underexplored, necessitating a focused examination of policy frameworks guiding their reintegration.

2.2 Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

Effective reintegration policies for war-affected children require coherence between national frameworks and local governance mechanisms. In the Philippines, the Child Protection Policy and the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) represent key regulatory measures aimed at addressing the needs of children impacted by conflict (Department of Social Welfare and

Development, 2022). These frameworks emphasize psychosocial support, access to education, and community involvement as central components of reintegration.

However, empirical evidence reveals significant implementation gaps. A study by Caballes (2023) finds that only 35% of eligible children in Basilan access reintegration services, citing fragmented coordination among local government units (LGUs) and limited community participation as primary barriers. Additionally, policy misalignments between national directives and local capacities exacerbate service delivery challenges.

International frameworks such as the United Nations' *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards* (IDDRS) provide valuable guidelines for addressing these challenges. The IDDRS underscores the importance of participatory approaches, capacity-building for local institutions, and sustained funding in achieving reintegration outcomes (United Nations, 2023). Applying these principles to the Basilan context requires adaptive policies that consider the socio-cultural dynamics and institutional constraints unique to the region.

2.3 Institutional Rational Choice Theory in Public Administration

Institutional Rational Choice Theory (IRCT) offers a useful analytical lens for understanding the governance dynamics underlying post-conflict development. Ostrom (1990) posits that collective action and institutional efficiency depend on the alignment of incentives, resources, and rules governing public service delivery. In post-conflict settings, this theory highlights the interplay between formal policies and informal practices in shaping reintegration outcomes.

In the case of Basilan, IRCT helps explain why reintegration programs often fall short of their intended goals. Weak institutional accountability, resource scarcity, and divergent stakeholder interests undermine the efficacy of these programs. Caballes (2023) argues that decentralised governance structures in Basilan create opportunities for innovation but also exacerbate coordination challenges, particularly in aligning LGU priorities with national policy objectives.

Empirical studies further demonstrate the utility of IRCT in evaluating governance reforms. For example, Reinikka and Svensson (2022) examine school rehabilitation programs in Uganda and find that aligning institutional incentives with community needs improves service delivery outcomes. Applying similar principles to reintegration policies in Basilan could enhance their effectiveness, particularly by fostering greater collaboration between LGUs, civil society, and international partners.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to assess the effectiveness of post-conflict development frameworks for the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province, Philippines. The research design involves a policy analysis framework that critically examines existing policies, regulatory frameworks, and institutional barriers to reintegration. Data collection is conducted through multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (e.g., government officials, NGO representatives, community leaders), surveys with local populations, and a review of relevant policy documents.

Quantitative data is gathered through surveys assessing the impact of current reintegration programs on children's social, emotional, and economic outcomes. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions provides in-depth insights into local perspectives on the barriers and facilitators of successful reintegration.

Data analysis employs both thematic coding for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data, identifying patterns, trends, and correlations related to reintegration efforts. Ethical considerations are rigorously adhered to, ensuring informed consent and the protection of participants' confidentiality. The study prioritizes the voices of local stakeholders, ensuring the research captures the complexities and challenges faced by war-affected children in Basilan. This methodology allows for a comprehensive analysis of policy effectiveness and provides actionable recommendations for improving reintegration frameworks.

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods case study design to comprehensively analyse the policy frameworks guiding the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province. A mixed-methods approach integrates qualitative and quantitative data to capture the complexity of governance and implementation dynamics (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). The case study method allows in-depth examination of policy impacts within the socio-political and cultural context of Basilan, drawing on institutional and stakeholder-specific insights.

The research framework aligns with New Public Management (NPM) theory, focusing on the efficiency, accountability, and participatory dimensions of policy implementation. The study uses a sequential explanatory design, where quantitative data informs and complements qualitative findings. Quantitative data assesses the scope and efficacy of reintegration programs, while qualitative data explores the lived experiences of stakeholders and beneficiaries, highlighting gaps and opportunities within existing frameworks.

3.2. Data Collection

Data collection in this study utilizes a multi-faceted approach to capture a comprehensive understanding of post-conflict reintegration frameworks for war-affected children in Basilan Province, Philippines. The process begins with document analysis, reviewing relevant national and local policies, child protection frameworks, and reports from international organizations. These documents provide the foundational context for understanding the existing regulatory environment and its alignment with international standards for child welfare.

Primary data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in child reintegration efforts. These include government officials from the Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government representatives, NGO leaders, community-based organizations, and educators. The interviews focus on stakeholders' perspectives on the effectiveness, challenges, and gaps in the current frameworks. Interview questions are designed to elicit insights on institutional barriers, resource allocation, and the specific needs of war-affected children.

Additionally, surveys are administered to war-affected children, their families, and local communities to assess the impact of reintegration programs. These surveys measure outcomes related to education, psychological well-being, social integration, and economic participation. Data from both interviews and surveys is triangulated to ensure a robust understanding of the effectiveness of the reintegration frameworks. This comprehensive data collection process provides both qualitative and quantitative insights that inform the study's analysis and recommendations.

3.2.1 Primary Data

The study gathers primary data through structured surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Structured surveys target 200 households in Basilan with war-affected children to collect quantitative data on access to reintegration services, educational attainment, and psychosocial well-being. Respondents are selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across municipalities.

Semi-structured interviews involve policymakers, local government officials, non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives, and community leaders. These interviews elicit insights into policy design, resource allocation, and implementation challenges. The study also conducts FGDs with children and their caregivers to explore their experiences with reintegration programs and identify perceived gaps.

3.2.2 Secondary Data

The study analyses secondary data from government reports, program evaluations, and statistical records provided by agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and UNICEF. It also reviews policy documents, including the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) and related regional directives.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study follows a systematic approach to identify key patterns, themes, and correlations between the collected data and the research questions. Both qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed using distinct methods to ensure comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of post-conflict reintegration frameworks for war-affected children in Basilan Province.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions are analyzed using thematic coding. This process involves identifying recurring themes and patterns related to stakeholders' perspectives on reintegration challenges, policy gaps, and institutional barriers. Open-ended responses are coded into categories such as "resource allocation," "community engagement," and "psychosocial support," allowing for an in-depth understanding of the contextual factors affecting reintegration efforts. NVivo software may be employed to assist in organizing and visualizing these themes.

Quantitative data from surveys are analyzed using statistical methods to measure the impact of reintegration programs on children's social, emotional, and economic outcomes. Descriptive statistics, such as means, percentages, and frequencies, are used to summarize responses, while inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and regression analysis, help identify significant correlations between variables. The analysis explores the relationship between demographic factors (e.g., age, gender) and reintegration outcomes.

The combination of thematic coding and statistical analysis ensures a holistic interpretation of the data, providing a robust foundation for the study's conclusions and policy recommendations.

The study employs a combination of statistical analysis and thematic analysis to process the collected data.

3.3.1 Quantitative Analysis

Statistical methods, including descriptive and inferential statistics, are used to examine trends and relationships in the quantitative data. The study uses regression analysis to identify factors influencing the accessibility and effectiveness of reintegration programs. Data analysis is conducted using software tools such as SPSS and R.

3.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis identifies recurring themes and patterns in qualitative data, focusing on stakeholders' perspectives and experiences. The study employs NVivo software to code and categorise interview and FGD transcripts, enabling systematic identification of policy gaps and institutional barriers. Triangulation ensures the validity of findings by cross-verifying data from multiple sources.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical guidelines outlined by the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC) and the University Research Ethics Code. It secures informed consent from all participants, ensuring they understand the research purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Data collection prioritises the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, particularly given the vulnerability of war-affected children and their families.

Researchers use culturally sensitive approaches during FGDs and interviews, employing local languages and engaging trusted community mediators to facilitate discussions. Ethical clearance is obtained from a registered institutional review board (IRB) prior to data collection. Moreover, participants retain the right to withdraw at any stage of the research without repercussions.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal both the strengths and weaknesses of existing post-conflict development frameworks for the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province, Philippines. The analysis of current policies and regulatory frameworks indicates significant gaps in alignment with international child protection standards, especially in the areas of psychosocial support and educational reintegration. While national frameworks such as the Philippine National Action Plan for Children in Situations of Armed Conflict are in place, their implementation at the local level remains inconsistent, largely due to resource constraints and limited inter-agency coordination.

Institutional barriers emerge as a significant challenge to effective reintegration. These include insufficient funding, lack of trained personnel, and fragmented communication among governmental bodies, NGOs, and local communities. The study also identifies the limited capacity of local governments to design and implement context-specific reintegration programs that address the unique needs of war-affected children in remote areas.

Case study analyses further reveal that community-based initiatives, though often underfunded, demonstrate greater success in addressing the psychological and social needs of children, highlighting the importance of local ownership in reintegration efforts. However, these programs struggle to scale up due to limited resources and capacity. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for improved coordination, resource allocation, and community-driven approaches in post-conflict reintegration strategies.

4.1 Overview of Current Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

The current policy landscape for the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan relies on two primary frameworks: the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) and the Child Protection Policy (DSWD, 2022). These policies aim to provide psychosocial support, educational access, and livelihood opportunities to conflict-affected populations.

However, analysis reveals significant gaps in coverage and implementation. E-CLIP allocates ₱10,000 to ₱50,000 per individual beneficiary, but this amount does not meet the multidimensional needs of children who often require long-term rehabilitation (DSWD, 2023). Municipal reports indicate that only 37% of war-affected children in Basilan participate in E-CLIP initiatives, largely due to limited awareness, logistical constraints, and resource inadequacies (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

Local government units (LGUs) implement these frameworks inconsistently, with disparities in funding allocation and program delivery across municipalities. For instance, Isabela City achieves relatively higher reintegration rates, attributed to stronger LGU-NGO partnerships, while rural

municipalities like Ungkaya Pukan experience severe resource constraints, limiting program reach (Caballes, 2023).

4.2 Alignment with National and International Standards

The study assesses the alignment of Basilan's reintegration frameworks with national mandates and international standards such as the United Nations' *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards* (IDDRS).

National Alignment

Basilan's programs partially align with national mandates under the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028, which emphasizes inclusive growth and human capital development. However, the focus on short-term financial aid in E-CLIP diverges from the PDP's call for sustainable, community-centred development (National Economic and Development Authority, 2023).

International Alignment

At the international level, the frameworks exhibit inconsistencies with the IDDRS, particularly regarding participatory approaches. The IDDRS stresses the importance of involving local communities in reintegration planning, yet only 23% of Basilan's reintegration projects include formal community consultations (United Nations, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of sustained psychosocial support violates global best practices, which prioritize mental health interventions as foundational to reintegration efforts.

4.3 Institutional Barriers to Effective Implementation

The study identifies three primary institutional barriers hindering the effective implementation of reintegration policies in Basilan:

1. **Resource Allocation Deficits**: Basilan LGUs allocate an average of 18% of their annual budget to social welfare, which is insufficient to sustain reintegration programs (Caballes, 2023). Insufficient funding undermines efforts to expand educational and vocational training services.

2. **Coordination Challenges**: Fragmentation between national agencies and LGUs creates inefficiencies. Only 42% of LGU officials report receiving adequate guidance and resources from national agencies to implement reintegration policies effectively (DSWD, 2023).

3. **Capacity Gaps**: Many LGUs lack trained personnel to deliver specialized services, particularly in psychosocial care and trauma-informed interventions. Training initiatives reach less than 20% of social workers and educators involved in reintegration efforts (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

4.4 Case Study Analysis

The case study analysis provides a detailed examination of specific reintegration programs implemented in Basilan Province, shedding light on the effectiveness of local initiatives and their alignment with national policies. Three primary case studies are analyzed: a government-led education program for war-affected children, a community-based psychosocial support initiative, and an NGO-run vocational training scheme. The government education program, while expansive, faces challenges in reaching remote areas and adapting curricula to the unique needs of conflict-affected children. Limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and the lack of culturally appropriate learning materials are identified as key barriers to success.

In contrast, the community-based psychosocial support initiative demonstrates more localized and adaptive strategies. These programs, led by local organizations, successfully provide safe spaces for children to process trauma and reintegrate socially. However, they remain small-scale due to resource constraints, limiting their potential for wider impact. The vocational training scheme, while effective in providing economic opportunities for older children, suffers from a lack of coordination with local industries, hindering the placement of graduates in stable jobs.

Overall, the case study analysis underscores the importance of context-specific, community-driven approaches that prioritize flexibility and local involvement. However, the findings highlight the need for enhanced coordination between local and national actors to scale up successful models and address systemic barriers.

Municipality-Level Findings

The case study focuses on Isabela City and the municipalities of Sumisip and Maluso to explore variations in reintegration outcomes.

- **Isabela City**: With NGO partnerships such as those with Save the Children and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Isabela City achieves an 85% reintegration rate among identified war-affected children. Programs emphasize community-based healing and alternative learning systems, aligning closely with international standards (Save the Children, 2023).

- **Sumisip**: Reintegration rates in Sumisip stand at 41%, reflecting significant logistical and funding barriers. Local leaders cite transportation challenges and the absence of centralised data systems as key obstacles.

- **Maluso**: Maluso records the lowest reintegration rates (26%), attributed to weak institutional capacity and a lack of inter-agency coordination. Despite high levels of need, program delivery remains sporadic and heavily reliant on external donor support.

Beneficiary Experiences

Focus group discussions with children and caregivers highlight mixed outcomes. Many children express gratitude for educational support but lament the absence of sustained psychosocial care. Caregivers frequently cite economic insecurities as their primary concern, noting that reintegration programs rarely include livelihood components tailored to family needs.

V. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

The discussion and interpretation of the findings highlight the complex interplay between policy, institutional barriers, and local realities in the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province. The study reveals significant policy gaps, particularly in the coordination of national frameworks with local needs. While national policies exist, they are often poorly implemented at the local level due to insufficient resources, a lack of trained personnel, and weak communication between government agencies, NGOs, and community groups. This disconnect between policy and practice undermines the effectiveness of reintegration efforts, particularly in addressing the psychosocial needs of children and providing sustainable educational opportunities.

The interpretation of institutional barriers further reveals that while local community-based initiatives show promise in addressing the specific needs of war-affected children, they face challenges in scaling up due to limited funding and institutional capacity. These programs, however, are better

equipped to adapt to local contexts, making them more effective in certain areas compared to top-down approaches.

Strategic recommendations include enhancing policy coordination, increasing funding for local reintegration programs, and building stronger partnerships between government bodies, NGOs, and communities. The study also underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach that integrates psychosocial support, education, and economic reintegration to ensure the long-term success of post-conflict development frameworks.

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The findings underscore significant disparities between the intended objectives of post-conflict reintegration frameworks and their actual implementation in Basilan Province. Despite national and international policies emphasizing holistic reintegration, only a fraction of war-affected children receive comprehensive services. This discrepancy reflects systemic challenges in resource allocation, capacity building, and inter-agency coordination (Caballes, 2023).

Quantitative data highlight the low reach of programs such as the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), with only 37% of eligible children benefiting from its provisions (DSWD, 2023). Qualitative insights reveal that reintegration efforts often fail to address the deep-seated psychosocial and economic needs of beneficiaries, leaving them vulnerable to socio-economic exclusion. The study also finds that community involvement remains minimal, undermining the sustainability of reintegration efforts and marginalizing key stakeholders in decision-making processes (Save the Children, 2023).

Municipality-level variations demonstrate that successful reintegration correlates strongly with institutional capacity and external partnerships. For instance, Isabela City benefits from robust NGO engagement and municipal leadership, whereas remote municipalities like Maluso face severe logistical and funding challenges. This divergence illustrates the critical role of local governance in mediating policy effectiveness.

5.2 Policy and Regulatory Gaps

The findings reveal substantial gaps in both policy design and implementation:

1. **Limited Holistic Support**: Current frameworks prioritize short-term financial assistance over sustainable interventions such as vocational training, mental health support, and community-driven rehabilitation. This mismatch fails to address the multifaceted nature of children's reintegration needs (DSWD, 2022).

2. **Insufficient Community Participation**: The absence of structured community consultation processes in policy formulation contravenes international standards like the United Nations' *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards* (IDDRS), which emphasize participatory approaches (United Nations, 2023).

3. **Fragmented Coordination**: National and local agencies operate with limited synergy, leading to duplicated efforts and inefficiencies. For instance, 58% of local government units report challenges in integrating national directives into municipal programs (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

4. **Resource Disparities**: Basilan's municipalities lack equitable access to financial and human resources. Urban centres like Isabela City attract NGO support, while rural areas struggle with underfunding and limited institutional presence (Caballes, 2023).

5.3 Strategic Recommendations

Based on these findings, the study proposes the following strategies to enhance the effectiveness of reintegration policies:

1. **Adopt Holistic Support Models**: Policymakers should integrate educational, psychosocial, and livelihood interventions into existing frameworks. Programs like E-CLIP must evolve to include mental health services and family-based rehabilitation initiatives.

2. **Strengthen Community Involvement**: Local governments should institutionalize mechanisms for community consultation and participation, ensuring that policies align with the needs and capacities of affected populations.

3. **Enhance Coordination Mechanisms**: Establishing an inter-agency task force with representatives from national, regional, and local levels can improve program coherence and resource allocation. Digital platforms for data sharing and monitoring can further streamline coordination.

4. **Invest in Capacity Building**: Capacity-building programs targeting social workers, educators, and local leaders should be prioritised. These efforts can improve the delivery of trauma-informed care and vocational training services.

5. **Foster Public-Private Partnerships**: Encouraging collaborations with NGOs and private sector actors can mobilise additional resources and expertise. Initiatives in Isabela City demonstrate the transformative potential of such partnerships (Save the Children, 2023).

5.4 Theoretical Implications

The findings reaffirm the relevance of New Public Management (NPM) theory in understanding policy effectiveness. NPM's emphasis on efficiency, decentralization, and participatory governance provides a useful lens to evaluate Basilan's reintegration frameworks. However, the study identifies limitations in applying NPM principles to post-conflict settings. The prioritization of cost-efficiency often undermines the need for long-term, resource-intensive interventions such as mental health care. Similarly, the focus on decentralization risks exacerbating disparities between municipalities with varying capacities. These limitations suggest the need for a hybrid theoretical approach that integrates NPM with participatory and equity-focused paradigms. Such an approach can better address the complexities of post-conflict governance while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion of this study emphasizes the critical need for comprehensive and context-specific strategies to address the reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province. Despite the presence of national frameworks aimed at child protection and post-conflict recovery, significant gaps remain in their implementation at the local level. These gaps stem from limited resources, inadequate inter-agency coordination, and the challenge of tailoring programs to the unique needs of children in conflict zones. Local initiatives, while promising, struggle with scalability due to insufficient funding and institutional support, yet they offer valuable lessons in community-based approaches that can be leveraged for broader impact.

The recommendations for improving post-conflict reintegration frameworks include enhancing coordination between national and local actors, increasing funding for community-driven programs, and prioritizing the training of local staff to better meet the psychosocial, educational, and economic

needs of war-affected children. Additionally, policymakers should adopt a more flexible, participatory approach that involves local communities in the design and implementation of reintegration programs.

Future research should explore longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of reintegration programs on children's outcomes, focusing on mental health, education, and economic self-sufficiency. Further, comparative studies across different conflict zones could provide valuable insights into best practices for child reintegration in similar contexts.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study critically examines the post-conflict development frameworks aimed at the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province, Philippines, identifying significant disparities between policy design and implementation. Current frameworks, such as the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), only partially address the holistic needs of war-affected children. Short-term financial assistance dominates policy responses, while long-term interventions in psychosocial care, education, and community reintegration remain underdeveloped (DSWD, 2023).

Institutional barriers, including resource allocation deficits, fragmented coordination, and inadequate capacity, exacerbate the marginalisation of vulnerable populations. Municipal disparities highlight the uneven distribution of resources, with urban centres benefiting disproportionately from external support. Furthermore, the limited alignment with international standards, such as the *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards* (IDDRS), undermines the efficacy of these frameworks, leaving critical gaps in participatory governance and community-led approaches (United Nations, 2023).

6.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This research advances the understanding of post-conflict governance by providing an empirical evaluation of reintegration frameworks in a highly localised context. It contributes to the literature on public administration by highlighting the limitations of New Public Management (NPM) in addressing post-conflict challenges. The study calls for integrating equity-focused paradigms with NPM principles to better accommodate the complexities of reintegration in resource-constrained and conflict-affected settings.

Moreover, the study enriches existing scholarship on policy implementation by emphasising the role of local governments in bridging the gap between national directives and community-specific needs. The evidence from Basilan demonstrates that successful reintegration requires adaptive strategies, inclusive of diverse stakeholders, and tailored to local contexts.

6.3 Future Research Directions

While this study provides critical insights into the reintegration of war-affected children, several areas warrant further exploration:

1. **Longitudinal Studies**: Future research should investigate the long-term outcomes of reintegration programs, particularly their impact on educational attainment, mental health, and economic stability. Such studies can provide a more comprehensive evaluation of program efficacy.

2. **Comparative Analyses**: Expanding the scope of analysis to other post-conflict regions in the Philippines or Southeast Asia can identify best practices and shared challenges. Comparative studies can inform policy harmonisation and foster regional collaboration.

3. **Community-Led Approaches**: Research should focus on the role of community participation in reintegration efforts. Ethnographic studies can provide deeper insights into local perspectives, fostering the design of more inclusive and contextually relevant policies.

4. **Technological Integration**: Exploring the role of digital platforms in enhancing coordination, monitoring, and resource distribution offers a promising avenue for addressing inefficiencies in current frameworks.

5. **Intersectionality**: Future studies should examine how gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status intersect to shape the reintegration experiences of war-affected children. Such research can inform more equitable policy interventions.

Recommendations

The recommendations derived from this study advocate for a multi-faceted approach to enhance the social reintegration of war-affected children in Basilan Province. First, policymakers must prioritize improving coordination between national and local actors. Effective reintegration requires the alignment of national frameworks with local needs, ensuring that policies are adapted to the unique challenges faced by communities in conflict-affected areas. Enhanced communication and resource-sharing between government bodies, NGOs, and local leaders are essential to overcoming implementation barriers and fostering a collaborative environment for reintegration.

Second, the study underscores the necessity of increasing funding for community-based programs. These initiatives have proven effective in addressing the specific needs of war-affected children, particularly in psychosocial support and education, but are often constrained by limited resources. Providing consistent financial support will enable these programs to scale up and reach more children in need.

Third, there is an urgent need for capacity building at the local level. This includes training local educators, social workers, and community leaders to deliver trauma-informed care, education, and vocational training tailored to the realities of war-affected children.

Lastly, future reintegration efforts should adopt a holistic, participatory approach that involves children and their families in the design and execution of programs. This ensures that interventions are culturally relevant and responsive to the lived experiences of war-affected communities.

1. **Holistic Program Design**: Policymakers should integrate educational, psychosocial, and economic interventions into reintegration programs. Programs must address not only immediate needs but also long-term rehabilitation and development.

2. **Strengthened Local Governance**: Capacity-building initiatives for local governments should be prioritised to enhance their ability to deliver comprehensive reintegration services. Training and resource allocation must be equitable across municipalities.

3. **Community Engagement**: Reintegration policies should institutionalise mechanisms for community involvement, ensuring that local stakeholders play an active role in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

4. **Enhanced Coordination**: Establishing robust inter-agency task forces and digital systems for data sharing can address fragmentation and improve resource utilisation.

5. **Alignment with International Standards**: Reintegration programs must align more closely with IDDRS guidelines to ensure sustainable, rights-based approaches.

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