

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Educating the Poorest of the Poor Boys in Conflict Zones: The Role of Peace and Development Programs

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Ensuring the continuous education of children from low-income families poses a considerable challenge, one that is aggravated twofold in conflict-affected areas. Despite the challenges, the Philippine government has persisted in educating the poorest of the poor through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). It provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor households. Households receive cash grants if children enroll in school and attend classes, as well as get regular health check-ups and vaccines. This study compared the simple dropout rate of 4Ps child beneficiaries in conflict and non-conflict areas. Conflict areas in this context are found within the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA or Peaceful and Resilient Communities) Program's "conflict zones." PAMANA is a national convergence program for peacebuilding, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development in conflict-affected and vulnerable areas. Data from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) on the 4Ps child beneficiaries were utilized in this study. It described the situation of the poorest of the poor children in terms of the simple dropout rate from 2015 to 2020. It examined whether there is a difference in performance according to gender. The data indicates that boys dropped out more than girls.

Keywords: Conditional Cash Transfers, Education Inequality, Conflict-Affected Areas, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Gender Disparities in Education, PAMANA Program

JEL Codes: H75, I21, O15

The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) was developed based on successful conditional cash transfer programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. It became a flagship program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in 2007 (Fernandez & Olfindo, 2011). It was eventually institutionalized through the passage of Republic Act No. 11310 as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by building human capital among low-income families. A household can be eligible as a recipient of

the program if the following requirements at the time of selection are satisfied: (a) it has residency status in the priority municipalities and barangays; (b) it is identified as poor based on the Proxy Means Test and belongs to the extremely poor household classification based on the issuance of the National Statistical and Coordination Board (NSCB); and (c) it has children 0-14 years old or with a pregnant woman.

As of 2021, 4.5 million households were registered beneficiaries of the program. A regular revalidation of beneficiaries is done every three years. This study covers children 0-14 years old who are beneficiaries of 4Ps households. All child beneficiaries must enroll in school and maintain a class attendance of at least 85% per month to continuously avail of the cash grants. Catubig and Villano (2017) studied a sample of 360 elementary and secondary schools in the province of Davao Oriental and concluded that significant enrollment growth occurred after the implementation of the 4Ps.

The literature indicates that the 4Ps were successful in keeping older children in school, specifically children aged 10–14 years old (Orbeta et al., 2016). The impacts are said to be comparable to the levels found in other conditional cash transfer programs around the world, specifically in terms of achievements in school enrollment. The decline in the number of out-of-school children was supported by the school attendance rates (David & Albert, 2015). Manifestations of poverty lead to under-enrollment of school-age children, according to Colclough et al. (2000). Gendered outcomes are found at the levels of society, labor market, school, and household and comprise a powerful set of forces that impede the enrollment, persistence, and performance in school of girls relative to boys.

As highlighted in the “Philippine Education for All 2015 Review Report: Philippines”, Gender disparity has also been noted with boys at the disadvantage in most of the indicators. The gender pattern in the Philippines is different from the majority of developing countries where girls are at a disadvantage. In the Philippines, it is the boys who are not participating equally in basic education. They leave school before completing their basic education and have lower literacy and academic achievement rates. (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2015)

Conflict negatively impacts the education of children. The causal effect of civil war on years of

education is shown in a cohort of students who were exposed to armed conflict in Côte d’Ivoire. The results show that war had a detrimental impact on education (Dabalen & Paul, 2012).

Objectives

The predominant focus of Philippine research has been on assessing the efficacy of 4Ps in maintaining school enrollment. Yet, a noticeable gap exists in looking at the conditions of the poorest of the poor children in conflict-ridden areas. The combination of poverty and conflict poses formidable challenges to school attendance and retention for children in these locales. Consequently, it becomes imperative to investigate the impact of 4Ps on the education continuity of children in conflict areas and whether there is a disparity in performance between girls and boys.

The study looked at the patterns of enrollment and dropout among the 4Ps child beneficiaries using the simple dropout rate. Specifically, it conducted the following: (a) estimated the simple dropout rate of 4Ps child beneficiaries from 2015–2020 for conflict and non-conflict areas; (b) assessed the contribution of 4Ps in bringing and retaining child beneficiaries in school in both conflict and non-conflict areas; and (c) compared the impact of government peace and development programs to girls versus boys.

The study used the 2015–2020 DSWD data of 4Ps child beneficiaries in primary (Kindergarten, Grades 1–6) and secondary education (Grades 7–12). Although the objective of the PAMANA program is enhancing the well-being of people in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas, the study defined “conflict areas” with the PAMANA program-identified conflict zones (barangay levels), whereas the remaining barangays outside of the PAMANA conflict zones are treated as “non-conflict areas.”

Theoretical Framework

The study builds on the scholarly literature that considers the role of peace and development interventions, especially in the form of conditional cash transfer programs, in improving education outcomes in conflict-affected areas. National governments now use cash transfers and vouchers to support households in choosing their own expenditure priorities, whether

these be immediate food needs, meeting the costs of health and education services, or investing in economic activities to support livelihoods. (Holmes, 2010. A study on the 4Ps notes a substantial decrease in conflict incidents in treated villages in the first year of the program and a smaller and statistically insignificant decrease in the second year. It finds evidence that treated villages experienced a decrease in insurgent influence compared to control villages, suggesting that the program weakened rebel presence (Croft et al., 2016).

It is hypothesized that community-driven development projects would improve the delivery of basic services and that access to electricity, safe water supply, and roads contribute to the reduction of armed and violent conflict. It is also hypothesized that the PAMANA Program would not only increase enrollment in primary and secondary education but also retain students in school, as evidenced by the simple dropout rate (SDR).

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative design that observed the data on 4Ps child beneficiaries provided by the DSWD—specifically, enrollment and drop-out by region, gender, grade level, and school year.

Enrollment and dropout rates of conflict and non-conflict areas from 2015–2020 were compared. The study argues that (a) the 4Ps Program brought and kept child beneficiaries to school. Its implementation in areas with conflict reinforced by the PAMANA program (b) contributed to human capital formation. Going to school is more challenging as aggravated by the conflict situation. The 4Ps plus the PAMANA program contributed to keeping children in school. It is also hypothesized that the 4Ps plus the PAMANA program (c) helped increase enrollment and decrease dropout in primary and secondary education.

Simple Dropout Rate

Non-Conflict Areas

Primary Education Level

Figure 2 indicates a declining simple dropout rate (SDR) trend across all grade levels in primary education in non-conflict areas. A sharp decline was recorded from 2015–2016 to 2016–2017 but went up again in 2017–2018. The highest SDR was recorded during the period of 2015–2016, specifically in Grade 6. On the other hand, the lowest dropout rate was recorded for all levels during the period of 2020–2021.

This is consistent with the findings of Orbeta et al.'s (2016) study that the 4Ps successfully kept older children in school, especially those aged 10–14. It

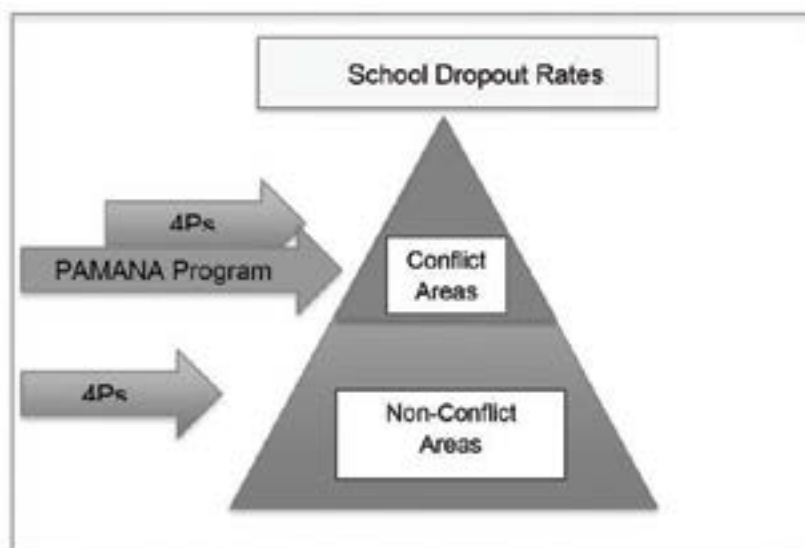


Figure 1.

Research Framework

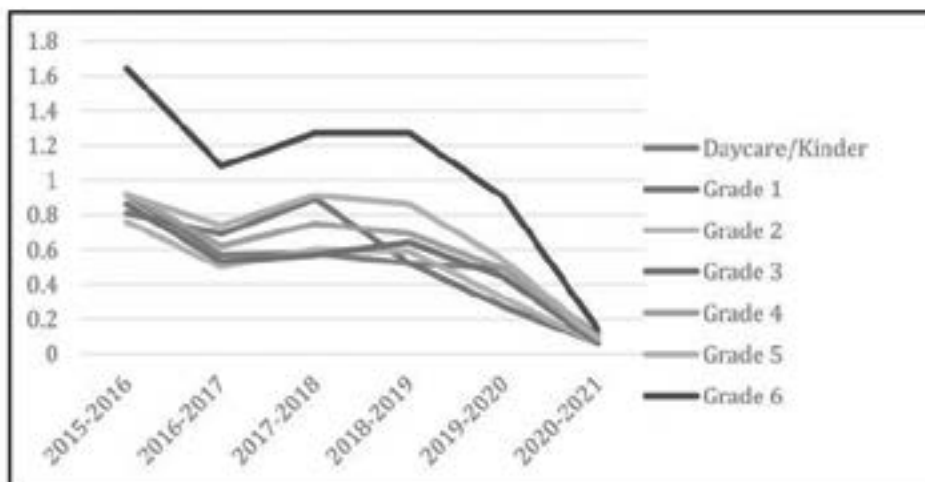


Figure 2

Primary Education Level - Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

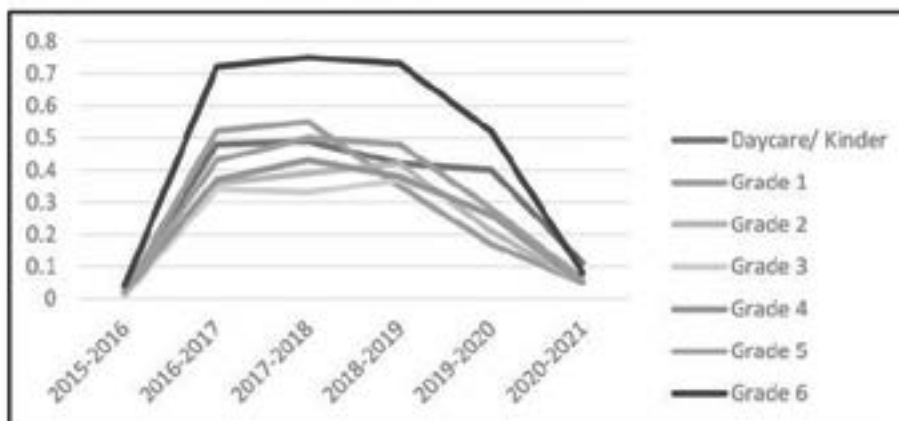


Figure 3

Primary Education Level - Girl Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

can be observed that the longer the student stays in school, the less probability of them dropping out. Likewise, Catubig and Villano (2017) found a small but significant and positive growth in enrollment outcomes in elementary schools after the implementation of 4Ps.

Taking into consideration the gender criteria, the SDR for both girls and boys increased and peaked in 2015–2016 and then started to decline in 2016–2017. Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SDR of all grade levels continued to decline in 2020–2021.

For 2015–2016, there was a sharp increase in the SDR in the different grade levels in non-conflict areas. There was also a sustained rise in the SDR among all the grade levels during the 2016–2018 period. However, there was a significant decline in the SDR during the 2018–2019 period. The highest SDR recorded was at the Grade 6 level.

The SDR for girls, specifically at the Grade 6 level, peaked in 2017–2018. On the other hand, there was a drastic decline in the SDR in 2019–2020.

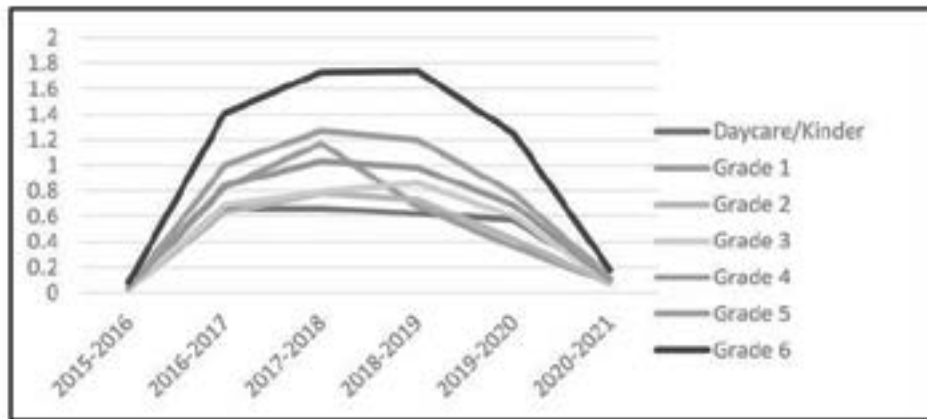


Figure 4

Primary Education Level - Boy Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015-2021)

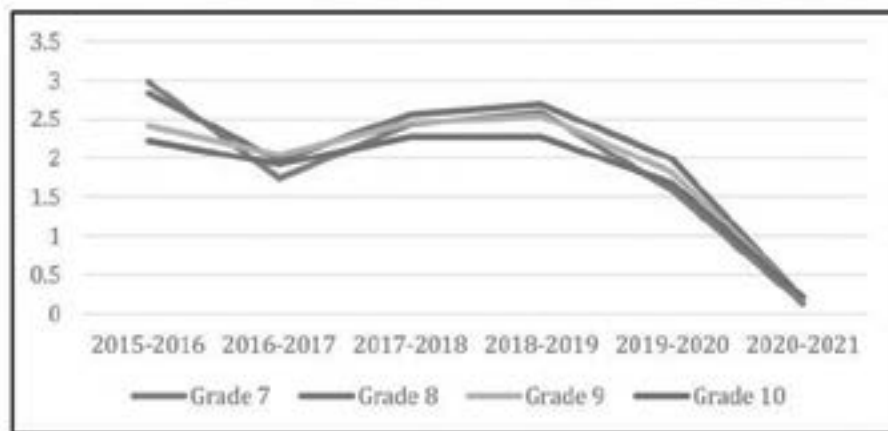


Figure 5

Secondary Education Level - Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015-2021)

Consistent with the SDR in non-conflict areas, the Grade 6 level had the highest SDR compared to the other levels. Furthermore, the highest SDR was sustained from the period of 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. Fortunately, it had a significant drop in the following year.

Concerning gender, the SDR of boys in non-conflict areas was higher compared to the girls, especially in Grade 6. On the other hand, the SDR in all grade levels dropped from 2019 to 2020. As a result, the lowest SDR recorded was in 2020-2021.

Secondary Education Level

All the grade levels in secondary education in non-conflict areas followed a similar SDR pattern. The highest SDR for all levels, regardless of gender, was registered from 2015 to 2016. However, in 2016-2017, the biggest decline of the SDR happened in Grade 7. The SDR increased again in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. The SDR for all levels started to decline after 2018-2019. Catubig and Villano (2017) found a small but significant growth in enrollment outcomes in secondary schools, increased by a larger percentage at 4.07, and a decline of 0.1% in the municipalities without 4Ps.

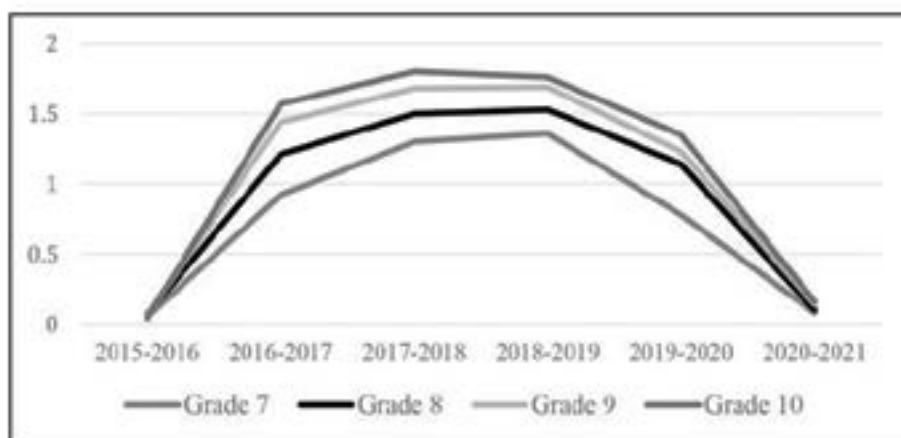


Figure 6.

Secondary Education Level - Girl Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-conflict Areas (2015–2021)

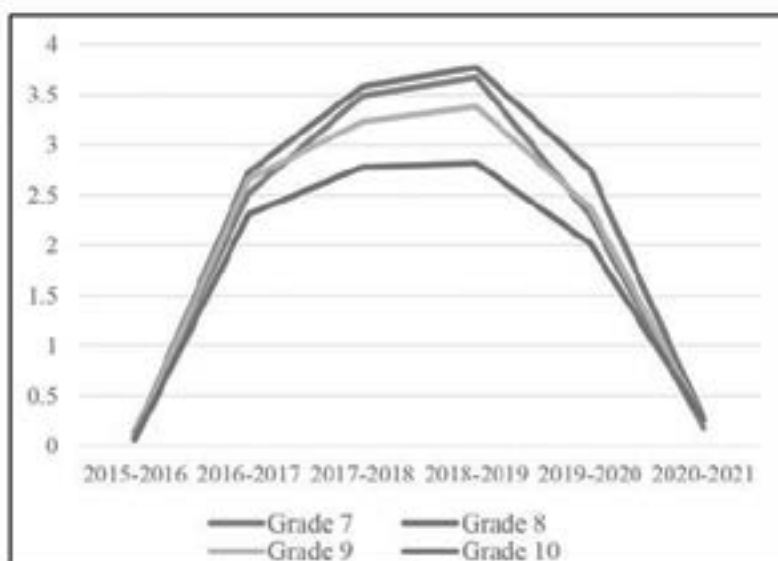


Figure 7

Secondary Education Level - Boy Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-conflict Areas (2015–2021)

There was a significant increase in the SDR for girls during the period of 2016–2017. It peaked in 2017–2018 and had a slight decline in 2018–2019. There was also a sharp decrease in the SDR of girls in 2019–2020. The Grade 7 level had the lowest SDR, whereas the Grade 10 level had the highest SDR.

Like the girls in the secondary education level, the boys had a similar trend in their SDR. However,

compared to the girls in the same levels, the SDR of boys is higher. This is consistent with the findings of David and Albert (2015) that, in secondary school, boys drop out at higher rates as the enrollment rate for girls remains consistent and higher at 10%.

There was a sharp rise in the SDR in 2016–2017. There was a slight increase during the period of 2017–2018, and the SDR peaked in 2018–2019. The SDR then declined in 2019–2020 and had a significant

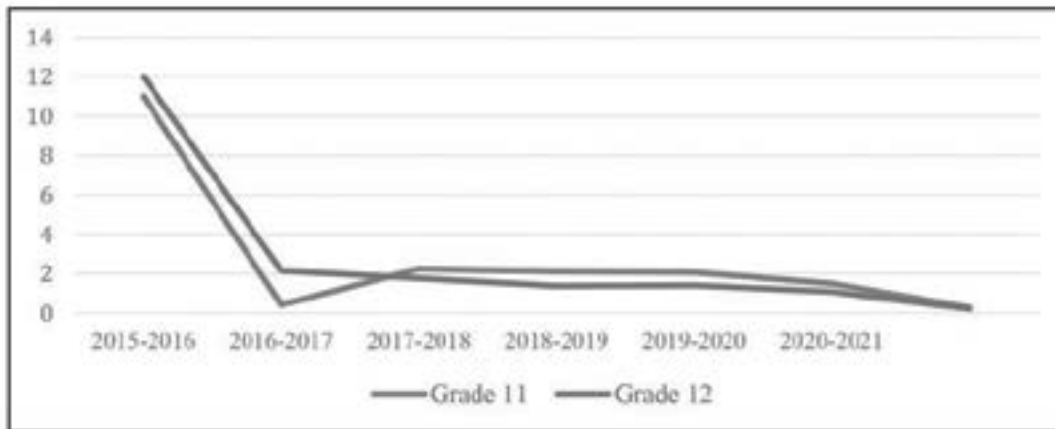


Figure 8

Senior High School Level - Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

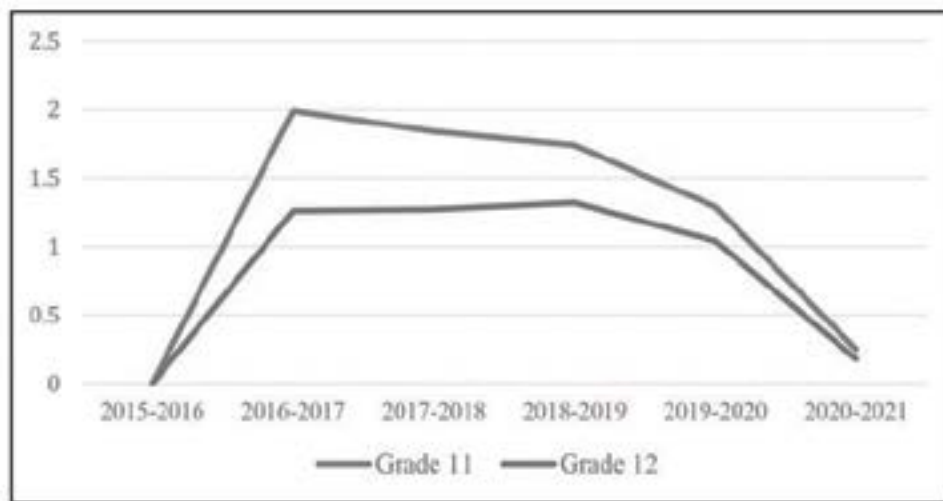


Figure 9

Senior High School Level - Girl Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

decrease in 2019–2020. The SDR dropped to its lowest point in 2020–2021.

Senior High School Level

Taking into consideration the gender criteria, the highest SDR was recorded during the period of 2015–2016 for both boys and girls. There was a sharp decline in the SDR at the senior high school level in non-conflict areas. The Grade 11 level had the biggest decline compared to the Grade 12 level in 2016–2017.

This low level of SDR was relatively sustained from 2017–2018 until 2019–2020.

The SDR of girls in senior high school in non-conflict areas had different trends at each level. For Grade 11, the SDR peaked in 2016–2017, followed by a steady decline and increased again in 2018–2019. On the other hand, for Grade 12, there was a sharp rise in 2016–2017 and a slight increase until 2018–2019. Nevertheless, both levels had a sharp decline in 2019–2020.

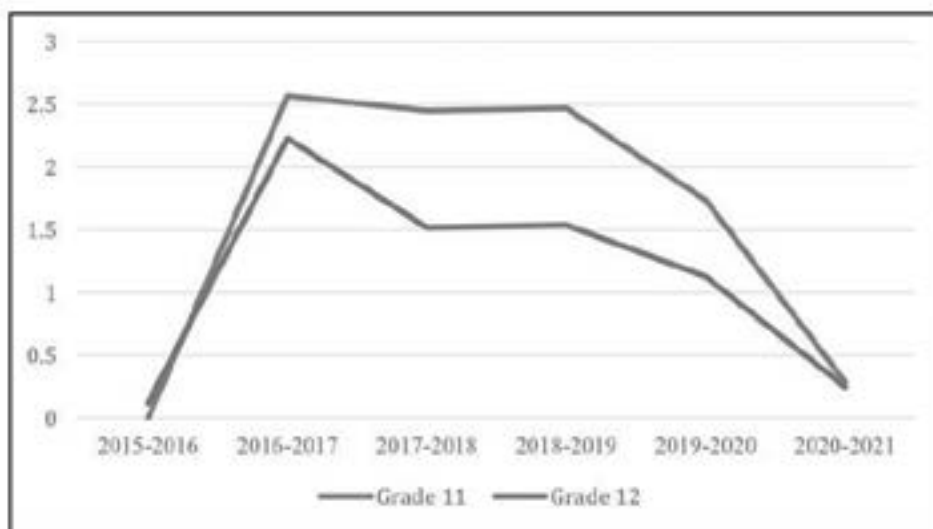


Figure 10

Senior High School Level - Boy Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Non-Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

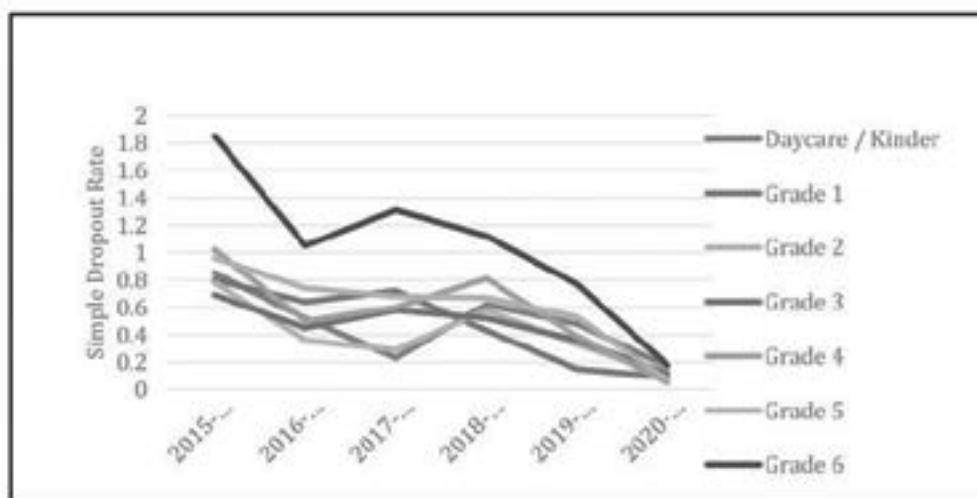


Figure 11.

Primary Education Level Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015-2021)

The SDR of boys in non-conflict areas for both the Grade 11 and Grade 12 levels sharply increased in 2015–2016. However, the Grade 12 level had a steep decline in 2016–2017, whereas the Grade 11 level had a relatively sustained SDR during the same period. Furthermore, there was a steady decline in the SDR for both levels in 2018–2019, and it continued to drop in the succeeding years.

Conflict Areas

Primary Education

The Grade 6 level had the biggest SDR compared to the other levels in primary education in conflict areas. In addition to this, the level had a sharp decline in 2015–2016 but had a significant increase in 2017–2018 and had a continuous decrease after that. On the other

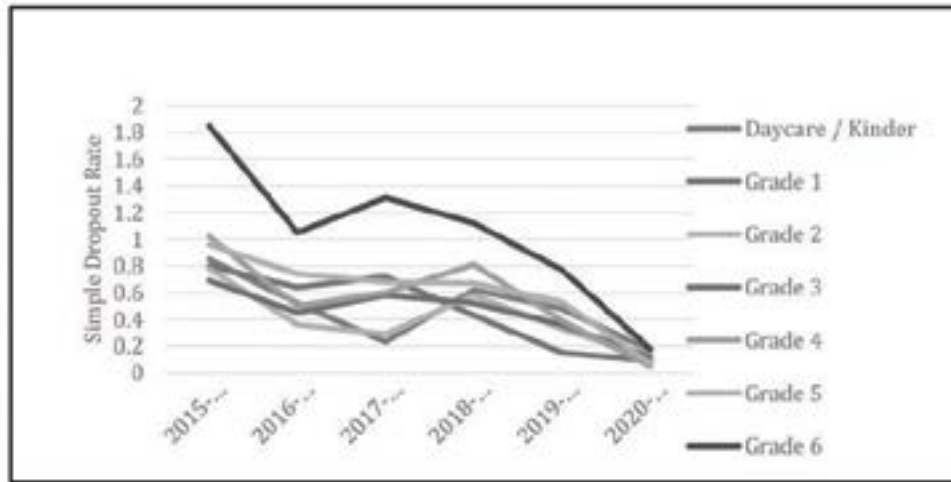


Figure 12.

Primary Education Level - Girl Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

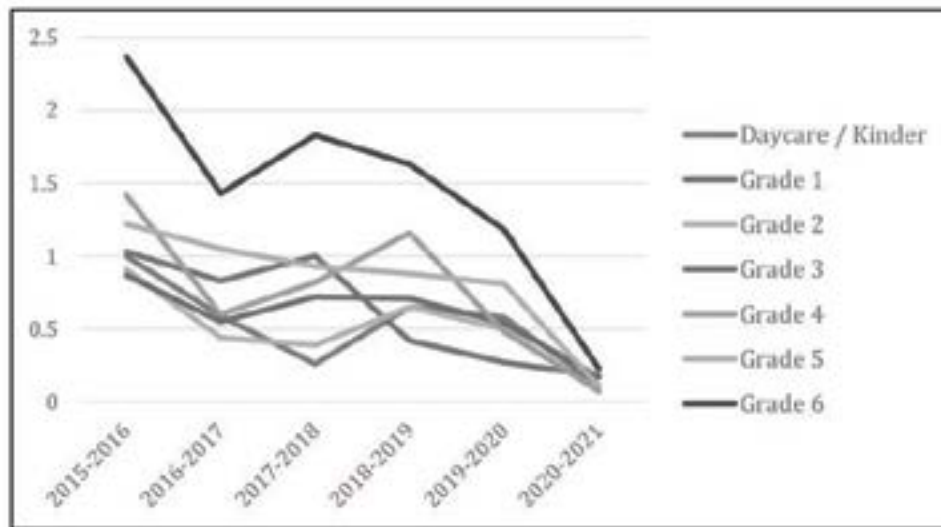


Figure 13

Primary Education Level - Boy Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

hand, this was not true for all levels. The daycare/ kindergarten had a steady decline in their SDR but had a huge increase in 2018–2019 and a slight decline after the period.

The SDR of the different levels within the primary education level had a common similarity which is that their respective SDR was steadily declining during 2019–2020.

There was a sharp decline in the SDR of girls in conflict areas recorded in 2015–2016. Moreover, the majority of the girls within the level had an increase in their SDR in 2018–2019. The SDR was not sustained and decreased in 2019–2020. Consistent with the previous chart, girls in the Grade 6 level had the highest SDR in comparison to the other levels. On the other hand, Grade 1 had the lowest SDR, with a consistent decline from 2017–2018.

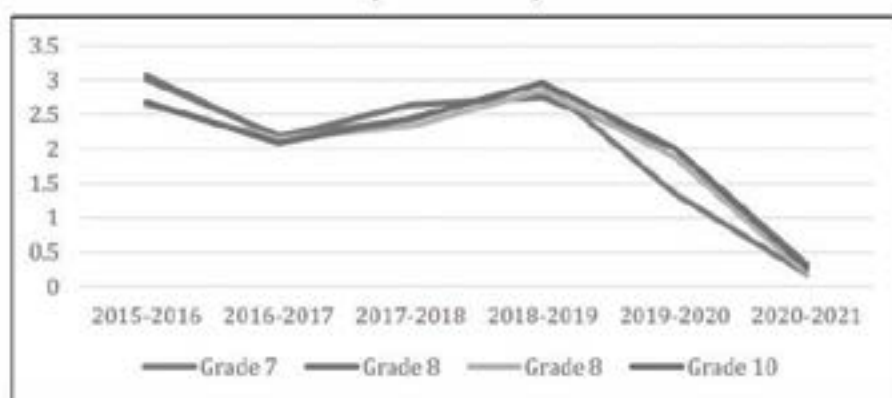


Figure 14

Secondary Education Level - Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015-2021)

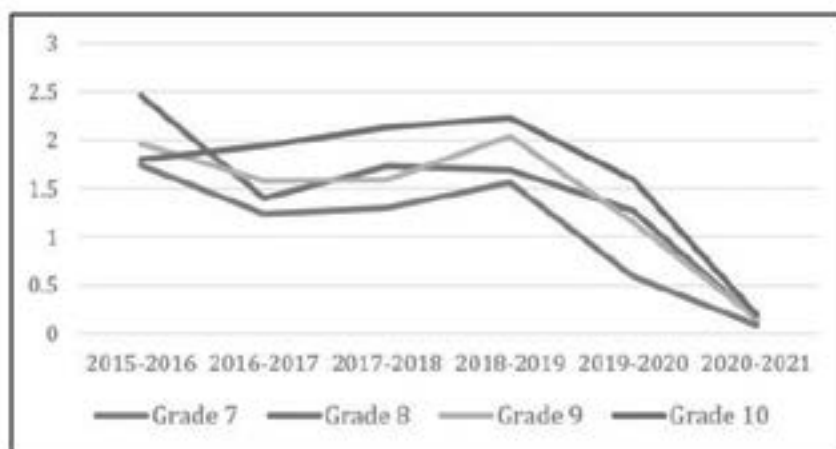


Figure 15

Secondary Education Level - Girl Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015-2021)

At the primary education level, there was a decline in the SDR of boys in conflict areas in 2015-2016. However, compared to the girls, the boys at the Grade 6 level had a higher SDR. In 2015-2016, they had a significant decline in their SDR but peaked in 2017-2018. Another level that had a significant decline was the Grade 4 level in 2015-2016. There was a continuous growth of their SDR from the period of 2016-2019. Their SDR peaked in 2018-2019.

Secondary Education Level

A slight decline in the SDR was experienced at the secondary education level in conflict areas in 2015-2016, regardless of gender, with a continuous increase from the period of 2017-2019. There was a significant decline in the SDR after 2018-2019. The SDR peaked for all levels at 2018-2019, while the lowest recorded SDR was in 2020-2021. The Grade 7 level had the highest decline in the SDR compared to the other grade levels.

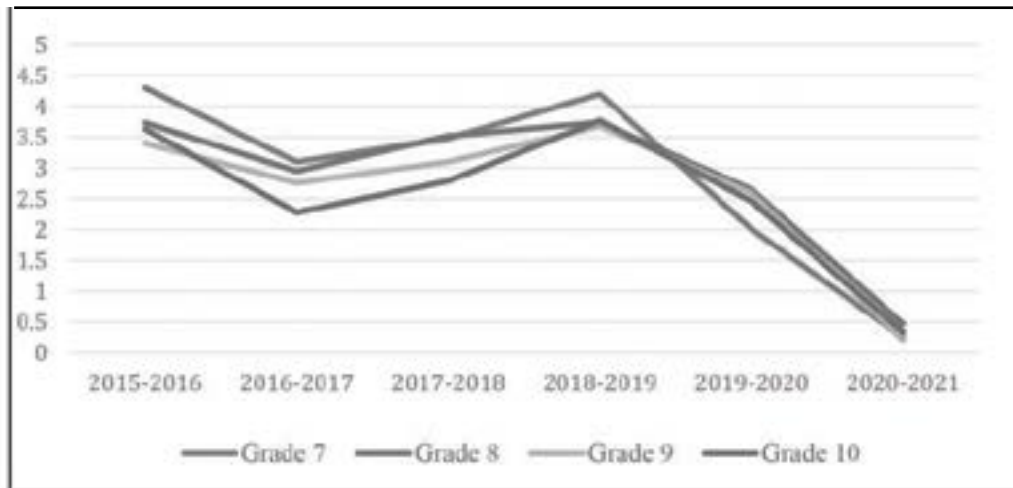


Figure 16

Primary Education Level - Boy Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

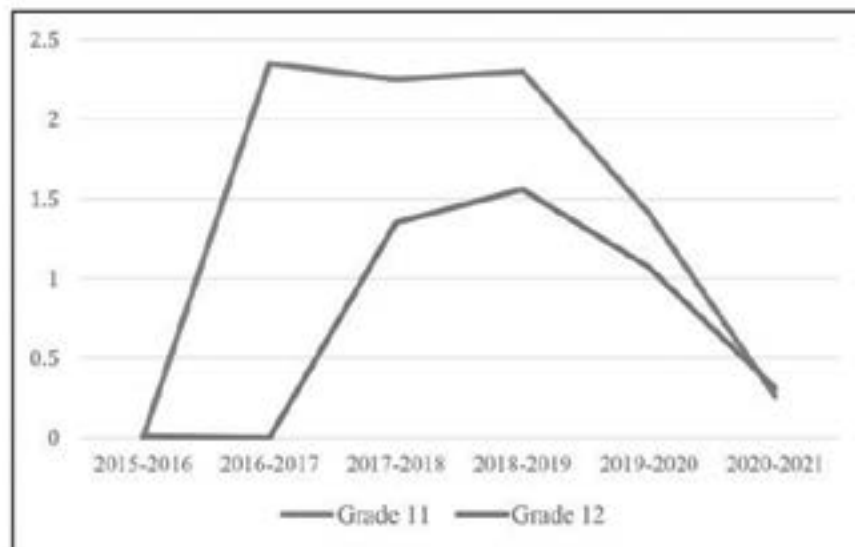


Figure 17

Senior High School Level - Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

The SDR of the girls at the secondary education level in conflict areas manifested different trends. However, the similarity of the different levels is that all of the SDR peaked in 2018–2019 and had a downward trend in the following years. The Grade 7 level had a steady decline in their SDR until 2016–2017. Another notable trait from the Grade 7 level is that they had the lowest recorded SDR compared to the other levels. At

the Grade 10 level, there was a steady rise in the SDR from 2015–2019 and peaked in 2018–2019. There was a decline in the SDR in the succeeding period.

Compared to the girls in the primary education level in conflict areas where the SDR showed varying trends per level, the SDR for the boys in conflict areas had similar patterns. All the levels had a decline in the SDR in 2015–2016 but had a steady increase in 2016–2019.

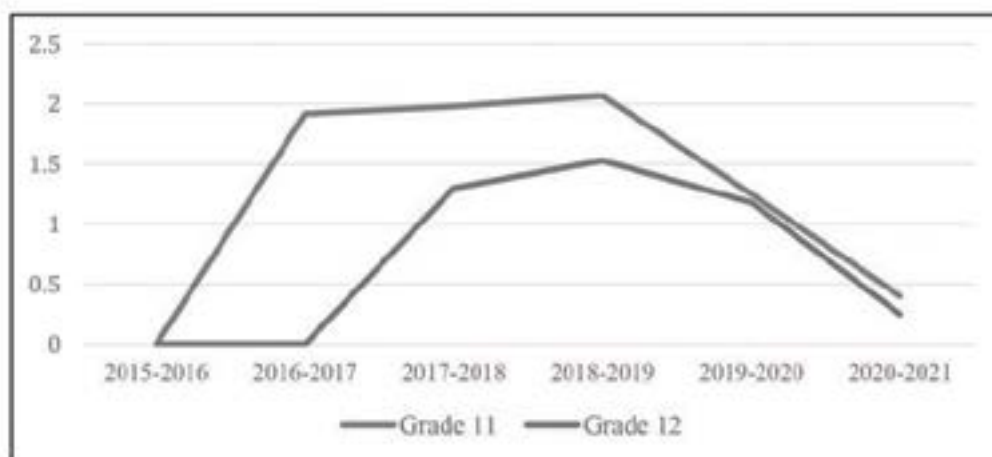


Figure 18

Senior High School Level - Girl Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

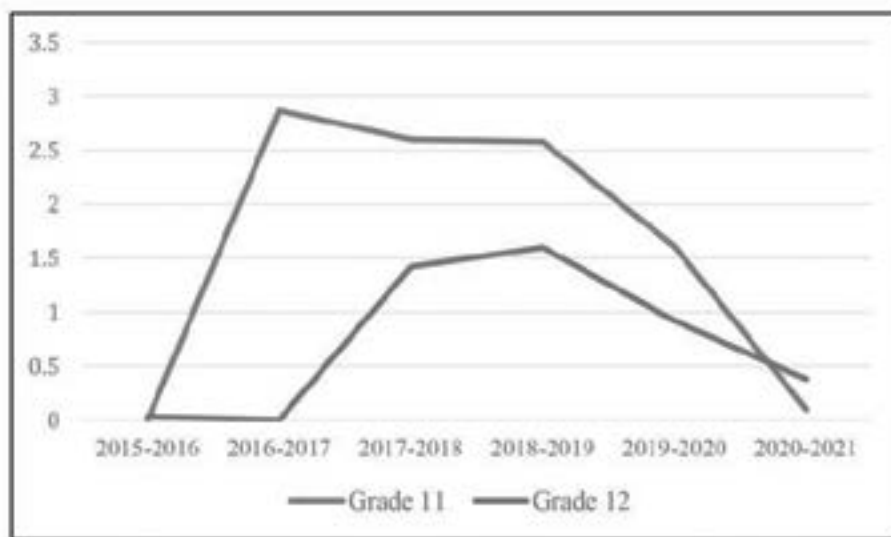


Figure 19

Senior High School Level - Boy Simple Dropout Rate by Grade Level in Conflict Areas (2015–2021)

The SDR peaked for all levels in 2018–2019. However, the Grade 7 level had the highest recorded SDR as well as the lowest SDR compared to the other levels.

Senior High School Level

Grade 11 had the highest recorded SDR, with a sharp increase in 2015–2016 compared to the Grade 12 level, and was able to sustain that high level of SDR in conflict areas. There was a small decrease in 2017–2018 but increased again in 2018–2019.

Fortunately, the SDR had a downward trend after 2018–2019 and continuously dropped after that period.

On the other hand, the Grade 12 level had a sharp increase in their SDR in 2016–2017 and increased again in 2018–2019. The SDR of the Grade 12 level peaked in 2018–2019 in the same manner as the Grade 11 level. After 2019–2020, both levels had a downward trend in their SDR.

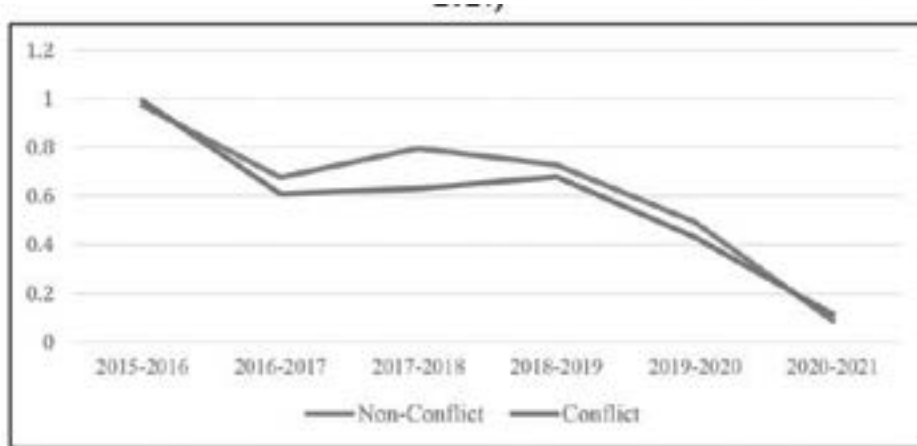


Figure 20

Primary Education Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

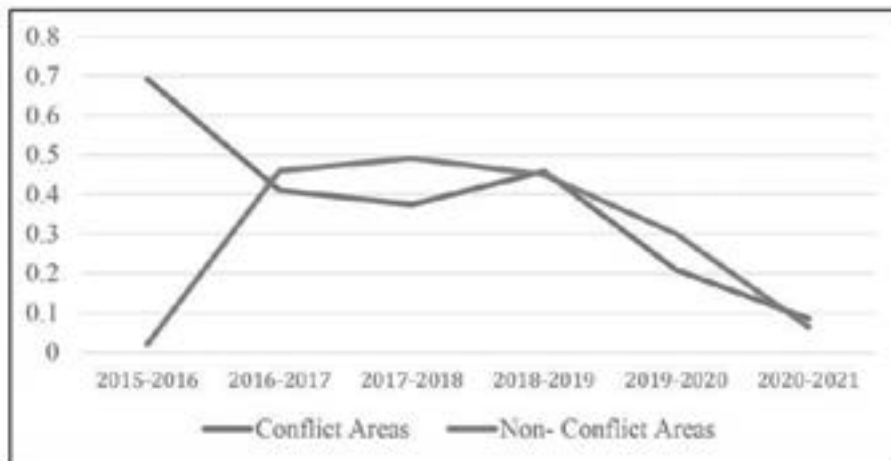


Figure 21

Primary Education Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Girl Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

The SDR trend of the Grade 11 girls in conflict areas was straightforward. It had a steep rise in SDR in 2015–2016 and had a gradual increase from 2016–2019. The highest SDR came from Grade 11, which peaked in 2018–2019. Consequently, the SDR had a consistent decline after 2019–2020. For the Grade 12 level, the highest SDR was in 2018–2019.

Like the previous chart, the Grade 11 level had the highest SDR recorded for boys in conflict areas in 2016–2017 as shown in Figure 19. The SDR of the Grade 11 level is significantly higher compared to the Grade 12 level. On the other hand, the lowest SDR also

came from Grade 11. The Grade 12 level also shared the same characteristics with the previous chart, where the SDR sharply increased in 2017–2018. Despite a consistent drop in the SDR after 2018–2019, there was still a small increase in the SDR in 2020–2021.

Conflict Versus Non-Conflict Areas

Primary Education

The SDR of both non-conflict and conflict areas had a steep decline from the period of 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, regardless of gender. However, the

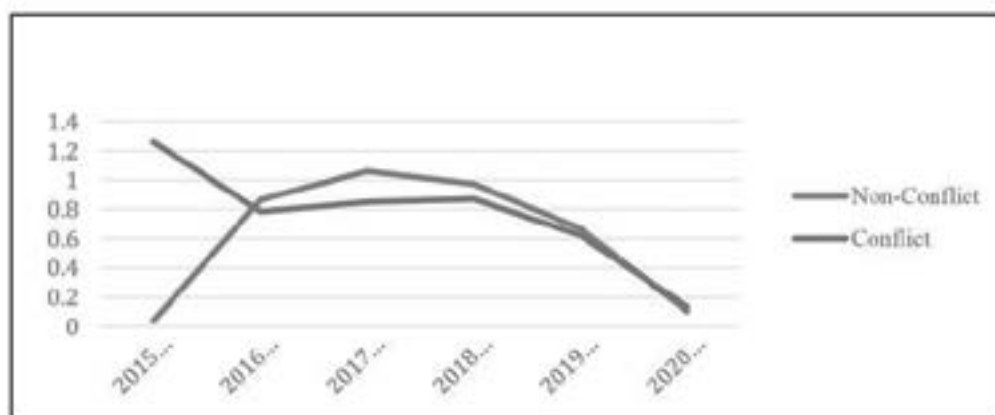


Figure 22

Primary Education Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Boys Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

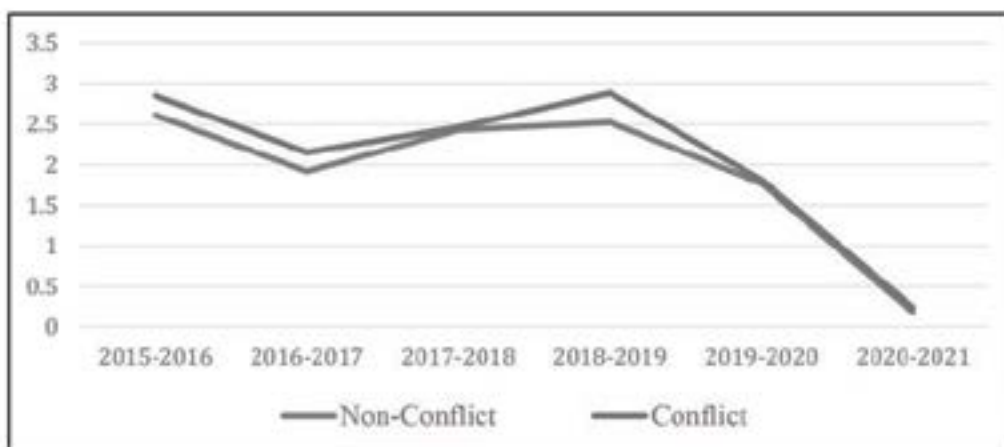


Figure 23

Secondary Education Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Simple Dropout Rate (2015-2021)

conflict areas had a bigger decrease compared to non-conflict areas. Furthermore, the highest SDR came from non-conflict areas peaking in 2017-2018. In addition, both areas had a consistent decline in their SDR in 2018-2019.

The highest SDR for girls happened at the primary education level in 2015–2016. A sharp decline in their SDR was seen after this period, and they relatively maintained their SDR from 2016–2017 and even reduced slightly in 2017–2019. Unfortunately, it increased in 2018–2019 and even surpassed the SDR in non-conflict Areas.

On the other hand, the SDR in the non-conflict areas had a significant increase in 2015–2016. The trend indicates that the SDR in non-conflict areas behaved differently in conflict-areas from the period of 2016–2017 until 2018–2019. The lowest SDR recorded came from non-conflict areas in 2020–2021.

The SDR at the primary education level for boys was higher in conflict areas compared to non-conflict areas in 2015–2016. After this period, the SDR had a slow decline and gradually rose and peaked in 2017–2018. On the other hand, the SDR in non-conflict areas had a sharp increase in 2015–2016 and reached the pinnacle in 2017–2018. The similarity in both

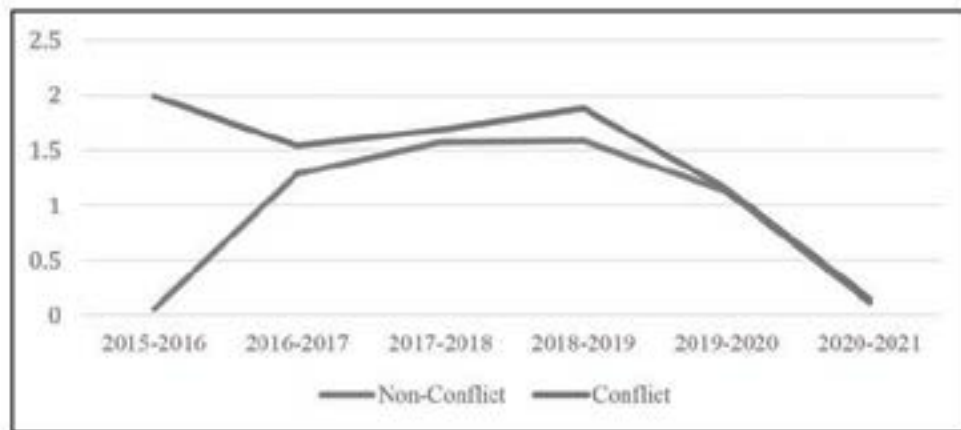


Figure 24

Secondary Education Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Girl Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

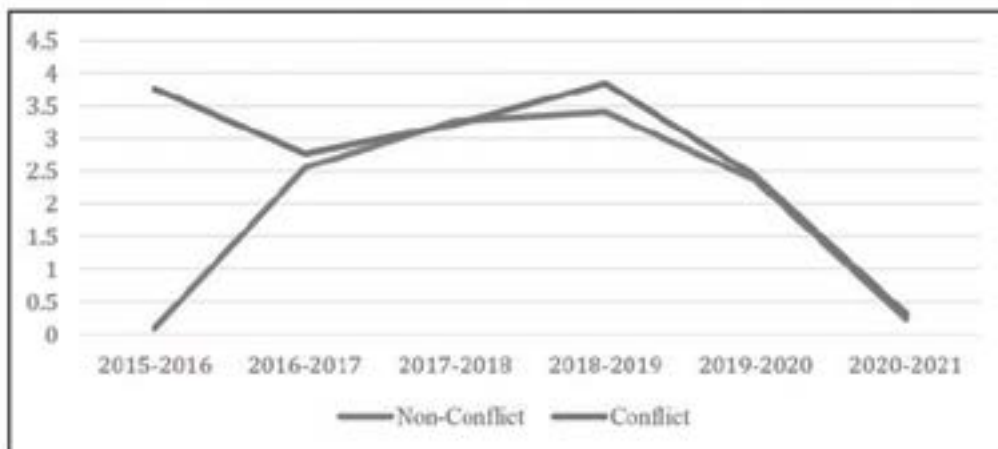


Figure 25

Secondary Education Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Boy Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

conflict and non-conflict areas is that their SDR had a continuous downward trend after 2018–2019.

Secondary Education

Conflict areas have higher SDR at the secondary education level compared to non-conflict areas, especially in 2018–2019 when their SDR peaked. However, after a steady decline in 2015–2016 the SDR in non-conflict areas rose in 2017–2018, which had the same SDR in the conflict areas.

Another similarity between the two areas is that their SDR dropped significantly after 2019–2020, regardless of gender. The SDR of girls at the secondary education level in non-conflict areas had a steep increase

in 2015–2016. On the other hand, the SDR in conflict areas had a steady decline. The SDR in non-conflict areas had a steady decline. The SDR in non-conflict areas peaked in 2017–2018, but the SDR in conflict areas peaked in 2018–2019. Furthermore, the SDR in non-conflict areas was sustained from 2017 through 2019. The highest recorded SDR was registered in the conflict areas during the 2018–2019 period. After 2019–2020, both areas had a sharp reduction in their SDR.

The SDR of boys at the secondary education level is significantly higher compared to the girls. In comparative terms, non-conflict areas had a significant increase in their SDR, whereas conflict areas had a steep decrease during the period of 2015–2016. Both areas had a significant drop in their SDR in 2019–2020.

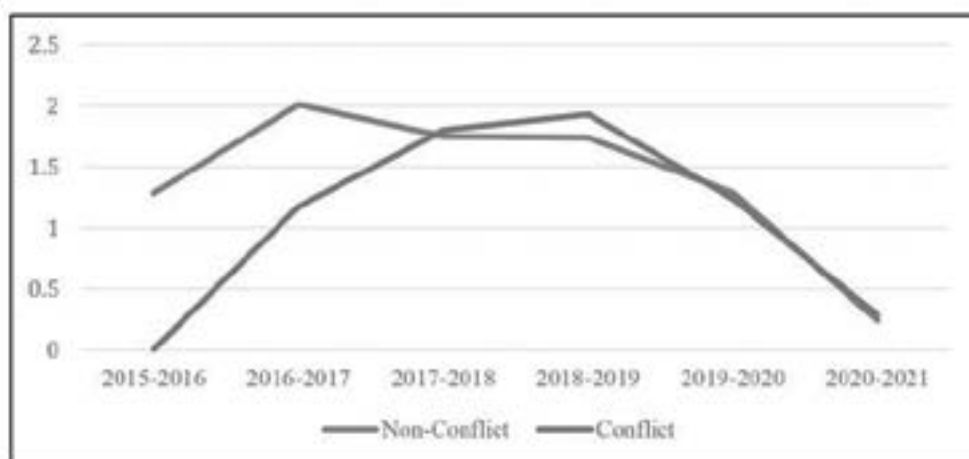


Figure 26

Senior High School Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

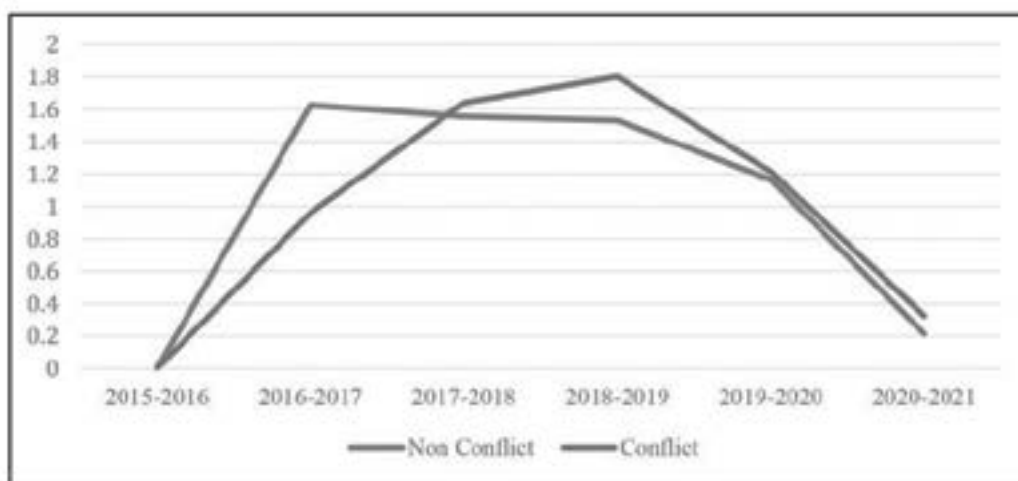


Figure 27

Senior High School Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Girl Simple Dropout Rate (2015–2021)

Furthermore, the highest SDR recorded came from conflict areas in 2018–2019. On the other hand, the SDR of boys in non-conflict areas at the secondary education level was higher compared to non-conflict areas in 2017–2018.

Senior High School

The SDR at the senior high school level in both non-conflict and conflict areas had a significant increase in 2015–2016. However, the SDR in non-conflict areas peaked in 2016–2017 and had a slight decline

in 2017–2018. The SDR rose again in 2018–2019, but dropped in 2019–2020.

The SDR in conflict areas steadily grew over the years and peaked in 2018–2019. However, the SDR dropped consistently after this period. The highest SDR recorded came in the non-conflict areas in 2016–2017, slightly surpassing the high mark of the SDR in conflict areas in 2018–2019.

Regarding gender, the highest SDR for girls in the senior high school level was recorded in conflict areas in 2018–2019. Like the previous chart, there was also

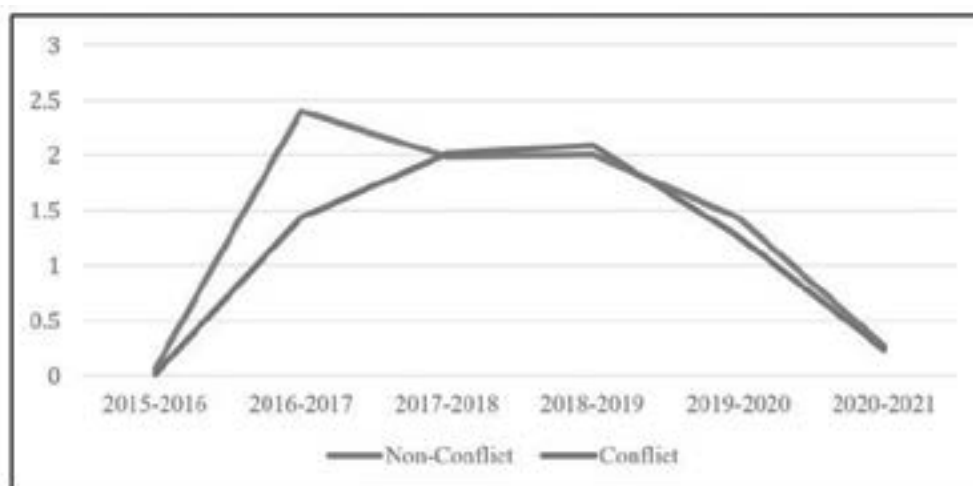


Figure 27

Senior High School Level Conflict vs Non-Conflict Areas - Boy Simple Dropout Rate (2015-2021)

a sharp increase in the SDR of girls in 2015–2016 and peaked in 2016–2017. In addition to this, the SDR in both conflict and non-conflict areas dropped significantly after 2019–2020.

In contrast to the girls, the highest recorded SDR for boys in the senior high school level appeared in non-conflict areas. In 2015–2016, the SDR in non-conflict areas peaked, and it slowly dropped in the succeeding years. During the 2017–2019 period, the SDR in both non-conflict and conflict areas was relatively the same, except that the SDR in conflict areas was slightly higher in 2018–2019. Eventually, the SDR in both non-conflict and conflict areas dropped significantly in 2019–2020.

Discussion and Conclusion

Past works of literature focused on poverty, school, and gender. This study argued that conflict is associated with the dropping out of school-age children. It attempted to look at the relationships between poverty, school, gender inequality, and conflict.

The focus of this study is to look at the patterns of enrollment and dropout amongst the 4Ps child beneficiaries using the SDR. Specifically, it aimed to (a) estimate the simple dropout rate of 4Ps child beneficiaries from 2015–2020 for conflict and non-conflict areas; (b) look at the contribution of 4Ps in bringing and retaining child beneficiaries in school in both conflict and non-conflict areas; and (c) compare the impact of government peace and development programs to girls versus boys.

Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Philippines (2015) highlighted that there is a clear and strong negative relationship between average national attendance rates and the difference between attendance in the conflict vs non-conflict areas. This can be observed in both conflict and non-conflict areas, where there was a rising SDR from 2015–2016 but started to decline in 2018–2019. Areas with no conflict recorded higher SDR in primary education than those with conflict. When it comes to the secondary education and senior high school levels, areas with conflict recorded higher SDR rates compared with areas without conflict.

The study supports the argument that the 4Ps Program brought and kept child beneficiaries to school, as shown by the declining SDR through the years. Likewise, the presence of the 4Ps program plus the PAMANA program in the areas of conflict contributed to not only bringing children to school but also retaining them. It can be observed that not only did the SDR decline but the decline was also observed at almost the same rate as the SDR in non-conflict areas.

It is evident that boys do initially enroll in schools, yet there is a notable challenge in sustaining their enrollment, leading to eventual dropouts, especially when compared to their counterparts in both conflict and non-conflict areas.

This study underscores the importance of the 4Ps and PAMANA programs within the government's initiative to facilitate the enrollment and retention of children in schools. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the necessity of prioritizing interventions to address

the escalating dropout rates among the poorest of the poor boys. The government may consider providing different rates of 4Ps subsidy in conflict areas based on the level of effort parents need to put into bringing their children to school. The government needs to persist in investing in quality engendered education. Knowledge of diverse motivations that drive both girls and boys to maintain their presence in schools is crucial. A potential factor contributing to boys dropping out is their involvement in family economic activities. To mitigate this, it is advisable to create economic incentives that make attending school more advantageous for boys.

Further research may compare the SDR of 4Ps beneficiaries with non-4Ps beneficiaries, as well as examine the implications of the pandemic on the education of poor children in the Philippines. It may also be of value to look at where our boys are going if not in school. Are they working? Or engaging in insurgency activity?

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